

January 8, 2023

Senator Joseph Rafferty
Representative Michael Brennan
Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333



Commissioner Pender Makin
Maine Department of Education Maine DOE
23 State House Station Augusta,
ME 04333

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and Commissioner Maker:

On behalf of the New Mainer Resource Center (NMRC) and Portland Adult Education (PAE), we are pleased to submit NMRC's 2021-2022 Annual Report. With this report we have taken the opportunity to provide information about PAE generally to give the context in which NMRC and PAE have been operating. The inclusion of NMRC at PAE has allowed for the development of both targeted programming focused on the unique needs of those who come to the U.S. with an advanced degree and experience in a professional field as well as support for workforce initiatives that are integrated throughout PAE's programs. Additionally, given what NMRC learns from the individuals it engages and the challenges they face as they attempt to move forward with their careers, NMRC has been able to develop expertise in the area of certification, licensing and credential evaluations that can be useful in informing state policy and developing best practices for assisting this population to fully utilize their skills and training as they seek to put their professional backgrounds to use in Maine's workforce.

Some initiatives from the past year discussed in the report that we want to point out include:

- The Education Academy, considered a national model, has been very successful at getting foreign trained teachers certified and into teaching and Ed Tech positions.
- The policy work that has been done on addressing barriers to licensing for foreign trained physicians which includes an upcoming forum on January 19th with presentations from national experts to interested stakeholders and the introduction of legislation by Representative Cloutier to establish a Commission to study the issue in more depth and come up with recommendations specific to Maine. This has been an approach that has been very successful in several other states, including Colorado and Massachusetts.
- Employer partnerships, such as the ones we have with Northern Light Mercy, Hannaford and ReVision Energy.
- Sector-focused offerings such as our Teller Training program in which a number of local financial institutions have been involved in developing and teaching the courses as well as hiring the program graduates.

This past year has also been a year of building and taking steps to expand capacity at PAE and NMRC to meet the growing demands on our programs:

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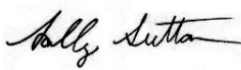
- NMRC redesigned its website so that it functions as a self-help tool for students, job seekers, teachers and other social service providers.
- PAE applied and was awarded an MDOL Apprenticeship grant to allow PAE to develop high quality pre-apprenticeship programs in healthcare and clean energy.
- PAE applied for and was awarded 3 MDOE Strengthening Maine’s Workforce grants that will support program expansion in several significant ways:
 - ESOL – Extended Language Access Project will allow us to diversify the ways we meet the ESOL needs of the growing number of students.
 - Digital Literacy – English and Digital Skills Integration will allow us to improve access to ESOL programs and also integrate digital skills with ESOL instruction across the organization.
 - Healthcare – PAE Healthcare Pathways Program provides much needed support for a number of initiatives that address healthcare workforce needs at a range of different levels.

We appreciate your support and interest in our programs. We are excited about the work we have been able to do during the past year and look forward to the opportunities that are before us in 2023. We would be delighted to provide whatever additional information you or your committee require, and we would be very interested in coming to speak to your committee at your convenience.

All the best,



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New Mainers Resource Center Portland Adult Education 2021 - 2022 Annual Report



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**New Mainers Resource Center
Portland Adult Education
2021/22 Annual Report
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



The New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) was created in 2013 by the Maine State Legislature to develop and execute a strategy to integrate and better utilize the skills of foreign trained immigrants living in Maine. Established as a pilot project at Portland Adult Education (PAE), **NMRC's mission is to support Maine's economic development by meeting employers' demands for a skilled and culturally diverse workforce.**

For over 15 years PAE has been supporting members of Maine's immigrant communities to find success and build financial stability through workforce development programs designed specifically for new Mainers. In pre-COVID years, these numbers averaged roughly 2,200 immigrant students each year. During COVID years, with a need to switch to remote learning, those numbers dropped, but in 2021/2022 and the second half of 2022, the demand for services has surpassed earlier years, and with the increasing number of new arrivals, this trend looks to continue.

The inclusion of NMRC at PAE has allowed for the development of both targeted programming focused on the unique needs of those who come to the U.S. with an advanced degree and experience in a professional field as well as support for workforce initiatives that are integrated throughout PAE's programs. Given what NMRC learns from the individuals it serves and the challenges they face as they attempt to move forward with their careers, NMRC has developed an expertise in the area of licensing and credential evaluations that can be useful in informing state policy and developing best practices for assisting this population to fully utilize their skills and training as they seek to put their professional background to use in Maine's workforce.

Take Aways from the 2021/2022 School Year and Recommendations for Future Years

- Instability of housing, large numbers of unhoused people, and the limitation of resources available for emergency housing and related services will significantly hamper the ability of recent and new arrivals to Maine to participate in English classes and to participate in American workforce-readiness classes, career fairs, networking opportunities and other training as well as their ability to be in a stable enough housing situation to enter the workforce.
- To foster a thriving workforce that fully supports Maine's skilled foreign trained professionals invest in scholarships, various forms of supports for longer term or advanced educational programs and supports for meeting professional licensing requirements instead of focusing solely on short-term training program for entry-level positions.
- Sector Strategies and employer partnerships continue to be an effective approach of moving people into a job and profession, but only if they don't stop at the entry level positions and employers make the investment in their employees that will enable them to move into professional roles that are on par with their previous careers.
- Costs related to licensing, credential evaluations and translations can be prohibitive. Easily accessible funds need to be made available to help cover these costs. Additionally, the number of people in Maine with experience in this field is limited and needs to be increased.

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**New Mainers Resource Center
2021-2022 Annual Report**

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
NMRC OVERVIEW	3
NMRC Mission	
Changes in NMRC Role Within PAE	
NMRC Program Statistics	
PORTLAND ADULT EDUCATION 2021/2022	5
Portland Adult Education Program Overview	
Program Statistics	
Some Comparisons - Fall Semester 2022/23 with 2021/2022	
LACK OF HOUSING AND RELATED EMERGENCY SERVICES IMPACT PAE STUDENTS	7
NMRC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS	8
Intensive Job Readiness Class for Intermediate English Speakers	
A SNAPSHOT of People Seeking or Receiving Services From NMRC	
Student Success Stories	
Employer Partnerships	
NMRC at the National Level	
NMRC SECTOR INITIATIVES	13
Healthcare Sector	
General	
Foreign Trained Doctors	
Nurses	
MDOE Workforce Innovations Grant	
Education Sector	
BUILDING PROGRAMS TO MEET INCREASED DEMAND FOR SERVICES	17
NMRC Website Redesign	
Major Grant Opportunities Through the State	
MDOL Apprenticeship Grant Award	
MDOE Strengthening Maines Workforce Grant Awards	
CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	20
APPENDICES	23
<u>Appendix A. PAE Workforce Course Offering Brochure</u>	
<u>Appendix B. Workforce Training Courses Winter 2022 - 2023</u>	
<u>Appendix C. PAE Course Catalog Winter 2023</u>	
Appendix D. PAE 2021/22 Immigrant Enrollment Chart	24

New Mainers Resource Center 2021-22 Annual Report

NMRC OVERVIEW

NMRC Mission

The New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) was created in 2013 by the Maine State Legislature to develop and execute a strategy to integrate and better utilize the skills of foreign trained immigrants living in Maine. Established as a pilot project at Portland Adult Education (PAE), **NMRC's mission is to support Maine's economic development by meeting employers' demands for a skilled and culturally diverse workforce.**

PAE has been supporting members of Maine's immigrant communities to find success and build financial stability through workforce development programs designed specifically for new Mainers, for over 15 years. The inclusion of NMRC at PAE allows for the development of both targeted programming focused on the unique needs of those who come to the U.S. with an advanced degree and experience in a professional field as well as support for workforce initiatives that are integrated throughout PAE's programs. Given what NMRC learns from the individuals it serves and the challenges they face as they attempt to move forward with their careers, NMRC has developed an expertise in the area of licensing and credential evaluations, that can be useful in informing state policy and developing best practices for assisting this population to fully utilize their skills and training as they seek to put their professional backgrounds to use in Maine's workforce.

