

Office of Policy and Legal Analysis

Date: May 5, 2021
To: Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business
From: Rachel Olson, Legislative Analyst
Re: LD 1517, An Act To Establish the Maine Workforce, Research, Development and Student Achievement Institute (Curry)

Bill Summary

This bill establishes the Maine Workforce, Research, Development and Student Achievement Institute and a related steering committee to advise the Legislature on matters related to workforce training, research and development, student debt and economic advancement in the State. The bill describes the 18 required steering committee members and establishes that each member, other than ex officio members, serves a 2-year term and that the steering committee meets at least 4 times per year.

Testimony:

Proponents: Senator Curry, sponsor; Senator Daughtry, cosponsor; Kate Foye, DECD; Sam Warren, University of Maine System; Katherine Johnston, Educate Maine; Ben Lucas, Maine Jobs Council; Bill Norbert, FAME; Simon West, Maine State Chamber of Commerce; Neal Goldberg, Maine Municipal Association; Becky Smith, Maine Community College System;

Opponents: None

Neither for nor against: Jessica Laliberte, Manufacturers Association of Maine;

Information Requests:

1. The Committee requested a list of workforce related programs that currently exists within the state.

Please see the included research memo below and uploaded as a PDF in the electronic LD file.

Additional Information: [Bill History](#)

[LD 1342](#) was originally introduced in the 129th, First Regular Session. The Committee [amended the bill](#) and it was reported out on June 4, 2019. LD 1342 as amended was further amended on the Senate floor ([S-A to C-A](#)).

The bill then appeared again in committee in February of 2020. On March 12, 2020 the committee voted OTP-AM ([with a new committee amendment](#)), which was then carried over to the 129th Second Special Session and was reported out on August 12, 2020. The bill died upon the conclusion of the 129th Legislature.

LD 1517 most closely resembles the Senate amendment to Committee amendment “A”. The major differences between the different versions have to do with the process of appointing steering committee members and the membership of the steering committee, as well as the requirement that the

Legislature contract with the University of Maine System for the establishment and maintenance of the institute.

The [Maine Education Policy Research Institute](#) (MEPRI) was mentioned as a model for establishing a research institute focused on economic development, workforce, research, and student achievement. According to the MEPRI website:

The Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) provides policymakers with objective data, policy research and evaluation to define and assess educational needs, services and impacts. The Institute was established by the Legislature in 1995 and conducts work for the legislature’s Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and for the Maine Department of Education. MEPRI researchers analyze trends and perform targeted research on topics of interest to education policymakers. Researchers include faculty, professional staff, and graduate students with a wide range of expertise in education. The Institute is a cooperative effort of the University of Maine System and the Maine State Legislature, and conducts its work through the University of Southern Maine and the University of Maine.¹

MEPRI’s statutory authority comes from [Title 20-A, chapter 1, section 10](#).

Possible Amendments:

DECD asked the sponsor to consider adjusting the steering committee to reflect the legislation that previously passed out of the IDEA Committee in the 129th session.

Fiscal Impact: A Fiscal Note is required – ([preliminary fiscal impact](#))

Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement

Legislative Cost/Study

	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	Projections FY 2023-24	Projections FY 2024-25
Net Cost (Savings)				
General Fund	\$250,390	\$250,390	\$250,394	\$250,397
Appropriations/Allocations				
General Fund	\$250,390	\$250,390	\$250,394	\$250,397

Legislative Cost/Study

The Legislature will require ongoing General Fund appropriations of \$390 in fiscal year 2021-22 and \$390 in fiscal year 2022-23 for the costs of the required participation of a Legislator on the steering committee of the newly created Maine Workforce, Research, Development and Student Achievement Institute.

¹ <https://mepri.maine.edu/>

Fiscal Detail and Notes

The University of Maine System has estimated the cost of establishing the Maine Workforce, Research, Development and Student Achievement Institute to advise the Legislature on matters related to workforce training, research and development, student debt and economic advancement in the State to be approximately \$250,000 per year. This estimate assumes the institute conducts between 6 and 8 studies annually.

