



**Community | Integrity | Teamwork | Results**

## **2025 ANNUAL REPORT (FY 2024)**

### **Executive Summary**

Boots2Roots enjoyed another strong year of growth in 2024 with Teammate enrollment and Teammate hires each reaching all-time highs. This growth is a result of the investments of employer and community partners, a talented staff, and a group of volunteers dedicated to achieving best outcomes for veterans. Momentum is continuing into 2025 with 108 Teammates actively looking for work in Maine and 10 hires already this year.

Boots2Roots ended 2024 in a strong financial position thanks in large part to Federal and State grant awards, a significant local nonprofit financial gift and the support of over 30 Maine business partners. We are actively working to extend funding commitments beyond the Federal and State grant funding windows.

Suitable housing remains the most significant challenge to our Teammates' transitions to Maine going into 2025. This was confirmed by results of a recent survey of newly transitioned Teammates. We are fortunate to have a passionate group of volunteers assisting to overcome this challenge, but we see this challenge continuing to present the greatest obstacle to more dramatic program increases

### **Mission**

Boots2Roots assists active-duty military members, Veterans and military spouses find meaningful work in Maine while providing a pipeline of workforce talent to Maine employers.

Boots2Roots fills an important gap as the only organization in Maine exclusively working with active-duty military members 12-18 months before they separate from service. Boots2Roots' Transition-to-Work program helps teach servicemembers how to express their military service in ways that civilian hiring managers will understand. The program also provides important access to a network of peer mentors, Maine employers and community partners who are ready to assist with all aspects of transition, including realtors, veterans' benefits, medical contacts, educational resources, etc. Attracting more military talent to Maine's workforce is another important element of Boots2Roots' program.

Together with the state, employers, and community partners we are working to make Maine the destination of choice for more of the 150,000 active-duty military who transition to civilian life each year.

### **2024 Program Goals**

Goal 1: Active duty servicemembers, Veterans and spouses ("Teammates") will find meaningful employment within 60 days of arriving in Maine.

Goal 2: Teammates will stay in their 1<sup>st</sup> post-military job for at least 12 months.

Goal 3: Increase enrollment to more than 200 transitioning military members, Veterans and spouses committed to living and working in Maine

### **2024 Results and Metrics**

- 96% employed within two months of arriving in Maine
- 94% first year post-military employment retention rate
- 12% increase in program enrollments—213 new Teammates in 2024\*
- 25% year over year increase in teammates actively in transition to Maine
- 42% increase in Teammate hires—84 Teammates in 2024 (335 total)\*
- 65% married with children
- 58% not from Maine originally (nor is their spouse)
- 70%+ purchase a home within 12 months of arriving to Maine (since inception)
- \$71,000 average salary

\* 8<sup>th</sup> straight year of increases

Significant activities in 2024 included:

- Initiating an “audio” marketing campaign with audio ads embedded in podcasts with a military audience and geo-fenced to military communities—achieved a 90% “completion rate”
- Hosting the first ever virtual Employer Annual Update to improve communications and share veteran hiring best practices with employers across the state
- Participating in and sponsoring more than 22 virtual and in-person, national military hiring events in partnership with Hiring our Heroes and Viqtorly Inc.
- Initiating in-person coaching windows for Teammates who are already living in or are visiting Maine
- Conducting a print and digital workforce attraction campaign through GI Jobs, Military Spouse and Military Family magazines and the Stars and Stripes Transition Guide
- Continuing a programmatic workforce attraction campaign using social media and on-line search to identify and market to military members looking to transition
- Receiving an \$80k donation from Maine-based veteran support nonprofit “Stand-by-to-Fly”
- Receiving a State grant through the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) using ARPA funds

### **Significant Initiative for 2025**

- Grow program enrollment to more than 250 military members and Veterans committed to making Maine home.
- Sponsor/participate in at least 20 national, virtual and in-person hiring events. Include Maine business partners in these outreach and recruiting events.
- Update/improve the Boots2Roots’ website making it more mobile-device friendly and improving testimonial content and navigability