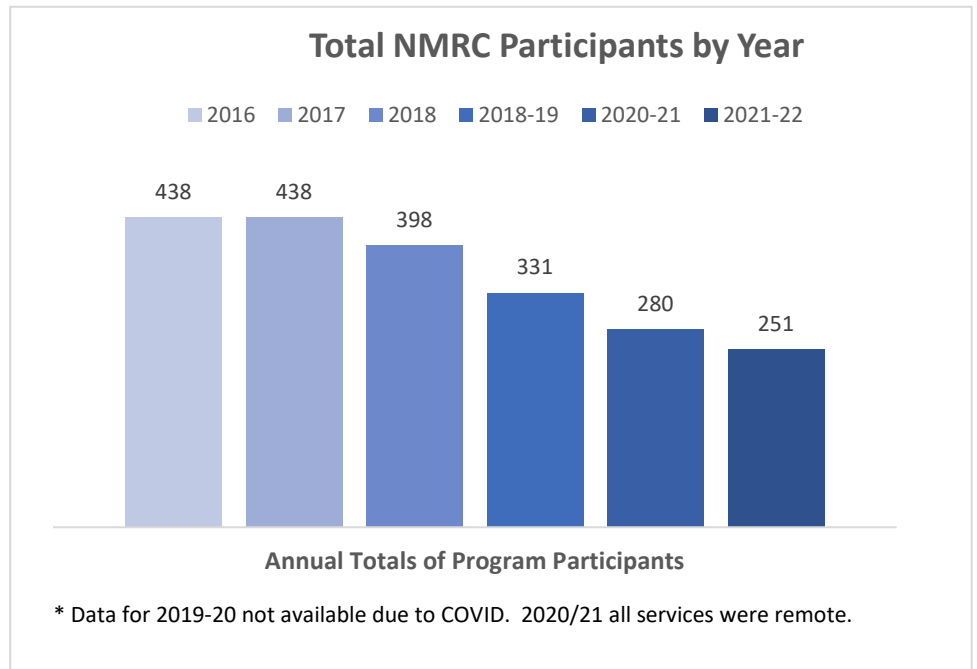
Changes in NMRC's Role Within Portland Adult Education

Since it was founded in 2013, NMRC's role at PAE has evolved to meet the ever changing needs of students and employers and other programmatic shifts at PAE. There has been a growing recognition of the need to integrate NMRC services more fully throughout PAE programming as the best way to meet those needs. During the past several years the number and type of workforce training programs developed and offered by PAE has expanded. The number of new Mainer students participating in those courses has also increased. There has also been a need to provide more career advising to PAE students generally and especially those students who are participating in PAE's workforce courses. With the labor market shortages and the move to remote services, there has been a need to look for different ways to be more effective in responding to employers who are contacting NMRC and PAE for assistance with their recruitment efforts.

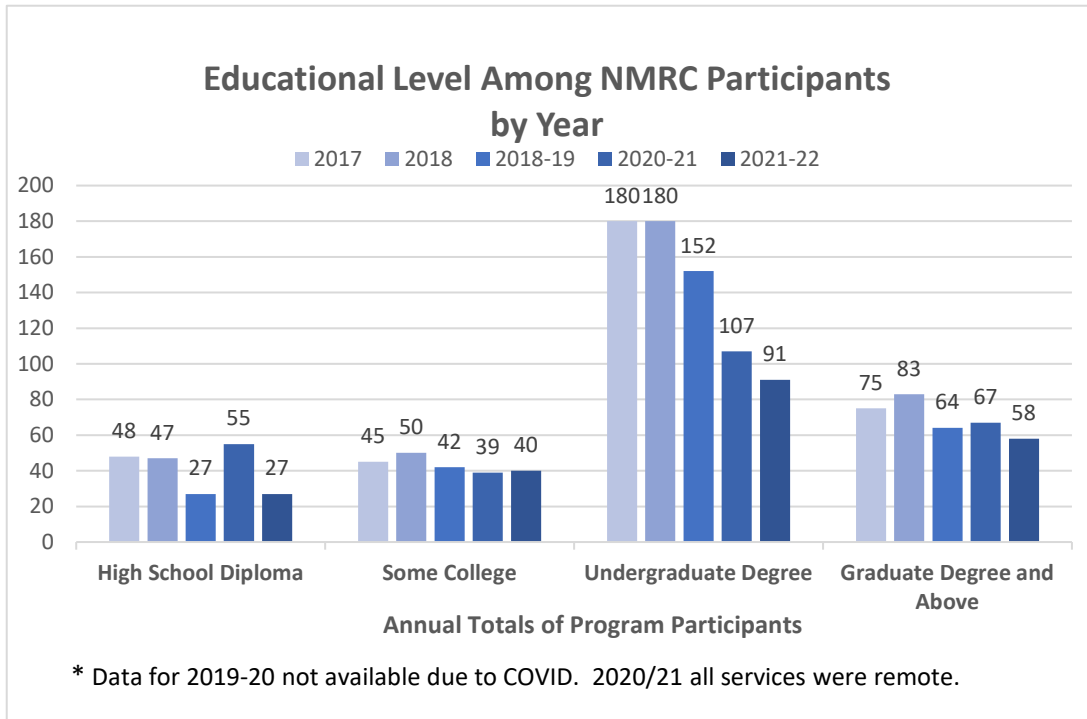
Given these different factors, changes have been made in NMRC programming. It has been more closely aligned with and incorporated into PAE's workforce training department allowing other PAE staff to manage the workforce training classes previously offered under NMRC. This allows NMRC staff to focus their time on program development, career and job search guidance, advising regarding credential evaluations and licensing, and expansion of services to support students more specifically in the workforce training courses. PAE workforce staff now includes someone whose time is dedicated to responding to employers. During the past year the NMRC website was redesigned in a way to better support students, job seekers, teachers and other service providers. NMRC's Health Professional Program Associate position, whose time is spent on advising students on health careers and licensing, working with employers, and teaching health related courses such as TOEFL and TEAS (entrance test for nursing students at community colleges) has really allowed NMRC to expand its efforts in the healthcare sector and to follow through on recommendations from its Foreign Trained Health Professional Pilot Project report.

NMRC Program Statistics

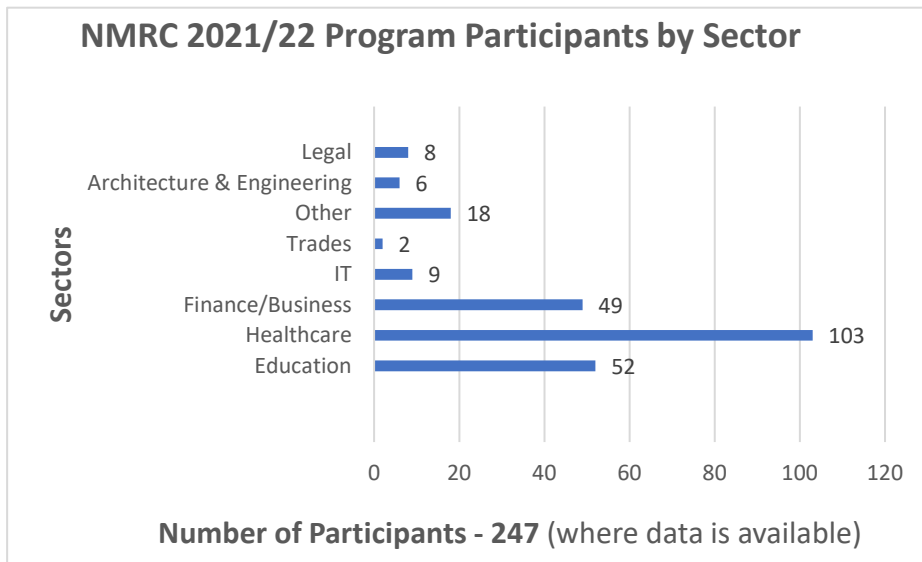
In the 2021/22 school year NMRC provided advising services to **251 people**. The reduced number of people being served reflect a greater integration of NMRC services into PAE overall programming. During this year NMRC services were provided both remotely and in person, to accommodate the needs of those people seeking assistance.



Over the years, the vast majority of students who have been served by NMRC have bachelor degrees and higher, clearly showing that Maine’s immigrants and refugees bring valuable skills and training to Maine’s workforce.



The healthcare and financial services sectors have consistently had the highest numbers of new Mainers who have sought services from NMRC and have been a driving force behind the types of workforce training programming that is developed by NMRC and PAE. The high number of educators being served, for example, reflects the ability of NMRC, through its Education Academy, to bridge the gap between the individuals seeking jobs as Ed Techs or teachers and a school district’s need for people to fill those positions. PAE has the ability to assess the individuals seeking services, their skill gaps, and then working with the employer, develop the training or other services so that people are qualified, competitive candidates for the positions they want, and employers are seeking to fill.



