

## CHAPTER 431-A

### MAINE QUALITY CENTERS

#### §12725. Establishment

There are established, under the Maine Community College System, the Maine Quality Centers, in this chapter referred to as the "centers." The mission of the centers is to meet the workforce education and training needs of new and expanding businesses in the State and provide new employment and career advancement opportunities for Maine people. The centers shall fulfill their mission by working in close coordination with state and regional economic development agencies. [PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §2 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §4 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 707, §CC1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 20, §OO2 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 20, §OO4 (AFF).

#### §12726. Purpose

The primary purposes of the Maine Quality Centers are as follows: [PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW).]

**1. Job creation.** To encourage and facilitate the creation of new jobs in the State by offering customized education and training programs at the community colleges free of charge to businesses that are seeking to create new jobs in the State. The eligibility criteria for free customized education and training programs and other policies and terms governing the centers are established by the Maine Community College System Board of Trustees; [PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §2 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §4 (AFF).]

**2. Workforce preparation.** To offer education and training opportunities for unemployed Maine people to allow them to prepare for future jobs in new or expanding businesses in the State, and for underemployed Maine people seeking to upgrade their education, skills and credentials in order to facilitate career advancement and enhance job security; and [PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW).]

**3. Partnerships.** To establish and maintain long-term partnerships with prospective and established businesses with the goal of creating and maintaining a skilled, adaptable and competitive workforce. [PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 707, §CC1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 20, §OO2 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 20, §OO4 (AFF).

#### §12727. Maine Quality Centers

**1. State and regional delivery.** The centers are located at the Maine Community College System Office and the community colleges. Staff of the centers shall work in close coordination with the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Office of the Governor and other state and local education and economic development agencies. [PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §2 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §4 (AFF).]

**2. Recruitment and screening.** Recruitment of trainees and preliminary screening and testing for programs developed through the centers must be conducted by the community colleges in conjunction

with the Bureau of Employment Services, state job training providers, human service offices and other referring agencies.

[PL 1995, c. 560, Pt. G, §7 (AMD); PL 1995, c. 560, Pt. G, §29 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §2 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §4 (AFF).]

**3. Eligibility for enrollment.** To be considered eligible for programs developed under this chapter, applicants must meet community college and program admissions standards. Students who have enrolled in such programs must maintain satisfactory academic performance and meet all requirements in order to continue enrollment in the program.

[PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §2 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §4 (AFF).]

**4. Cost to trainees.** Education and training programs developed through the centers must be offered to trainees free of charge.

[PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW).]

**5. Certification of competencies.** Upon completion of a program, trainees are issued certification from the community college providing the training that delineates the education or skill competencies obtained through the program.

[PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §2 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §4 (AFF).]

**6. Training guarantee.** If the employer of the trainee finds that the trainee fails to meet any of the competencies listed on the certification, the community college providing the training must retrain the employee at no cost to the employer or trainee.

[PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §2 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §4 (AFF).]

**7. Placement of trainees.** Placement of trainees in jobs with the employer for which a program has been provided is not guaranteed. Final determination of hire rests with the employer.

[PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 707, §CC1 (NEW). PL 1995, c. 560, §G7 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 560, §G29 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 20, §OO2 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 20, §OO4 (AFF).

#### §12728. Coordination with education providers

If an education or training requirement can not be delivered directly by a community college, staff of the centers shall work with other education and training providers to develop and deliver the program.

[PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §2 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §4 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 707, §CC1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 20, §OO2 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 20, §OO4 (AFF).

#### §12729. Report

The President of the Maine Community College System shall provide to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over economic development matters an annual report that must include the following for each business assisted under this chapter: the name and location of the business; the number of employees trained or retrained; the dollar amount expended; and, where applicable, the number of new jobs created. [PL 1993, c. 707, Pt. CC, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §2 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. OO, §4 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 707, §CC1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 20, §OO2 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 20, §OO4 (AFF).

### §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 community colleges in this State by working with private businesses and community colleges.

[PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]

**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 and trade associations to determine the demand for jobs and the skills needed for those jobs in those industries and with community colleges 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 or an industry partnership 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; [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]

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 or in an industry in which technology or work practices have significantly changed to require training to assist new workers to acquire needed skills or incumbent workers to remain current and competitive; [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]

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; and [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]

D. In order to participate, a business must agree to hire a person who successfully completes the job training program at a post-training wage that is at least \$2.50 per hour more than the minimum hourly wage rate established in state law and to provide successful incumbent worker trainees with an increase in the hourly wage to meet or exceed the median wage for that occupation in the State as identified by the Center for Workforce Research and Information within the Department of Labor. [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]

**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. If the job training program includes academic credit, the program may coordinate with the financial aid office of the sponsoring postsecondary education institution to deliver an award to an individual student; the award must be used to assist with all or partial unmet expenses for tuition, fees or books after any existing financial aid resources are used. The centers may accept funding from private businesses and other interests for this purpose.

[PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]

**4. Rules.** The Board of Trustees of the Maine Community College System shall amend or adopt as necessary the centers' operational policies and procedures in order to implement the provisions of this section. In selecting awardees for the program, the board of trustees shall consider:

A. Whether the business or industry partnership provides fringe benefits and what those fringe benefits are; [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]

- B. Economic impacts to the local or regional economy; [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]
- C. The ability of the business or industry partnership to leverage other resources both in the short term and the long term; [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]
- D. The record of the business or industry partnership in training individuals who have historically faced barriers to employment and individuals who are unemployed or underemployed; [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]
- E. Occupational outcomes of individuals who have been trained by the business or industry partnership; and [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]
- F. Factors determined appropriate by the board of trustees. [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]

Recruitment of prospective trainees and preliminary screening and testing for funded partnerships must be done in conjunction with the Department of Labor's career centers, as well as with state job training providers, industry partners and other referring organizations as appropriate and consistent with the program.

To be considered eligible for training under this program, applicants must meet the specific training program's related academic and admissions standards. Individuals that do not meet threshold academic standards may be referred to available community remediation services. Individuals enrolled in the program must maintain satisfactory academic performance and meet all requirements in order to continue enrollment in the program.

[PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. AAAA, §1 (NEW).

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