



Testimony to support LD 1705 - An Act Regarding Adult Education Funding and Oversight

April 30, 2025

**Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,**

My name is Shirley Wright, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Adult Education Association (MAEA), a professional nonprofit organization that supports adult education programs across the state through advocacy, professional development, and collaboration.

I am writing to express MAEA's strong support for LD 1705, submitted by Representative Holly Sargent, which seeks to accomplish two critical and long-overdue actions for the benefit of Maine's adult learners.

### **1. Support for College and Career Success Coordinators**

First, this bill requests state funding for the College and Career Success Coordinators (CCSCs)—a group of dedicated professionals who are hired by local adult education programs but based at each of Maine's seven community college campuses. These coordinators are the vital bridge between adult learners and successful postsecondary transition.

Their work is making a difference. CCSCs provide personalized support that helps adults build academic confidence, navigate enrollment and financial aid systems, and persist through the first critical year of college. Many of these learners are first-generation college students, working adults, parents, or returning learners with unique challenges. CCSCs meet them where they are and walk alongside them through this transition.

This Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan model is working, and we can provide data to show increased college enrollment and persistence among adult learners who receive this support. However, the program's future is uncertain without an additional \$338,000 of sustainable state funding through June of 2026. LD 1705 recognizes the value of this investment and asks the state to commit to it in the future.

## **2. Full Funding for Adult Education Subsidy**

The second component of this bill is equally urgent. For more than a decade, the state has calculated the adult education subsidy based on an expenditure model that aligns with current law. And yet, year after year, programs receive only half—or, in many cases, less than that of the amount that is due to them. This persistent underfunding occurs not because of changes in need or formula, but because the state fails to allocate enough funds to meet its own obligations. Furthermore, the state's subsidy notification letter that goes to school superintendents fails to mention the amount due to each program compared to the actual amount to be received and the prorate or reduction is never mentioned.

The results are serious. Adult education programs employ part-time staff, experience high turnover rates among experienced staff, and are unable to expand services at a time when the state needs them more than ever. Whether it's helping adults complete high school, learn English, gain digital skills, or train for careers, adult education is a cornerstone of Maine's workforce and career development system. Programs should not be penalized for doing more with less year after year. The local share for each adult education program far outweighs the state share.

It is time for Maine to fully fund the adult education subsidy at the level prescribed by law and the level adult learners deserve.

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In closing, LD 1705 addresses two of the most critical gaps in Maine's adult education landscape. It is a forward-thinking, cost-effective way to strengthen our workforce, support families, and ensure that all Maine adults have the opportunity to succeed.

On behalf of the Maine Adult Education Association, I urge you to support this bill and provide the funding and support that our learners and programs need to thrive. I am attaching data to support our request for this testimony.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to adult education.

Respectfully submitted,

***Shirley N. Wright***

Shirley Wright, Executive Director, Maine Adult Education Association



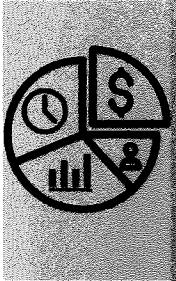
# LD 1705

## An Act Regarding Adult Education Funding and Oversight

### GOAL

- Fund adult education as outlined in current statute.
- Provide emergency funding for College and Career Success Coordinators located at each Community College Campus.

### SUBSIDY STATUTE



- Outlined in Title 20-A, Chapter 315
- Sets an expectation for programming.
- Is an expenditure-based model.
- Has not been funded according to statute for many years and the gap is widening between actual funding and statute.