Additional costs to the Department of Labor, the Maine Community College System and the Finance Authority of Maine to serve on the steering committee can be absorbed within existing budgeted resources.

OPLA RESEARCH REQUEST MEMO

To: Rachel Olson, Legislative Analyst, IDEA Committee
From: Kristin Brawn, Legislative Researcher
Date: May 6, 2021
RE: Workforce Development Programs in Maine (LD 1517)

Hi Rachel,

You asked me to find out what workforce development programs are available in Maine, per Senator Cyrway's request during the public hearing for LD 1517. Please see the findings from my research below.

I. Maine State Workforce Board

Responsibilities Under State and Federal Law

The State Workforce Board (SWB), established in [26 MRSA §2006](#), is required by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) ([P.L. 113-128](#)) to provide oversight and evaluation of the state's workforce development programs and coordinate the development of the state's four-year strategic and operational plan for enhancing the state's workforce and establishing a responsive, networked and coordinated workforce development system across public and private sectors. The plan outlines the long-term agenda for the state's workforce development system and covers the following core programs authorized by the WIOA:

- Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs
- Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program
- Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (Career Centers)
- Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Program

In addition to the duties assigned under WIOA, state statute outlines the following responsibilities of the SWB:

- Recommending to the Governor a state workforce development plan designed to maximize utilization and effectiveness of state workforce development services.
- Monitoring agency and system-wide strategic goals based on the statewide workforce development policy and strategic plan and evaluating progress toward meeting those goals.
- Providing recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature that would improve system effectiveness and reduce system fragmentation.

- Creating greater coordination between economic development and human resource development and education programs.
- Ensuring a balance between rural and urban workforce development.
- Providing policy oversight and recommendations to ensure the effectiveness of vocational programs for people with disabilities in order to support efforts that reduce barriers to employment.
- Providing policy oversight and recommendations to ensure that self-employment, microenterprise and small business are part of the overall workforce development strategy.
- Providing policy recommendations to ensure the effectiveness of work-related programs and services for youth, including youth with disabilities.
- Providing policy recommendations to ensure the effectiveness of work-related programs and services for “at-risk” youth.
- Supporting and tracking progress toward an attainment goal of increasing the percent of working-age adults holding a high-value certificate, college degree, vocational education or other industry-recognized credential to 60% by 2025, with a focus on meeting future workforce needs and reporting annually on progress to EDU, LBHS and IDEA.

Membership

SWB membership consists of leaders representing private business, labor, community-based organizations, legislators, local government (county commissioners), and state agencies (Department of Labor, Department of Education and Department of Economic and Community Development). Under WIOA, SWB members are nominated by the Governor, and state statute ([26 MRSA §2006](#)) requires certain members to be reviewed by the Labor and Housing Committee (LBHS) and confirmed by the Legislature. There are also the following eight statutorily required advisory committees composed of employers, professionals and members of the public that report to the full board:

- Apprenticeship Council
- Commission on Disability and Employment
- Immigrant Workforce Committee
- Older Worker's Committee
- Program Policy Committee
- Veterans Employment Committee
- Women's Employment Committee
- Younger Workers Committee

Reporting and Accountability

The SWB and its steering committees meet on a regular basis and the public is encouraged to attend the meetings. State statute ([26 MRSA §3101-A](#)) also requires the Department of Labor to provide annually to LBHS the same expenditures and outcomes report provided to the U.S. Department of Labor for the workforce development programs operated under WIOA.