PORTLAND ADULT EDUCATION 2021/2022

Portland Adult Education Program Overview

The following chart illustrates the three different programmatic areas of Portland Adult Education offerings:

WORKFORCE	ACADEMICS	ENRICHMENT
<p>Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting/Finance Computers Office Skills Job Search/Readiness <p>Healthcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CNA programs Medical Assistant Healthcare Office <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Academy Child Development Associate <p>Banking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teller Training <p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDL License Prep <p>New Mainers Resource Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Services Credential info 	<p>ESOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels Literacy → ESOL 5 Pronunciation Workforce intensive English <p>High School Diploma & College Transitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic advising Math Language Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels 100 → 300 Social Studies Science HiSET Prep & Testing Odysseyware Online Learning College and Career Access Street Academy 	<p>Business & Personal Finance</p> <p>Fine Arts & Photography</p> <p>Fitness & Dance</p> <p>Home & Life Skills</p> <p>Languages</p> <p>Wellness</p>

Workforce training, Academic classes and advising and Enrichment courses. For a full description of Workforce Classes See [Appendix A.](#) and [Appendix B.](#) which provide links to a workforce course brochure and a listing of the 2022/23 winter

courses and programs. For a full listing of Enrichment courses and more details about Academic classes, see Appendix C. for the [PAE Course Catalog Winter 2023](#). Data about academic courses, including: numbers and types of classes and number of staff is provided below.

Portland Adult Education Program Statistics 2021-2022 School Year (July 1 - June 30)

- 1,596 attended academic and workforce classes
- 17 - 84 years old
- 90% BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)
- 72 countries (Top 5: Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Somalia, Iraq, Rwanda)
- 93% low-income
- 71% receive some form of public assistance
- 24% have children in local school system
- 19% single parents



College Transitions Program

- Over 50 students participated in the College Transitions Program
- 40+ PAE alumni earned spots on the Dean’s List at SMCC & USM in 20/21.
- 31 PAE alumni graduated from SMCC in May - 5 were listed as Phi Theta Kappa
- At least 3 graduated from USM

High School Diploma and HiSET Program

- 93 Enrolled
- 53 students achieved High School Diploma
- 20 students achieved their High School Equivalency Diploma

English Language Classes (ESOL)

- 1,248 ESOL students Sept 2021 - June 2022
- 48 courses offered (Beginning - Level 5)
 - 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
 - Face-to-Face & Remote classes
- 30 ESOL Teachers

Some Comparisons - Fall Term 2022/23 with 2021/2022

Total Number of Students Fall Term 2022/23 - 1,268

Rollover (Students enrolled in previous semester classes)	679
New	430
Returning+	159

+ Students who previously took classes at PAE but stopped and whose last CASAS (English) test score is past 12 months.

Total Number of Classes and Type of Class

Type of Class	Total Number of Classes For School Year (3 terms) 2021/22 - 363	Total Number of Classes Fall Term 2022/23 - 105
Remote	170	37
Face to Face	164	51
Face to Face with Technology	1	8
Hybrid	28	9

PAE Intake Tests (English) Administered/Done

School year 2021/2022	1,128 intakes (7/1/21 – 4/30/22)*
School year 2022/2023	868 intakes (7/1/22 – 11/30/22)*

* Includes new students that have never taken classes at PAE and returning students.

LACK OF HOUSING AND RELATED EMERGENCY SERVICES IMPACT PAE STUDENTS

Maine’s immigrant population is a major solution to helping the state meet its workforce shortages, but people will not be able to realize their potential and be part of this solution unless they have stable, safe and affordable housing and are able to meet their basic needs. Finding adequate housing and just meeting basic needs have frequently posed challenges for PAE’s new Mainer students who are generally asylum seekers or refugees. The past several years have made the precarious situations that many people live in even more so, first with COVID in 2020, and then with the steady stream and increasing number of new arrivals in 2021 and 2022, due to a seriously compromised immigration system at the national level. The lack of housing is not just a black cloud that hangs over everyone, but a storm that threatens or impacts every aspect of a person’s life. This is the context in which people are nevertheless committing to move forward by attending classes, taking care of their families and engaging in communal life to prepare themselves for their next careers and to find jobs. Yet they don’t know from one day to the next or one month to the next whether or not they will even have a roof over their head. The following are some key events/factors relating to housing insecurity that have occurred in the past year.

- In February 2021 organizations and coalitions providing services to immigrants began discussions about how to plan for the pending arrival of people who had been held in detention at the southern border. Since then, a steady stream of asylum seekers, mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola, have made their way to Maine.
- On 11-22-21 News Center Maine reported *Seeking shelter & safety in Maine, asylum-seekers arriving in increasing numbers* “The Portland Family Shelter is full, so Portland has contracted with six hotels in South Portland and other communities [Freeport, Yarmouth and Saco] to act as overflow shelters....More asylum-seekers are coming to Maine now than during the summer of 2019 when Portland opened up the Portland Expo to house nearly 450 of them. Currently, **513** asylum seekers are in temporary housing...”
- On May 4, 2022, Kristen Dow, Director of Health & Human Service for the City of Portland, sent out the following [message](#) to service providers in other states saying there is no further shelter or hotel capacity for any new arrivals to Portland: “If your organization sends a family to Portland, Maine they are no longer guaranteed shelter upon their arrival to our shelter.” Three weeks later, on 5/25/22, the

City of South Portland sent out a similar letter saying that South Portland was at capacity and that if a family was sent to South Portland, they would not be guaranteed shelter.

- In response to the growing need for housing and emergency services, the Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition (MIRC) sent a letter with a series of urgent, medium and long term recommendations to local state and federal officials. These recommendations were offered as a way to protect the newly arriving asylum seekers, including those that are in temporary housing, as well as those who have arrived after Portland and South Portland declared they had no more capacity to guarantee shelter or arrange services.
- On **12/2/22**, a little more than a year after the above referenced News Center Maine Report, at the monthly meeting of the Asylum Seekers Working Group representatives from organizations in the call collectively estimated that there were about **2,000** people in temporary housing (shelters and hotels) living in a number of different communities in the region.
- Despite the lack of guaranteed shelter, the stream of people coming to Portland has not stopped or even slowed down, with an average of 10-12 new families arriving every night who have no place to stay. These people are at the mercy of, and at risk of exploitation or harm, from whomever happens to drive by and offer them a couch to sleep on.
- Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds, for those individuals who are eligible, have helped to cover the cost of sheltering people in hotels. ERA funds have also allowed people to access housing that would not otherwise be affordable under General Assistance. With ERA funds initially expected to end in November 2022 people began to get eviction notices. For those people who were already in the system, funds were extended through December, and then January 2023. Many people who have been housed in hotels paid for with ERA funds and also those people who were able to find apartments, with rents that exceed GA limits, face eviction. They only know month to month if they have a place to live.

MIRC's May 20, 2022 letter to Maine's elected officials lays out a series of recommendations, at each level of government, to address this challenging situation.

NMRC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Intensive Job Readiness Class for Intermediate English Speakers

This class, which served 28 students in the 2021/22 school year, has long been a foundational element of NMRC's programming and provides a model for other offerings. Despite the challenges of going online during the pandemic, and the extreme delay of the US immigration services to provide work authorizations to people, this course continues to be a tremendous resource for the students who take the class and receive ongoing advising, as well as employers who are able to connect to potential job applicants. A quote from one of the students, Ben L., who is now participating in NMRC's Education Academy, stated: *"I learned so many important things such as defining my skills, counting hours worked, culture at the workplace, resume and more. I thank teachers and Adult Education for this class."*

A SNAPSHOT of People Seeking or Receiving Advising Services From NMRC on November 3, 2022

Below is some information about who is currently being served or seeking advising services on 11/3/2022. For some sectors, such as healthcare and education, NMRC/PAE has secured funding to cover the costs of translations and evaluations and provided limited financial assistance with any licensing requirements. Unfortunately, others often have no other source. In addition to inadequate funding, there is also limited staffing to serve the increased number of skilled professionals in these other sectors who seek assistance.