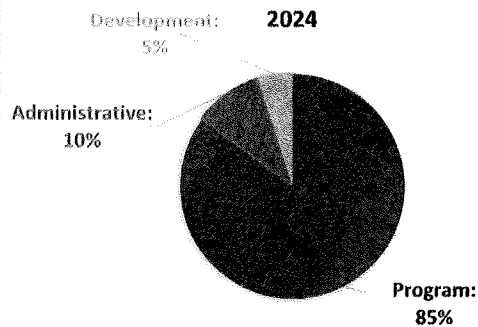
- Participate in a HGTV program “American Dream” highlighting opportunities for veterans to live and work in Maine
- Hire an additional Military Transition Specialist to meet increased coaching demand (funded through the DECD grant awarded in 2024)
- Expand the network of Maine businesses seeking to hire military talent through engagement with different trade and/or regional organizations like the Institute for Family Owned Business, Manufacturers Association of Maine and others
- Transition the Board Chair to Carrie Arsenault, SVP Northern Light Health from Matt Harmon, SVP MEMIC
- Continue a comprehensive national marketing campaign (print/digital/programmatic/audio/in-person/virtual) to military communities promoting Maine as a place to live, work and find success after military service

**Budget and Financials**

Boots2Roots’ budget is approved annually by the board of directors. The Finance Committee provides budget oversight of the Executive Director and conducts a monthly review of accounts and expenses, including monthly reconciliation. A financial review or audit is conducted annually.

Boots2Roots operated at a surplus in 2024 thanks to the start of payments from the FY23 Federal Congressionally Designated Spending Grant award. This significant revenue source was augmented by a significant donation from “Standby-to-Fly”, a Maine nonprofit focused on improving outcomes for veterans. These revenue streams coupled with continued support from over 30 Maine businesses and community partners helped erase the -\$198,000 operating deficit incurred in FY23. An additional grant from the DECD was awarded in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter FY24; and together, puts Boots2Roots on strong financial footing for FY25 and beyond.

**FY24 Donations:** \$734,133  
**FY24 Expenses:** \$532,282  
**FY24 Operating Revenue:** \$201,850



*William (Bill) Benson*

William (Bill) Benson  
 Executive Director

*Carrie Arsenault*

Carrie Arsenault  
 Board Chair

**Attachments (3)**

- Employer and Community Partners
- Return on Investment
- Board of Directors

## PARTNERSHIPS

Boots2Roots is honored by its robust network of dedicated employers, community partners, volunteers and Veteran Service Organizations. This network is essential to providing comprehensive transition support and employment. Together we are making Maine the destination of choice for more military members, Veterans and military spouses.

Boots2Roots Contributing Partners and Stakeholders

<b>5-STAR PARTNERS</b> 				
<b>GENERAL DYNAMICS</b> Bath Iron Works				
		An AVANGRID Company		
<b>4-STAR</b> 				
<b>Victory Partners</b>				
<b>Command Partners</b>				
<b>Patriot Partners</b>				
<b>Mission Partners</b>				

### Sustaining Grants

- Margaret E. Burnham Foundation
- FGK Foundation
- Heather Foundation
- Gerrish Milliken Foundation
- Fisher Foundation

Thank you also to all who have contributed and wish to remain anonymous. Together we are moving this mission forward for Maine's newest veterans and for Maine's workforce.

Boots2Roots' Transition to Work program is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor. In FY24, a total of \$503,000, or 90 percent, of the program is financed with federal funds, and \$56,000, or 10 percent, is funded by other sources.

## Return on Investment

### Transitioning military members provide a significant return on investment for M

#### Why attract transitioning military to Maine?

- Workforce experience/specific job skills
- Leadership experience
- Ready to put down roots and give back to the community
- 70%+ arrive with a family = more workers
- 70%+ buy a house
- 90% bring other federal benefits
- An identifiable cohort ready/willing to rel

**Bottom Line:** Attracting a former military member to Maine brings as much as **\$1,882,000 +** to the state local communities over 20 years. This is in addition to adding a hard-working, dedicated, trustworthy, tra employee **and their family** to the Maine workforce.