II. Maine Workforce Development System

State and Local Agencies

The SWB is just one part of a much larger workforce development system consisting of multiple state agencies, programs, workforce service providers and partners that are funded with federal, state, local, philanthropic and private resources. The following state and local agencies contribute oversight, resources and programming to the state’s workforce development system:

- Department of Labor (DOL)
- Department of Education (DOE)
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

- Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)
- Local workforce boards (3 regional boards):
 - Northeastern Workforce Development Board – serves Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis and Washington Counties
 - Central/Western Maine Workforce Development Board – serves Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Oxford and Somerset Counties
 - Coastal Counties Workforce Board – serves York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Waldo and Knox Counties
- CareerCenters
- Adult Education
- Maine Community College System
- University of Maine System

III. Workforce Development System Programs

The following tables list the workforce development programs and activities across the state that receive regular public funding, the state agency overseeing the program and a brief description of each program. The information in these tables was obtained from the state’s [2020-23 Unified State Plan](#). The plan groups the programs and activities into four categories: WIOA core partner programs, other publicly funded employment and training programs, other publicly funded education programs and additional publicly funded programs.

WIOA Core Partner Programs

Program	Overseeing Agency	Program Description
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IB	MDOL	WIOA Title IB provides employment and training services to adults, dislocated workers, and youth who meet priority and eligibility criteria. IB programs are overseen by three local workforce boards and delivered through four service providers.
WIOA Title III Employment Services	MDOL	WIOA Title III amends the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 and provides employment and labor exchange services to individuals and employers. Job seekers access the Maine JobLink labor exchange system in which employers post jobs. Individualized career services are provided to job seekers who require more intensive assistance finding employment.
WIOA Title IV Rehabilitation Services	USDOE/ MDOL	The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) works to bring about full access to employment, independence and community integration for people with disabilities: The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation helps individuals with a range of disabling conditions to achieve or retain employment; the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides services to individuals who are blind or have low vision; and the Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened assists individuals with hearing loss.
WIOA Title II Adult Education	MDOE	Maine Adult Education promotes programs that help adults get the foundational skills they need to be educated and productive workers, family members, and citizens. The major areas of instruction and support are adult basic education, adult secondary education (high school completion), English language acquisition, college transition, and workforce training. These programs emphasize foundational skills such as reading, writing, math, English language competency, career awareness and exploration, workforce training, and problem-solving.

Other Publicly Funded Employment and Training Programs

Program	Overseeing Agency	Program Description
Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)	MDOL	JVSG funds are allocated to state workforce agencies from the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) in direct proportion to the number of veterans seeking employment within their state. The grants support two principal staff positions: disabled veterans' outreach program specialists, and local veterans' employment representatives. This grant provides funds to exclusively serve veterans, other eligible persons and, indirectly, employers.
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	MDOL	The TAA program is a federal program that provides a path for employment growth and opportunity through aid to U.S. workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade. The TAA program seeks to provide these trade-affected workers with opportunities to obtain the skills, resources, and support they need to become reemployed.
Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)	MDOL	The WOTC is a federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment.
ReEmployment Services & Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)	MDOL	The RESEA program assists unemployed workers to return to work more quickly by delivering and services to those claimants profiled as “most likely to exhaust” and all transitioning veterans receiving unemployment compensation. Targeted claimants will be provided relevant reemployment services and eligibility review interviews. Services will be delivered through group workshops, one-on-one meetings, and other methods allowing individuals who would not be able to attend for various reasons to attend.
CareerCenter General Funds	MDOL	The Maine CareerCenter provides a variety of employment and training services at no charge for Maine workers and businesses.
Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP)	MDOL	CSSP helps workers learn new skills and succeed in a changing economy. The program is open to all qualified Maine residents and pays for education and training for high wage jobs in demand in Maine. The number of new CSSP applicants accepted into the program each year is based on available funding and allocated by county.
Maine Apprenticeship Program (MAP) and Apprenticeship Expansion Grant	MDOL	Maine Apprenticeship Program and Apprenticeship Expansion Grant helps mobilize Maine's workforce with structured, on-the-job learning in traditional industries such as construction and manufacturing, as well as emerging industries such as healthcare, information technology, energy, telecommunications and more. Registered apprenticeships connect job seekers looking to learn new skills with employers looking for qualified workers, resulting in a workforce with industry-driven training and employers with a competitive edge.
WIOA Title ID National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs)	MDOL	NWDGs provide additional assistance to support employment and retraining efforts for dislocated workers displaced due to mass layoff or natural disaster. USDOL offers access to these funds through a competitive process to address other issues affecting workers such as the opioid crisis or need for technology upgrades. Maine is in the process of implementing a single portal from which job seekers can access the services of all core partners. The portal

