

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Create the Put ME To Work Program

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

PART A

Sec. A-1. 20-A MRS §12730 is enacted to read:

§ 12730. Put ME to Work Program

1. Establishment; purpose. The Put ME to Work Program, referred to in this section as "the program," is established within the centers. The program must facilitate the establishment of job training programs at postsecondary institutions of higher education in this State by working with private businesses and postsecondary institutions of higher education.

2. Job training programs; criteria. The job training programs in the program must provide training to prepare workers for jobs in high-demand fields. The centers shall work with private businesses to determine the demand for jobs and the skills needed for those jobs and with postsecondary institutions of higher education to determine the ability of those institutions to provide the appropriate education and training, including teaching faculty and any necessary infrastructure. A qualified job training program must meet the following criteria:

A. Support of at least 50% of the start-up costs for the job training program must be provided by a business or group of businesses that chooses to participate in a job training program. The support may be provided through funds or through an in-kind contribution, such as equipment or teaching faculty;

B. The job training program must provide education or training for employment in a trade or industry with a significant demand for skilled labor either statewide or in a region that has been identified by the Center for Workforce Research and Information within the Department of Labor as providing employment for high-compensation jobs; and

C. A person who successfully completes the job training program must be awarded a certificate, degree or similar credential that is universally recognized by the trade or industry that meets the requirements of paragraph B in which the person intends to seek employment.

3. Financial aid; funding. The centers shall make available needs-based scholarships, grants and other financial aid to persons participating in a qualified job training program. The centers may accept funding from private businesses and other interests for this purpose.

4. Rules. The centers shall adopt routine technical rules, as described in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A, to implement the provisions of this section.

Sec. A-2. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM, BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MAINE

Community College System - Maine Quality Centers 0804

Initiative: Provides funds for needs-based tuition assistance and grants for persons participating in the Put ME to Work Program.

GENERAL FUND	2015-16	2016-17
All Other	\$250,000	\$250,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$250,000	\$250,000

Community College System - Maine Quality Centers 0804

Initiative: Provides funds to be used to match funding or in-kind contributions by businesses participating in the Put ME to Work Program.

GENERAL FUND	2015-16	2016-17
All Other	\$650,000	\$650,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$650,000	\$650,000

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM, BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MAINE

DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2015-16	2016-17
GENERAL FUND	\$900,000	\$900,000
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$900,000	\$900,000

Sec. A-3. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Industry Partnership Assistance Collaborative N186

Initiative: Provides funds for one Public Service Coordinator position and related All Other costs needed to carry out the responsibilities associated with the Industry Partnership Assistance Collaborative.

GENERAL FUND	2015-16	2016-17
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POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	1.000	1.000
Personal Services	\$75,978	\$79,739
All Other	\$24,022	\$20,261
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$100,000	\$100,000

PART B

Sec. B-1. 26 MRSA §1166, sub-§6-A is enacted to read:

6-A. Voluntary contributions. In addition to the fund contributions required pursuant to subsection 5, an employer may make a voluntary contribution to the fund. These contributions must be segregated and used exclusively by the commissioner for the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program established in section 2033 and for the costs of administering the fund.

SUMMARY

This bill assists Maine residents to obtain highly skilled, high-demand, livable-wage jobs by creating a new jobs training program and improving and funding existing jobs training programs.

1. Part A establishes the Put ME to Work Program in the Maine Quality Centers to facilitate the establishment of job training programs at postsecondary institutions of higher education in this State by working with private businesses and postsecondary institutions of higher education to provide training to prepare workers for jobs in high-demand fields. In order to participate in the program, a business or group of businesses is required to provide at least 50% of the cost of the program, which may be through in-kind contributions. Part A provides \$250,000 for needs-based tuition assistance, scholarships and grants for students in the program and \$650,000 to match funding or in-kind contributions by businesses participating in the program.

Part A also provides \$100,000 to the Industry Partnership Assistance Collaborative to fund a position and associated costs within the collaborative.

2. Part B allows employers to make voluntary donations to the Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund. These donations would be in addition to the required employer contributions and would be used for the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program.