There are several factors that contribute to this increased demand: more people are arriving in Portland, free community college for HSD graduates and the need that people have for evaluations of their degrees to get credit for previous college work; lack of resources at the state or college level to cover these costs for the people their programs serve or who they are recruiting; and more referrals to NMRC for these services from other service providers. In addition to insufficient financial resources, there is limited staffing around the state that has the expertise to provide these services. This snapshot of people who were seeking or receiving services on November 3rd provides a good example of the demand that is seen year-round, both in terms of the need for experienced advisors who can work with a range of skilled professionals as well as support for related expenses.

NMRC Advising – 49 people

- Returning students – 24
- New – 25 – includes 11 people waiting for 1st appointment

Sectors

- **Education – 15 people** – All of these people have expenses that are covered under a contract with the City of Portland to support the Education Academy.
- **Healthcare – 13 people (6 MDs)** – Some expenses for these people are covered under the MDOE Strengthening Maine’s Workforce Healthcare Pathways grant which became available mid- November 2022. *These numbers do not include healthcare professional students being advised by the NMRC Healthcare Program Associate, who may also have expenses.
- **Other (finance/business, legal, IT engineering, HR, biology) – 25 – 20 of these people will likely have expenses.** What we are able to provide is due to the generous support of Scholarships for Maine Immigrants (SMI). To be able to provide services for all of them, we would need additional funding.

Student Success Stories

While each person who comes to the New Mainers Resource Center will have their own path to follow depending on their profession, previous experience, immigration status, access to documents, family status, access to financial resources, and a number of other factors, there are some common themes that run through all of their experiences. Success does not happen overnight and involves a lot of hard work and commitment for someone to be at the level they were at in their previous professions. For many people, despite their experience and education, there is no or very limited recognition of that experience. They need to re-do most, if not all of their previous training, or pursue another career that will also require re-schooling. This will also require a significant amount of time and expense, for which there are limited resources or support available to them. Following are a few individuals who have achieved certain milestones toward reaching their career goals. Each has put in a considerable amount of time and effort over a number of years to get to where they are.



Christine M. received her US citizenship on Nov 4, 2022 and voted for the first time 4 days later. Christine began taking English classes at PAE in the fall of 2016 and continued taking academic and workforce classes for the next several years. With a Bachelor’s degree and teaching experience from her home country, DRC, Christine was interested in pursuing a teaching career in Maine and was a perfect candidate for the Education Academy. She was in the 1st Education Academy cohort in 2019. She has been working as an Ed Tech 3 at East End School since Fall 2020. With support from the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP), Christine is taking courses toward her certification to be an elementary school teacher. She has only 2 more courses to take to qualify for her conditional teaching certification.

Christine M. at her Citizenship Ceremony 11/4/22.

David N., is a physician from DRC, who came to the US as an asylum seeker in 2015. He participated in NMRC and PAE courses such as English for Health Professionals and Medical Terminology and with NMRC support took a phlebotomy course at SMCC. He has received ongoing advising and support from NMRC. As soon as he got his work authorization in 2016 David was hired as a phlebotomist by Nordx. He has also worked as a Clinical Research Coordinator for Maine Medical Center Research Institute.

Against all odds, and with an overwhelming amount of hard work and persistence, David has successfully made it through the many difficult, complicated and expensive steps for foreign trained doctors who wish to be licensed as doctors in the US.



In May 2022 David was a speaker on the *Bright Spots* Panel for the Daniel Hanley Center for Health Leadership 2022 Forum - *Creating a Healthy Sustainable Healthcare Workforce*. On July 1, 2022, David began working as a first year medical resident in the Internal Medicine Residency program at Maine Medical Center. Illustrating the determined attitude that he had regarding his efforts David says: *“It wasn’t supposed to be easy.”*



Zulma L. Besides improving her English, Zulma took advantage of the range of programs that PAE offers. She went on to get her High School Diploma, graduating in 2022, worked with the College Transitions advisor, received assistance from NMRC to have her college transcripts from her home country translated and evaluated. She has just completed her first semester in an online accounting program at Central Maine Community College, where she is receiving a full scholarship as a result of getting her High School Diploma at PAE. *“The COVID-19 pandemic changed my life. First, in March 2020, I lost my job where I had worked for 10 years, so we only had my husband’s income to live on. We struggled because we had three kids to feed, and a lot of bills to pay. When I lost my job, I realized that I had to improve my English skills. The second thing that changed was that I had the opportunity to return to school. This was a turning point for me. Because of the pandemic, adult education classes were online.”* Zulma, PAE Graduate 2022

Zulma at PAE 2022 High School Graduation, with her husband, also a graduate, and 3 of her 4 children

Employer Partnerships

New Mainers Resource Center and Portland Adult Education have a number of partnerships that range from working with an individual employer to programs that include a number of employers from a specific sector. These partnerships are designed based on the needs of that employer or sector and what it takes for a new Mainer, particularly one with previous training or experience in a field, to gain meaningful employment where they can put their skills and experience to work. The following are some examples of successful partnerships that could be replicated with other employers.



Northern Light Health Workforce Development Contract

This past year PAE developed a partnership with Northern Light Mercy Hospital to: 1. Help ELL Environmental Service employees advance within the company through advising, training and education, and 2. Assist foreign trained health professionals to access employment opportunities that could utilize their previous backgrounds. This partnership was highlighted in a [4 minute video](#) Mercy prepared for their annual report.

Teller Training Program

PAE's Teller Training Program is about to begin its 4th cohort in January 2023. This program was developed and taught in partnership with local financial institutions who indicated that the best way for someone to move forward in their industry was to start out in teller positions. Here are the results from the first three years this program was offered:

- **28 graduates** from 12 countries
- **16 of 28 (57%)** hired into jobs at banks and credit unions
- People are in positions ranging from Teller to Credit Recovery to Bank Secrecy Act Representative, and one graduate is now working as a Staff Accountant at Infinity Credit Union
- Most others have gone into related jobs (Patient Services Representative or Customer Service) or are studying at SMCC

Testimonial from a graduate: *"The Teller Training Program is the best thing that happened to me ever since I moved to the US. In the last two years, I have been thinking of transitioning into the finance field and when I saw this opportunity, I thought I might as well seize it. Not once did I regret choosing to do this. I LEARNED A LOT! Starting as a teller will provide me with a strong foundation to build my career in the finance field."*



2022 New Mainer Teller Training graduation, April 2022

Hannaford Retail Leadership Internship

In December 2020 Hannaford reached out to PAE with an interest in partnering around workforce development and inclusion efforts focused on more diversity in their leadership and management positions. PAE and NMRC brought to the table talented, professional students seeking career advancement opportunities. After discussions spanning several months, working together reviewing a range of ideas, an internship model was determined to be the best option for both students and Hannaford.

Launched as the **Hannaford Retail Leadership Internship**, a program was developed as a partnership between Hannaford and Portland Adult Education that provided a unique opportunity for foreign-born students with professional backgrounds to gain experience working in retail leadership, learning what it takes to run a multimillion-dollar grocery store in the U.S. At the end of the program interns had the opportunity to interview for and move directly into a range of permanent positions at Hannaford such as Assistant Produce Manager Trainee, Produce Lead, Assistant Center Store Manager Trainee, Assistant Department Manager Trainee and Department Manager Trainee.

Hannaford created a wonderful video featuring our partnership and the success of the three interns. They hope to replicate the model in other states and PAE is in the process of recruiting applicants for a spring 2023 cohort. You can watch the [video here](#).

NMRC at the National Level

NMRC is recognized as a model program at the national level, particularly the work that has been done in the education field with the Education Academy, the healthcare sector and in the area of professional licensing. Following is a list of national groups or associations that NMRC participates in that allow us to learn about best practices from other states, connect to national experts and advocate for policy and practices that impact the ability of immigrants to fully utilize their skills and training and integrate into the US workforce and economy.