Program	Overseeing Agency	Program Description
		allows information to be shared between the information systems of each partner upon request from the job seeker, saving the customer from answering the same questions multiple times.
WIOA Title IC: Penobscot Job Corps Center	Boston Regional Office of Job Corps	Job Corps is a no-cost education and career technical training program administered by the USDOL that helps young people ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through career technical and academic training. The Job Corps program is authorized by Title I-C of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The Penobscot Job Corps Center is operated by Career Systems Development Corporation for the USDOL.
WIOA Title IC: Loring Job Corps Center	Boston Regional Office of Job Corps	See above
Maine Conservation Corps (MCC)	Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry	The mission of MCC is to accomplish conservation initiatives that inspire individuals and enhance communities. The MCC is a state AmeriCorps program, comprised of members who undertake conservation projects while completing job readiness training and achieving personal development goals. Service inherently includes the distillation of personal responsibility, accountability, teamwork, communication, problem solving, as well as many other appropriate workplace behaviors and attitudes. Members also engage in career research, goal setting, resume and cover letter writing, develop interview skills and earn certifications as part of their AmeriCorps terms.
New Ventures Maine (NVME)	UMA/ UMS	NVME is a statewide community outreach and education program of the University of Maine at Augusta/University of Maine System. NVME provides in-person and online training and individual coaching in career planning, entrepreneurship, and financial education and asset building. For Mainers in life and career transitions, NVME provides an empowering environment for participants to define and achieve goals. NVME helps individuals recognize strengths, overcome barriers, access resources, develop a plan and take action towards their goals--finding good jobs, furthering their education, starting a business, managing their money and building savings and assets.
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	USDOL/ A4TD	SCSEP is a community service and work-based training program for unemployed, low-income persons over the age of 55 with barriers to employment. Authorized by the Older Americans Act (Title V), the program provides subsidized, service-based training by placing participants in paid internships at 501(c)(3) non-profit and public agencies. Participants are also able to participate in workshops that improve their job search skills and job readiness. Individuals train for an average of 20 hours per week and are paid minimum wage. The community service training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities.
Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG)	JMG	JMG partners with public education and private businesses to offer results-driven solutions to ensure all students graduate, attain post-secondary credentials and pursue meaningful careers. JMG is hosted in Maine's public middle and high schools, and community college

Program	Overseeing Agency	Program Description
		and university systems. JMG reaches more than 10,000 students throughout all of Maine’s 16 counties. JMG programs are led by JMG specialists who serve as mentors and educators. The JMG model integrates competency-based learning strategies with career exploration. JMG helps students overcome academic, financial and social barriers to help students reach their fullest potential. JMG increases high school graduation rates, post-secondary persistence, and degree attainment.
WIOA Title ID YouthBuild Portland (YBA)	USDOL	YBA serves teens and young adults who struggle to find their way in the traditional education system. Since 1994, high school dropouts aged 16-24 were assisted in successful transition to adulthood through an alternative education model that includes HiSET exam preparation, construction skills training, leadership development, job skills, and life skills. Through YBA, young adults obtain important certifications including NCCER, OSHA-10, ServSafe and more. Most advance toward postsecondary education or career-oriented employment. In addition to the program itself, one year of follow-up services support graduates’ transition to education and work.
WIOA Title ID National Farmworker (NFJP)	USDOL	NFJP provides workforce development services and training assistance to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents.
WIOA Title ID Indian and Native American (INA) Program	USDOL	The purpose of the WIOA INA program is to support employment and training activities in order to: develop more fully the academic, occupational, and literacy skills of such individuals; make such individuals more competitive in the workforce and to equip them with entrepreneurial skills necessary for successful self-employment; and promote the economic and social development of INA communities in accordance with their goals and values.
Federal Bonding Program	USDOL	The USDOL established the federal bonding program in 1966 to provide fidelity bonds for “at-risk,” hard-to-place job seekers. The bonds cover the first six months of employment at no cost to the job applicant or the employer.

