

Economic Development Programs in Maine

Recommendations/Issues Identified for Potential GOC Action as of February 2016

Need to Improve Efficiency, Effectiveness and Value of DECD's Future Evaluations of Economic Development Programs

1. Combine separate statutorily required Research and Development Programs Evaluation (5 MRSA §13107) and Comprehensive Economic Development Evaluation into one evaluation (5 MRSA §13056-A) and report. (statutory change)
2. Establish timeline for the evaluation that provides increased opportunity for legislative review, consideration and action on reported results or related initiatives proposed by DECD. Change report due dates to odd-numbered years on a four year cycle (possible statutory change).
3. Ensure there is an adequate level of funding available to accomplish the evaluation on the desired timeline (reconsideration of current funding mechanisms established in 5 MRSA §§13056-C.3 and 13109.4 and possible statutory change)
4. Further define and clarify scope and expectations for the DECD evaluation (possible statutory change to 5 MRSA §§13056-A and 13107)
5. If part of the scope of the evaluation is to determine how well the State is achieving its economic development strategy (goals and objectives), then establish a requirement that a formal, public, current economic development strategy must be developed and maintained (statutory change to make this a responsibility of DECD or possibly instead require evaluation to address to some degree the Measures of Growth tracked by Maine Development Foundation)
6. Establish function, process and tools for DECD to efficiently and regularly collect from benefitting organizations the data/information needed to monitor and evaluate program activity and effectiveness for ALL economic development programs in the State's portfolio/inventory (this will likely require additional DECD resources on on-going basis and one time resources to design and build the process and tools that would support this function including determining what data needs to be collected – may require statutory changes)
7. Establish mechanism that gives DECD, and others as necessary, authority and clout to compel organizations to provide the data requested (statutory change)
8. Establish expectation and process for ensuring DECD evaluations of economic development programs and OPEGA evaluations of tax expenditures are coordinated and complementary rather than duplicative (statutory change)
9. Establish expectation, responsibilities and mechanism for ensuring results and recommendations from DECD evaluations are considered and acted on as appropriate by Administration and/or Legislature (statutory change)