- **IMPRINT COALITION** (Immigration Professional Integration) – A national coalition working to advance public policies and promising models that support the economic inclusion of immigrants and refugees who hold international degrees. Our participation in this group has helped us to connect to people in other states who are working on similar issues, particularly around licensing. We are also able to bring to IMPRINT issues that impact Maine people, such as issues around asylum and work authorizations, that they can help advocate for at the national level. NMRC is a member organization and also belongs to the Advocacy Working Group which works on both national and state legislation.
- **WES Global Talent Bridge** – Dedicated to helping skilled immigrants fully utilize their talents and education in Canada and the US. Here are the different groups we belong to that fall under the WES Global Talent Bridge umbrella.
 - **Skilled Immigrant Integration Program** – Portland’s Office of Economic Opportunity was in the first cohort of communities that were brought together under this program to further local immigrant and refugee workforce inclusion initiatives. As a result of Portland’s involvement, NMRC has been able to participate in related initiatives around the development of licensing guides and the Teacher Bridge Program, and the recent Economic Inclusion Forum.
 - **WES Gateway Program** – NMRC is a partner in this program which attempts to provide evaluations for individuals from certain countries who have limited access to their transcripts and diplomas.
 - **The Teacher Bridge Project** – This project promotes pathways to teaching for internationally trained educators. The Education Academy is one of the six city or state programs that have been participating in this collaboration during the past year and will continue to do so in 2023.

- [WES Economic Inclusion Forum Resources](#) – Resources made available at the recent national forum focused on economic inclusion.
- [Welcome Back Initiative](#) – This is a federation of programs founded in 2001 who have developed best practices in helping licensed foreign trained professionals being relicensed. Maine has belonged since 2015. There is a focus on health professionals, but several other programs, like Maine, do not limit themselves to serving any one profession or sector.



NMRC SECTOR INITIATIVES

HealthCare Sector

In 2020, NMRC released a report of its findings and recommendations related to barriers foreign trained healthcare professionals face in obtaining licensing and employment in the healthcare field: [Report of the Foreign Trained Health Professionals Licensing Pilot Project](#). Much of NMRC’s efforts since the release of that report have been focused on moving forward on its many recommendations, including coordination and expansion of NMRC/PAE services in the healthcare sector. The following are several highlights of those efforts.

- NMRC reached out to different stakeholders around the state and presented the findings and recommendations of the report. – [Presentation made to the State Refugee Advisory Council](#)
- Development and offering of test prep courses (TEAS) for entrance into nursing and radiography programs at community colleges and TOEFL and other English and licensing exam prep courses
- Expanded advising and support for licensing and evaluations for foreign trained health professionals – provided under two MDOE grants: Bridge to Advancement in Healthcare Hub 8 Grant and the MDOE Strengthening Maine’s Workforce PAE Healthcare Pathways Program grant
- Worked with other adult education programs serving health professionals; partnered with health employers (Northern Light Mercy and MaineHealth) on recruitment and training; and worked with the UNE Advanced Track PharmD program to recruit and support foreign trained pharmacists
- The NMRC website has been updated to provide more information for [Foreign Trained Health Professionals](#) and specific licensing information and related resources for: nurses, physicians, pharmacists and physical therapists and NMRC staff is available to provide advising services for these and other health professions

In addition to the more general efforts listed above, NMRC focused its attention on two specific healthcare professions: doctors and nurses. Listed below are the NMRC activities related to these professions based on the recommendations in our report.

Physicians - For physicians, NMRC partnered with the [Daniel Hanley Center for Health Leadership](#) in several different ways:

- The Hanley Health Leadership Development Course is an annual program which brings together leaders from a range of healthcare settings and professions to build their leadership skills. One activity of this program are group projects, and one group in the 2021/22 program did their project on *Foreign Trained Physician Workforce Development in Maine*. NMRC helped to provide background information and resources to this group. For their project they produced both a [written report](#) and a [video](#) that explain the challenges faced by foreign trained physicians.
- Hanley Center Forum 2022 – *Creating a Healthy Sustainable Healthcare Workforce*, an in-person conference held May 18, 2022, focused on the recruitment and retention challenges health care employers are facing in their efforts to provide high quality health care. NMRC Program Coordinator

Sally Sutton and David Ngala, a foreign trained physician from the DRC, who in 2022 began a residency program at Maine Medical Center, spoke as part of a panel focusing on *Bright Spots*.

- The call to action that came about as a result of the collaboration of these two organizations and the focus on this issue is the need for a more in-depth discussion amongst stakeholders to get a better understanding of the challenges and to find a way to move forward toward some solutions. Planning began for a remote forum to be held in January 2023 [Fulfilling Potential: Foreign Trained Physicians - A Pathway Forward for Maine](#). The agenda includes hearing from Maine's foreign trained doctors about their experiences and leaders from around the country who will share their insights and experiences about how to address these issues as well as explore options for Maine.
- During 2021 and 2022 there was a lot of activity in other states related to foreign trained physicians and different pathways to licensure. NMRC tracked these different state initiatives and researched potential strategies for Maine. [NMRC-Hanley Doctor Forum Background Materials](#)

Nurses - NMRC approached the nursing profession in several different ways:

- Development and offering of a TEAS test prep course. This is an entrance exam for SMCC, and other community college students into nursing programs.
- Providing intensive advising services to potential nurses, some with previous training and experience as nurses and others trained as physicians, to provide them information about their various options, such as directly pursuing nurse licensure or exploring the different educational programs to determine the best fit. Advising services include all steps in both the licensing process and applications to nursing education programs.
 - Document translation and evaluation
 - English test prep
 - Serving as a registered agent for licensing applicants with CGFNS (Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools) to help licensure applicants with their applications and to work with the Maine State Board of Nursing regarding clarification of licensing requirements and potential barriers
 - Advocating with nursing educational programs for as much credit as possible from previous degrees and courses for individual applicants
 - Assisting with applications for any possible scholarships
- Working closely with educational nursing programs to advocate generally for recruitment and support of new Mainer applicants, and to remove any barriers that may exist in the application process or course requirements and promote recognition of previous degrees or coursework
- Collaborate with other Welcome Back programs around the country to address problems with state nursing licensing boards only using CGFNS as the sole evaluation company for nurse licensure
- Collaborate with other state Welcome Back programs about the availability of NCLEX prep and other courses being available to Welcome Back program participants from other states.

MDOE Workforce Innovation Grant

(Maine Adult Education & Career Development HUB 8 – Spring 2021 – July 2022)

Bridge to Advancement in Healthcare - The Bridge to Advancement in Healthcare (B2A) project, funded with a grant from the Maine Department of Education, put forth by Portland Adult Education (PAE) in partnership with the Cumberland County Adult Education and Career Development Hub (Hub), addressed the healthcare workforce shortage in Maine by providing innovative training opportunities combined with foundational supports to remove barriers for adults who seek to enter or advance in the healthcare field along with the guidance and support they needed to achieve their fullest career potential.

The program targets foreign trained healthcare professionals and individuals seeking to enter or advance within the healthcare field who face language, educational, financial, or other obstacles by providing the innovative training models that blend technical and foundational supports along with the guidance and advising necessary to help any individual who has previously been a healthcare professional, or who wants to enter or advance in the healthcare field, to reach their fullest potential.

This grant provided funding for PAE to address some previously identified needs. PAE's offerings through this grant included:

- Bridge to Medical Assisting – to prepare students for a medical assisting program
- Patient Services Representative training – prepares students for medical office related positions which are identified by PAE's employer partners, MaineHealth and Northern Light Mery, as difficult positions to fill.
- TEAS test Prep Course – This test is required for students going into nursing and other healthcare programs at the community colleges
- TOEFL and other Licensing test prep – Helps support those individuals who are planning for graduate or other programs or who need TOEFL or other tests for licensing requirements
- Foreign Trained Health Professional advising – expands available staffing at NMRC to advise individuals with foreign health degrees, further development of NMRC academic workforce resources for health professionals, and financial support for some of the expenses related to certifications and licensing.

Lessons Learned - The number of students that were served by this program was more than twice what was anticipated and demonstrated the need for ongoing and long term assistance. There were also a number of common themes, or lessons learned from the provision of services under this grant:

- Most students struggled with meeting the combination of both short term and long term goals and needed assistance in figuring out the most efficient and cost effective career path
- Expenses tied to licensing and returning to school (not including costs for tuition and fees) are cost prohibitive for most people and the financial assistance provided by this grant made a big difference in covering those costs related to the application process. There is a need for future funds/grants to cover these costs in a low barrier approach
- One big challenge for most students who have to return to school is the cost of tuition for their programs and the lack of scholarships available to them, and their inability to borrow funds due to their immigration status
- Trying to balance work and family with some programs, which require a full-time commitment, is a challenge and may make those programs unavailable to many people or limit their ability to work to not only cover their living expenses, but also their tuition and other school related costs.
- Partnerships with employers and schools should continue to be developed beyond the end of this grant which should help to facilitate employment and entry into programs.
- The demand for resources to cover expenses related to evaluations, applications, tests etc. was not sufficient under this grant and funds had to be located from other sources.
- While the grant may have been successful at meeting its goals, it unfortunately made very apparent the lack of resources available in Maine to foreign trained doctors, nurses, pharmacists, etc. for the longer term educational programs they need to undertake or the full costs of being re-licensed in their previous profession. These highly skilled professionals are able to make it into entry level positions such as MA, CNA or Pharmacy Tech, but there is not adequate support to allow them to move beyond these entry level jobs into a position that uses their full skills and training. If they are successful at making this leap, it is due to their hard work and determination and despite the lack of support they receive, not because of it.