#### First Year in Maine

\$4,860 annual income taxes (6.75% on \$72,000)<sup>1</sup>

\$5,174 annual property taxes (1.32% x 392,000)<sup>2</sup>

\$402,034 (median cost of home in Maine)<sup>3</sup>

\$412,068

#### 20 years in Maine

\$97,200 in income taxes over 20 years (2024 dollars)

\$103,480 in annual property taxes over 20 years (2024 dollars)

\$402,034 (one-time home purchase in 2024 dollars)

\$602,714

+ incidentals: home furnishing, home improvements, new vehicle purchases/registrations, back to school spending, vacations, visitors

#### Additional Value to Maine over 20-year stay

\$114,288 GI Bill benefits (4 year in-state tuition, UMO, 2024 dollars)<sup>4</sup>

\$918,800 Pension (average pension benefits (average officer/enlisted pay) after 20 years of servi

\$246,960 Healthcare for life (\$12,348/yr x 20 years for family medical insurance 2023 dollars,)<sup>6</sup>

\$1,280,048

**Total Return on Investment for Maine:** Boots2Roots' Teammates have generated more than \$100 million Maine's economy since inception, and that number grows each year a military family stays in Maine<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.maine.gov/revenue/forms/1040/2018/rate\\_sched\\_2018\\_rev\\_sept18.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/revenue/forms/1040/2018/rate_sched_2018_rev_sept18.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://smartasset.com/taxes/maine-property-tax-calculator>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/mortgages/real-estate/median-home-prices-by-state/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://umaine.edu/stuaid/aid-basics/costs-at-umaine/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://themilitarywallet.com/military-retirement-worth-millions/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://themilitarywallet.com/much-military-pay-worth/>

<sup>7</sup> 325 total hires x 70% home buyers x \$402,034 spent in the first year (+ living expenses, healthcare etc....)



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Community \* Integrity \* Teamwork \* Results*

*Boots2Roots is committed to maintaining a diverse board, including a mix of military and non-military experience, as an important aspect of community integration. Specifically the Board strives to be comprised of no more than 50% military veterans.*

**Carrie Arsenault**  
Chair  
Northern Light Beacon Health  
Alton, ME

**Kathleen Trost**  
Secretary  
State of Maine  
Augusta, ME

**Nathan Dunlap**  
Treasurer  
BerryDunn  
Standish, ME

**Pawel Binczyk (Veteran)**  
The Bennet Law Firm  
Gorham, ME

**John Varuolo**  
National Sales Director  
Unum  
Portland, ME

**Matt Harmon**  
MEMIC  
Windham, ME

**Allyson Coombs**  
General Dynamics Bath Iron  
Works  
Brunswick, ME

**Bryan Fuller (Veteran)**  
MMG Insurance  
Presque Isle ME

**Laura Wolfson**  
Androscoggin Bank  
Lewiston, ME

**Mike Griffin**  
JP Morgan Chase  
Executive Director Mid- Market

*Boots2Roots is proud to serve and represent one of the most inherently diverse populations in America: members and families of the United States Armed Forces. Our team is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in all our activities and operations. It is Boots2Roots' policy to ensure equal opportunity without discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion/creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.*

### Teammate Testimonials

"Boots2Roots quickly stepped in to help and immediately I got results. It was night and day. The very next application I put in after seeking resume help from Boots2Roots, I had phone calls from employers. Boots2Roots made what should have been one of the most stressful periods of my life one of the most exciting."

James Webster  
Bath Iron Works  
U.S. Army veteran

"Boots2Roots was a huge help. We put countless hours into my resume and spent weeks redoing it and getting it set up specifically for the specific jobs I was applying to. It went from a C- to something that I think is really good."

Kevin Morse  
Dead River Company  
U.S. Air Force Veteran

"Thank you Boots2Roots for literally facilitating our transition and relocation to Maine. We went from not having a home, friends, or job here in Maine to all of the above and it's all thanks to you!"

Bryan Fuller  
MMG Insurance  
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

"Boots 2 Roots helped me find opportunities to work and contribute in Maine, develop my resume, and prepare for the interview process. Their support was instrumental in my success transitioning back home and returning to my family."

Dustin Smiley  
LifeFlight of Maine  
U.S. Navy Veteran

"Boots2Roots was instrumental in my successful transition out of the US Coast Guard and into civilian life in Maine. My wife and I both benefited from their genuine, personalized and professional services and support. We can't thank you enough!"

Chris Richard  
Portland Yacht Services  
U.S. Coast Guard  
Alyssa Richard  
Covetrus  
U.S. Coast Guard Spouse