### SUBSIDY BREAKDOWN

Adult Education Statewide Subsidy Data FY14 - FY26

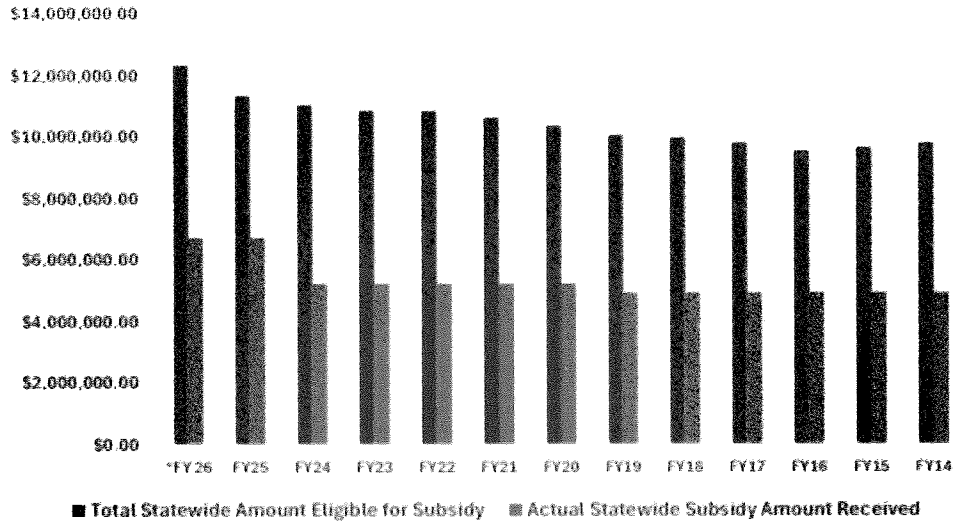
Subsidy Received Year	Total Statewide Amount Eligible for Subsidy	Actual Statewide Subsidy Amount Received	Pro-rate Percentage
*FY 26	\$12,359,201.27	\$6,748,025.02	54.59920%
FY25	\$11,353,228.51	\$6,748,018.43	59.43700%
FY24	\$11,056,106.07	\$5,248,023.98	47.46720%
FY23	\$10,876,711.92	\$5,248,028.73	48.25014%
FY22	\$10,853,527.03	\$5,247,964.68	48.35262%
FY21	\$10,628,405.52	\$5,248,028.18	49.37738%
FY20	\$10,366,620.99	\$5,248,029.31	50.62430%
FY19	\$10,058,055.58	\$4,948,020.21	49.19460%
FY18	\$9,976,838.88	\$4,948,023.22	49.59510%
FY17	\$9,814,358.80	\$4,948,026.76	50.41620%
FY16	\$9,546,650.59	\$4,948,029.00	51.83000%
FY15	\$9,650,919.09	\$4,948,026.22	51.27000%
FY14	\$9,798,075.82	\$4,948,028.29	50.50000%

\* Estimated amounts for FY26



## SUBSIDY

**Adult Education Subsidy Eligible vs. Actual**



## IMPLICATIONS

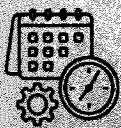
	Full Subsidy	Actual Subsidy	Local Share
<b>Program A FY 25</b>	\$136,202	\$80,954	\$169,307
<b>Program A FY 24</b>	\$132,858	\$63,064	\$168,397
<b>Program B FY 25</b>	\$321,047	\$190,821	\$349,097
<b>Program B FY 24</b>	\$320,264	\$152,020	\$332,472
<b>Program C FY 25</b>	\$164,819	\$97,694	\$255,151
<b>Program C FY 24</b>	\$170,882	\$81,113	\$209,151

## MAINE COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS COORDINATORS

TOTAL SERVED

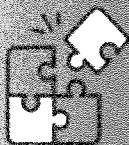
3,583

### GOAL



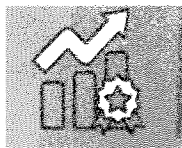
- Provide comprehensive support to improve college services and graduation rates while ensuring a smooth transition into the workplace.

### BRIDGING THE GAP



- Help adults navigate the complexities of higher education and career planning.
- Make direct referrals and guidance from adult education to community colleges and back.
- Provide personalized advising that includes career and academic planning tailored to individual goals.
- Support adult learners with time management, organization, and study strategies.
- Make referrals to tutoring, financial aid, and community programs like FAME, HOPE, and the New Mainer Resource Center.
- Provide assistance moving from adult education to college-level learning, other workforce training, and getting a job.
- Coordinate necessary assessments for placement such as the CASAS, Accuplacer, and other career inventories.

### SUCCESS



- 852 ENROLLED IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- 1,277 SET UP CAREER AND ACADEMIC PLANS
- 642 REFERRED BACK TO ADULT EDUCATION FOR SUPPORT
- 812 REFERRED TO OTHER NECESSARY SERVICES