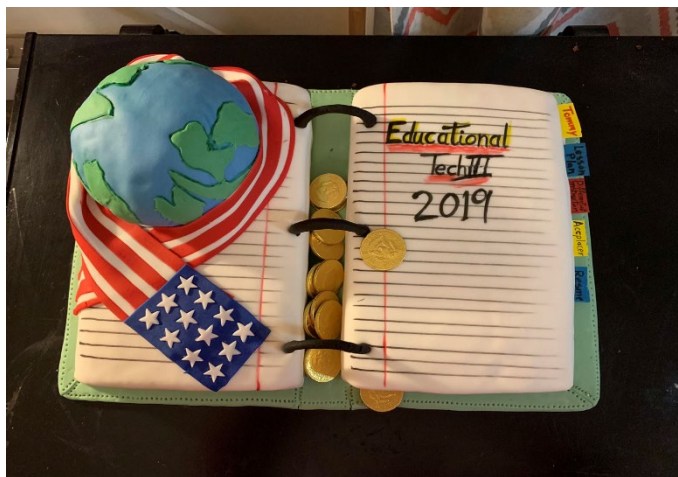
Education Sector

The Education Academy was founded by NMRC at Portland Adult Education in 2019 to help new Mainers who were interested in teaching professions enter the education field. Additionally, many school districts were interested in diversifying their workforce, such as the Portland Promise initiative undertaken by Portland Public Schools. Many school districts were experiencing staff shortages, a situation that has only grown worse in recent years.

To work in public schools there are many challenges new Americans must overcome:

- state certification requirements
- foreign trained teachers may be unfamiliar with U.S. school systems
- limited access to financial resources for more coursework
- unable to access documents from home country
- lack of information about the educational programs available to meet certification requirements
- lack of familiarity with U.S. job search strategies
- English proficiency required for employment, college courses, and PRAXIS tests
- immigration status may have implications for some people

Since the first cohort of Education Academy students graduated in the spring of 2019, the program has received national attention and is recognized as a national model. In 2021/22 NMRC participated in WES Global Talent Bridge - Teacher Bridge Project. In March of 2022 NMRC was invited to present in a national webinar hosted by WES - WES Pathways to Teaching for Immigrants and Refugees. In preparation for that presentation, NMRC put together a document, Education Academy Program Background and History, that includes the historical background about the program's development, which was done with support from MDOL, and input from Portland Public Schools, and links to the Education Academy Course Curriculum, program results, one immigrant's path toward MDOE teacher certification, and provides information about systemic barriers to teacher certification that exist in Maine. Some of these barriers to teacher certification impact others in addition to new Mainers, who want to enter the teaching profession.



Systemic Barriers Still to Be Addressed By MDOE Related to Teacher Certification

- Access to transcripts and diplomas is not possible for many people - MDOE should consider alternatives for people who are unable to get their documents in a different way than is required by degree evaluation companies to show that they are qualified to work as Ed Tech 3's or teachers.
- Student teaching is not available - There is not an educational institution in the state of Maine that offers student teaching to people who are not fully matriculated in the school's program. MDOE should work with an educational institution to develop a student teaching option for students who are seeking certification through an alternative pathway and not enrolled in a teacher cert. program.
- Ed Tech 3s cannot afford to quit their jobs to student teach - MDOE and school districts should develop clearly defined district-wide strategies for Ed Techs to fulfill their student teaching requirements without having to quit their Ed Tech positions and/or give up their salary and benefits to do student teaching.

BUILDING PROGRAMS TO MEET INCREASED DEMAND FOR SERVICES

Recognizing the need to meet the increased demand for services from both students and employers, NMRC and PAE have dedicated time and resources to meeting that increased demand. The following are examples of several initiatives that had the groundwork laid this past year and will begin to see results in 2023.

NMRC Website - NMRC has redesigned its website so that it is easily accessible to individuals, teachers and other service providers. It now contains self-help materials for people looking for jobs, links to resources or answers to common requests for information about educational programs, licensing, scholarships etc.

Major Grant Opportunities Through the State

During the past year two major funding opportunities became available through the state that provided the potential for significant resources in areas that PAE recognized programming needed to be expanded to meet an increased demand.

In January 2022 **MDOL's Bureau of Employment Services, Maine Apprenticeship Program** released its RFA for grant funding for the Maine Apprenticeship Program. The focus of this program was on: expanding the number of high-quality pre and registered apprenticeships offered within the priority communities of women, people of color, people with disabilities, and justice involved individuals; increasing the number of under-represented workers in Apprenticeship within those priority communities, and developing an integrated, sustainable, and effective statewide Apprenticeship system.

During the summer 2022 **MDOE** released its **Request for Applications for its Strengthening Maine's Workforce** program which is designed to "empower and equip Maine's adult education leaders with the resources and support needed to address educational and workforce gaps and provide new opportunities for Mainers that have disproportionately been impacted by the pandemic."

Portland Adult Education's RFAs under each of these programs were successful and provide PAE with significant funds to meet the demand for programming in a range of different areas. Descriptions of the grants and the expanded programming that will be provided in the coming years are provided below.

MDOL Apprenticeship Grant

Healthy Futures Grant - \$684,000

PAE's Healthy Futures grant will result in new and expanded training capacity that includes a number of high quality pre-apprenticeships in healthcare and clean energy in the Greater Portland region. Specifically, PAE will:

- Train 120 pre-apprentices in three distinct programs:
 - Clean Energy Technician Pre-Apprenticeship, including a partnership with PATHS (Portland Arts and Technology High School)
 - Medical Assistant Pre-Apprenticeship, and
 - Medical Office Assistant Pre-Apprenticeship
- Work closely with ReVision Energy and Northern Light, both of whom have established apprenticeships within their companies and are looking to expand and diversify their pipeline of qualified apprentices through a partnership with PAE.
- Partner with MaineHealth to refer qualified pre-apprentices as they develop a registered Medical Office Assistant apprenticeship.

The pre-apprenticeships will be marketed to and designed for individuals with barriers to entry into traditional apprenticeship programs with a focus on nonnative English speakers who are unemployed/underemployed, women, and people of color. Through comprehensive curricula designed in partnership with employer partners and including contextualized English, digital skills, career exploration, customer service, technical skills, work readiness, and direct networking opportunities, students will graduate prepared to enter a formalized apprenticeship program.

MDOE Strengthening Maine’s Workforce Grants

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) - Extended Language Access Project (*Access*) - \$489,950

The Extended Language Access Project (*Access*) will enable Portland Adult Education, the largest adult education provider in Maine, to extend English language learning opportunities to a greater number of students disproportionately impacted by the COVID19 pandemic and meet the increased demand for services due to the increase in the number of new arrivals to the Portland area through innovatively addressing the waitlist, expanding English instruction, and addressing barriers to participation.

Through *Access*, PAE will develop and implement innovative ways to reduce the waitlist, enhance services and get closer to meeting the ESOL needs of prospective students. PAE will take a multi-pronged approach that will include:

- Assessing and improving the class waitlist system
- Developing and maintaining an updated services map of regional learning opportunities
- More proactively engaging people on the waitlist to share internal and external extended learning opportunities
- Increasing the number of instructional hours offered at PAE by adding remote classes and summer instruction
- Increasing accessibility through expanded remote instruction as well as transportation support for in person classes, and
- Actively partnering with regional adult education and other programs to develop a more regional approach to service provision

PAE’s inability to meet the demand for English language acquisition services among the growing immigrant population in Southern Maine is hindering employment opportunities for hard working, motivated individuals, and limiting opportunities to strengthen Maine’s workforce through a potential pipeline of new employees. *Access* will enable PAE to extend learning opportunities to a greater number of individuals who aspire to enter or advance in Maine’s workforce, improving their workplace situations and ultimately strengthening Maine’s economy by addressing the dire workforce shortages in the state.