Other Publicly Funded Education Programs

Program	Overseeing Agency	Program Description
Career and Technical Education (CTE) (secondary)	MDOE	As part of the Maine Department of Education's ongoing commitment to support all learners, CTE aims to ensure that students acquire the high-quality, industry-recognized technical skills and related academic standards that will prepare them for postsecondary education and entry into an ever-changing workplace and society.
University of Maine System (UMS)	UMS	UMS offers associates, bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees (including the JD degree) as well as a selection of specialized undergraduate and graduate certificates. The UMS currently is developing a series of micro credentials specific to 21st century work ready and technical skills and is working across the state to develop a statewide approach to this. The UMS features seven

Program	Overseeing Agency	Program Description
		universities —some with multiple campuses—located across the state, as well as eight University College outreach centers, a law school, 31 additional course sites, and Cooperative Extension. It has an annual enrollment of nearly 30,000 students in credit bearing programs and serves over 500,000 individuals annually through educational and cultural offerings, including non-credit continuing education and professional development programming.
Maine Community College System (MCCS)	MCCS	The mission of the MCCS is to provide associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs directed at the educational, occupational and technical needs of the state’s citizens and the workforce needs of the state’s employers. The primary goals of the MCCS are to create an educated, skilled and adaptable labor force responsive to changing economic needs and to promote local, regional and statewide economic development.
Maine Quality Centers (MQC)	MCCS	The MQC program funds customized workforce training delivered through Maine’s seven community colleges. MQC grants are available to fund pre-hire, post-hire, and incumbent worker training. The program is designed to ensure that businesses have the qualified workers they need to succeed. Grant limits for incumbent worker training are based on company size. Employers with 1-50 employees may apply for 100% funding. Employers with 51-100 employees may apply for 75% funding, with a 25% company match. Employers with 101+ employees may apply for 50% funding, with a 50% company match. Other customized training is provided at no cost to either the business or trainee.

Additional Publicly Funded Programs

Program	Overseeing Agency	Program Description
State Correctional System	MDOC	Provides programs and services to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.
Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEP)	U.S. Dept. of Commerce	MEP leverages a vast array of public and private resources and services that are available to every manufacturing enterprise in Maine. The nationwide system of MEP centers is linked through the U.S. Department of Commerce - National Institute of Standards and Technology, with the common goal to strengthen the global competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers. MEP's mission is to become the state's premier provider of growth-based solutions for Maine's small and medium sized manufacturers; and its vision is to create profitable growth opportunities for small and medium sized manufacturers by helping them become more efficient, productive and globally competitive.
Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment (ASPIRE)	DHHS	DHHS’s ASPIRE program is the training and employment program serving TANF recipients by developing individualized employment plans and providing supports which lead to successful transition to employment.

Program	Overseeing Agency	Program Description
Food Supplement Employment & Training (FSET)	DHHS	DHHS administers Maine’s Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), including employment and training activities (E&T) provided by MDOL at CareerCenters. Maine’s E&T program is known as the Food Supplement Employment and Training (FSET) Program.
Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment (HOPE)	DHHS	Higher Opportunities for Pathways to Employment (HOPE) is administered by DHHS to assist low income families. HOPE provides financial assistance and campus-based navigators to support families and help them to achieve education goals leading towards employment.