Digital Literacy – English and Digital Skills Integration (*EDSI*) - \$490,650

Like most others around the world, Portland Adult Education was forced to provide its services remotely during the height of the pandemic. Quickly, PAE lifted up remote learning. In the first year of the pandemic, PAE’s courses were entirely remote. In the second year of the pandemic, PAE adopted a hybrid model with both remote and in-person options for students. PAE administration and instructors have learned so much from teaching remotely and from student feedback and are ready to take what has been learned from two years of a somewhat forced and reactive approach to now being more thoughtful and intentional in how to approach remote learning. Additionally, students continue to come to PAE to learn English; yet PAE continues to have a waitlist and is always looking to improve accessibility and relevance to English language acquisition.



With a student population composed of individuals disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, primarily immigrant people of color, it is imperative that PAE focus on ways to meet the availability, relevance and access to English language acquisition services to enhance students' employment prospects and workplace situations. PAE

also recognizes that employer's needs have shifted post COVID19 requiring significant digital fluency in an increasingly remote and hybrid workplace.

The *EDSI* approach will improve access to ESOL programming and integrate digital skills with ESOL instruction across the organization through:

- Adequate access to loaner devices and hot spots
- Tech support for classes using computers (remote and in-person classes)
- A reopened revamped learning lab (closed in 2020) that will provide learning opportunities for waitlisted students, as well as one on one digital learning support
- Integrating a multi-pronged approach to digital skills building at all levels of the organization that includes:
 - Digital literacy standards embedded into the ESOL curriculum
 - Digital literacy workshops
 - Improving remote instruction

The components of this strategy will increase English language acquisition accessibility and relevance through digital skills integration that will build student confidence, automaticity, and independence which are each essential to being successful in the workforce.

Healthcare – PAE Healthcare Pathways Program (*Pathways*) - \$500,000

Portland Adult Education's Healthcare Pathways program (*Pathways*) will create English language acquisition and workforce training opportunities in the healthcare industry for individuals disproportionately affected by COVID19 including people of color, individuals with low-incomes, low English literacy levels, and women who may also be unemployed or underemployed, or currently out of the labor force. PAE will work closely with healthcare employers to address their workforce shortages and design and implement programming and connect students to employment opportunities.

The *Pathways* program will address barriers by providing multiple pathways and innovative training models that blend technical and foundational supports along with the guidance and advising necessary to help any individual who has previously been a healthcare professional, or who wants to enter or advance in the healthcare field, to reach their fullest potential.

Portland Adult Education exists to meet students where they are and assist them on their journey toward their goals. Specifically, the program design will meet students where they are and address barriers. It will:

- Build on PAE's existing healthcare program development, advising, training and education expertise

- Deepen PAE's strong healthcare employer relationships
- Develop an innovative marketing and communications strategy
- Provide comprehensive assessment and advising
- Develop and offer innovative training programs that meet students where they are academically
- Offer a new low level English class with a health care focus
- Develop, coordinate and offer an on-site employer based intensive English and work readiness class for low level literacy incumbent workers at Northern Light
- Offer an intensive Bridge to Healthcare Careers program for intermediate level English speakers
- Pilot an Earn as You Learn Model for higher level English customized healthcare training programs
- Provide career advising and employment connections/networking
- Offer foreign trained health professional advising for those with advanced degrees
- Prepare and advise students for TOEFL, English and licensing exams
- Offer flexible class modalities - remote and hybrid options - so that students can participate despite potential child care and transportation challenges
- Lend devices and hot spots to those students who need internet access for classes and programs

Challenges and Recommendations

1. Instability of housing, large numbers of unhoused people, and the limitation of resources available for emergency housing and related services will significantly hamper the ability of recent and new arrivals to Maine to participate in English classes and other training as well as their ability to be in a stable enough situation to enter the workforce.
2. Focusing solely on short term training programs for entry level positions and making no real investment in scholarships or assistance for longer term or advanced educational programs or support for meeting professional licensing requirements will keep Maine's skilled foreign trained professionals from reaching their full potential.
3. Sector Strategies and employer partnerships continue to be an effective approach of moving people into jobs, but only if they don't stop at the entry level positions and employers make the investment in their employees that will enable them to move into professional roles that are on par with their previous careers.
4. Costs related to licensing, credential evaluations and translations can be prohibitive. Easily accessible services and funding need to be made available to help cover these costs which can run from hundreds to thousands of dollars. In addition to a need for more funds dedicated to this, the number of people in Maine with experience in this field is limited and needs to be increased.
5. NMRC/PAE's multi-pronged approach to providing assistance to anyone seeking a healthcare career, regardless of their English level or previous professional healthcare experience, seeks to find career pathways for everyone. Much more still needs to be done to help those new Mainers who come as doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health professionals work to their fullest potential. See the NMRC's Oct 2020 report for recommendations: *Report of the Foreign Trained Health Professional Licensing Pilot Project.*
6. Internships or volunteer experiences provide a great opportunity for new Mainers to become familiar with US workplace culture, establish professional networks, become trained and prepared for jobs and also provide public and private employers a tool for recruitment. Employers should review their

internship and volunteer program policies and consider ways they can be expanded to include new Mainers.

7. Last year some progress was made in professional licensing with the newly passed legislation (LD 149 – an Act to Facilitate Licensure for Credentialed Individuals from Other Jurisdictions), which included several provisions that could potentially make it easier for someone with a foreign license or degree to become licensed in that profession in Maine. Unfortunately, rulemaking on the provisions related to foreign trained professionals seems to have stalled. Whatever resources are necessary to facilitate the rulemaking process on this should be made available to the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation.
8. Systemic Barriers to Teacher Certification need to be addressed by Maine Department of Education:
 - Access to transcripts and diplomas is not possible for many people - MDOE should consider alternatives for people who are unable to get their documents in a different way than is required by degree evaluation companies to show that they are qualified to work as Ed Tech 3's or teachers.
 - Student teaching is not available - There is not an educational institution in the state of Maine that offers student teaching to people who are not fully matriculated in the school's program. MDOE should work with an educational institution to develop a student teaching option for students who are seeking certification through an alternative pathway and not fully enrolled in a teacher certification program.
 - Ed Tech 3s cannot afford to quit their jobs to student teach - MDOE and school districts should develop clearly defined district-wide strategies for Ed Techs to fulfill their student teaching requirements without having to quit their Ed Tech positions and/or give up their salary and benefits to do student teaching.
9. Competitive Skills Scholarship Program Needs to Remove Barriers to eligibility for skilled foreign trained professionals. This Maine Department of Labor program, which could be of help to new Mainers seeking degrees and assistance with licensure, has a number of barriers that make it less accessible to new Mainers, particularly those in skilled professions from their home countries, who have degrees but are not able to work in those professions in the US, and who could benefit from this resource. See NMRC comments offered at CSSP Listening Session 12/20/22 Rulemaking Listening Session.

The following recommendations were originally published October 2020 in the NMRC's *Report of the Foreign Trained Health Professional Licensing Pilot Project*. Please refer to that report for the background behind the recommendations. The problems they seek to resolve remain as major barriers and need to be addressed. While this original report focused on health professionals, the recommendations are applicable to other professions, sectors and employers, and have been modified slightly to encompass this broader focus. If Maine is serious about valuing the skilled foreign trained professionals that have come to our state, it must commit to bring about systemic changes that will result in long-term investments. These recommendations show how to achieve those goals so that skilled professionals are able to fully utilize their skills and past achievements in their new environments so that we, as a state, are able to benefit from their involvement in our workforce and as members of our communities.

10. Financial Support – Public and Private Funders - Expand state and public funding resources for those who do not have access to traditional scholarships, grants, loans, or other forms of financial assistance, who may be pursuing college courses, starting their education all over, pursuing advanced degree programs, or who require financial support for licensing related expenses.

- Next Steps
 - State funding programs such as those administered by FAME, Competitive Skills Scholarship Program, Opportunity Tax Credit, Maine Health Professional Loan Program, and other loan forgiveness programs, apprenticeships, and scholarships offered through public colleges and universities should research and as needed, draft language for potential modifications and work with stakeholders to implement changes through policy, rule change or legislation.
 - Maine Department of Labor, the State Workforce Board, and Local Workforce Boards and others who administer such programs, should make provisions, such as changes to rules and providing state resources for those programs restricted by federal law. This would allow asylum seekers who have applied for asylum and are waiting for their work authorizations to participate in workforce training programs, such as CSSP, Quality Centers, and others, prior to receiving their work permits.
 - Maine Department of Labor, the State Workforce Board, and Local Workforce Boards and others who administer such programs, should make provisions to cover the costs of advisors to foreign trained health professionals, and other skilled professionals, who may access publicly funded programs so that they may be able to work with the health professional on their full range of options at the different stages of their career paths.
 - Maine Department of Labor, the State Workforce Board, and Local Workforce Boards, and others who administer such programs should develop resources that would support incumbent workers moving forward with their careers.
 - All funders, including private funders, community organizations, foundations, scholarships - There is a need for private funding sources, community foundations, scholarships, civic groups, etc. to review the eligibility criteria of their programs so that, if their programs do not include this group of immigrants, including those returning to school, pursuing college courses or advanced degrees or funding for licensing related expenses, including advanced programs that could involve a long term and costly investment, changes should be made to expand eligibility requirements.
 - Next Steps
 - Private funders should review and change their eligibility criteria so that their programs cover foreign trained health professionals, and other skilled professionals, who have not had access to traditional scholarships, grants, loans, or other forms of financial assistance, who may be returning to school, pursuing college courses, including advanced degree programs, or who require financial support for licensing related expenses are eligible for support through their programs.
 - Private funders should make provisions in their grant making to cover the costs of advisors to foreign trained health professionals who may access privately funded programs so that they may be able to work with the health professional on their full range of options at the different stages of their career paths.
11. Colleges and Universities should explore a range of strategies to facilitate the admission, retention, and successful completion of programs that meet the needs of new Mainer skilled professionals seeking to work to the fullest extent as possible of their skills and training.
- Next Steps
 - Maine’s colleges and universities should work with state officials to address the funding issues and recommendations discussed under **Financial Support – Public and Private Funders**.
 - Educational programs and department chairs should consider different ways to support and facilitate entry into their programs, providing as much credit for previous training as

possible, and work together on a range of issues including:

- Work with partners to offer bridge English programs to prepare students for entry into programs and support for students while in programs.
- Provide flexibility in transcript evaluation requirements. Accept all NACES evaluation services, and work with individual students who may not have access to their transcripts on alternative ways to demonstrate competency.
- Establish and/or expand and standardize the provision of credit for past education and experience of skilled professionals.
- Provide flexible English requirements including expanded proficiency exams, and ongoing support within programs.
- Rethink how programs are offered to provide stipends, apprenticeships, or scheduling that allow students to work and meet family obligations.
- Offer single subject classes to non-matriculated students for filling educational gaps or meeting licensing requirements.

12. Employers can play a significant role in the career advancement of their current employees. By working with their staff to identify who has previous experience as a professional they can work with those employees to develop a career plan. This plan can include moving up into other job opportunities, planning for future training, moving forward with steps in the licensure process, identifying what potential financial resources and other supports are required for licensure and/or career advancement, providing mentors, etc.

- Next Steps

- Employers should consider strategies needed to identify current employees with previous health professional experience, or skilled professionals, and work with them to develop a career plan toward licensure and/or working in a position that allows them to use their previous skills and training.
- Employers should explore various financial options to provide employees with financial assistance so that they may pursue licensing in their previous profession. Options might include: establishing a fund for this purpose that current employees can apply to for support, changes in benefit packages to support part-time workers who need flexible schedules to prepare for exams, licensing application and test fees, stipends for studying, scholarships, working with state labor officials to pursue incumbent worker training funds.
- Many prospective health professionals need access to some type of unpaid or clinical experience as part of their application for licensure or for an educational program. Health employers are encouraged to review their policies and practices in this area to make these types of clinical experiences available to new Mainer health professionals who may not be associated with an educational program.

APPENDICES

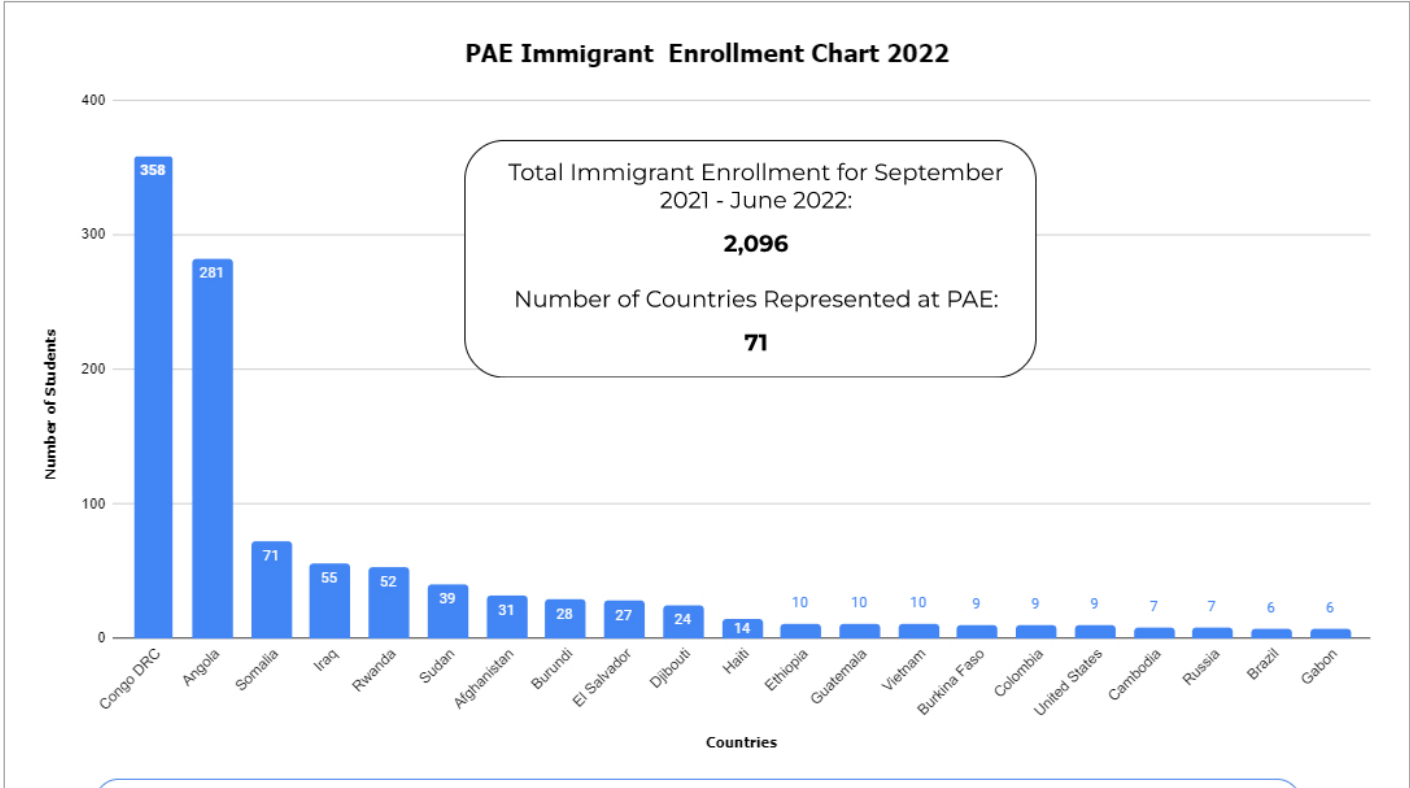
[Appendix A. PAE Workforce Course Offering Brochure](#)

[Appendix B. Workforce Training Courses Winter 2022 - 2023](#)

[Appendix C. PAE Course Catalog Winter 2023](#)

Appendix D. PAE 2021/22 Immigrant Enrollment Chart

Appendix D. PAE 2021/22 Immigrant Enrollment Chart



Countries with 5 or less students attending: China, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, India, Peru, Syria, Thailand, Bangladesh, Mexico, Namibia, Zambia, Belarus, Cameroon, Canada, Ecuador, Honduras, Iran, Kenya, Mali, Turkey, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait, Lithuania, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Senegal, South Africa, South Korea, Uganda, Ukraine, Venezuela, Zimbabwe