September 9, 2020

Members of the Governor's Economic Recovery Committee, Education and Workforce Subcommittee:

In challenging times such as these, the critical role that Adult Education programs will play in economic recovery is even more evident. Adult Education can help to stabilize and support Maine’s adults who are unemployed, have significant barriers, and are lacking foundational skills. Adult Education can also help Maine mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and grow its economy by providing the necessary skills and training Maine’s adults need for success.

Adult Education in Maine is statutorily defined in 20-A MRS 8601-A(1):

"Adult Education means an education program primarily operated for individuals beyond the compulsory age that is administered by school administrative units through a career pathways service system and that... includes intake, assessment, advising, instruction and individual learning plans, is guided by data management and analysis, annual monitoring and annual professional development plans; uses appropriately certified staff; is designed to meet identified local needs; makes use of partnerships and alignment with workforce development, postsecondary institutions and support services and offers at least three of the following: Basic literacy instruction or instruction in English as a Second Language, high school completion course, college transition course, adult workforce training and retraining, and adult career and technical education."

To accomplish these statutory goals, Adult Education programs will continue to work together with multiple state agencies to leverage the resources needed to move adults through career pathways that will result in marketable careers for adult learners and for a sustained economy for Maine.

Making change can be difficult, but from Maine Adult Education Association’s perspective, there are several critical steps that the Governor’s Economic Recovery Committee could take to initiate change that would better the lives of Maine residents.

These steps are as follows in bold:

**Recognize Maine Adult Education as the primary agency that supports Maine residents with basic skills and college preparatory skills in literacy, writing, English language learning, basic technology and mathematics and provide those learning services to adults at low or no cost so that federal financial aid funds are used to support college-level, credit bearing classes only.**

For example:

- Adult Education programs are able to create sector-specific programming to meet the needs of employers and students. A number of programs have created Integrated Education and Training programs, blending foundational skills with credentials of value. For example, Lewiston/Auburn Adult Education was able to combine math and language skills with a construction program. At Portland Adult Education, English language skills were combined with a CNA program. A recent financial education program in Portland and in Lake Region/Fryeburg combined English language, math and banking skills (instruction provided by local financial institutions) with the “Today’s Teller” certificate course of the American Banking Association.
• For the thousands of immigrants who have moved to Maine to seek refuge and a better life, Adult Education programs provide English language classes, access to higher education or guidance navigating professional licensing, and skills to overcome the barriers of the American workforce.

Provide streamlined funding to support the infrastructure of Maine Adult Education Programs.

For example:
• Funding would be available to support needed technology hardware and software upgrades and would be available for facility costs since there is no current mechanism to support facilities in adult education funding. Full-time staff would also be supported and would become the norm.
• Funding would be streamlined from multiple sources including state subsidy, bond funding, grant funding, local workforce board training allocations and any other funding sources to support Maine’s adults with courses, training, and support services.
• Funding would be flexible to serve students who are not eligible for Federal funding – or tied to restrictive federal requirements - and would allow Adult Education programs to provide inexpensive, specific training needed in all areas of the state.

Provide support for leveraging the use of Maine’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) centers by local adult education programs to offer more technical training for adults when the centers are not in use for high school students and to offer increased availability to a Credential of Value for participating adults.

For example:
• Centers in some areas offer adult programming. Use these centers as a model to expand technical training across the state.
• Expand funding to support equipment and staffing costs in CTE centers for adults at times when the centers are not in use by high school students.

Revisit Maine’s Adult Education certification guidelines to insure that there are reduced barriers to hiring qualified adult education staff to support regional needs and workforce training initiatives.

For example:
• Community colleges can hire instructors for content related classes that adult education programs cannot hire due to certification guidelines.

Support a statewide marketing initiative that allows all Maine adults to find the information they need to access Adult Education programs, classes and trainings as part of the pathway to learning and to maximize the outreach to include information about the low-cost, accessible nature of Adult Education opportunities in Maine.

For example:
• Many local adult education programs offer remedial courses required for college admissions at little or no cost, but adult education programs do not have the marketing dollars of other agencies or private companies and often those enrolling pay high fees for a course that they could have taken via adult education. This would help adult learners from spending precious tuition dollars on these courses.
• Marketing the fact that Adult Education is the best place to go for remedial skills in Maine would avoid duplicate funding streams that actually reduce total funding to Adult Education. Adult Education programs are all set up to offer basic skills instruction in an effective, high quality, low-cost way. By promoting and financially supporting Adult Education as the best place to go for basic skills, Maine would streamline spending on these courses and make this particular pathway more visible and more accessible for adults.

Maine Adult Education Association (MAEA) is willing to supply those working on the Economic Recovery Committee more information as needed. Thank you for the chance to send information about the importance of Maine Adult Education to your efforts.

Sincerely,

Shirley N. Wright

Shirley Wright, Executive Director
Maine Adult Education Association
#WeAreMaineAdultEducation

A person with a high school diploma or equivalent annually earns an average of $9,620 more than a non-graduate.

"I needed to do more so I went back and became a C.N.A. with the adult education program and now I am working full time!" - Hannah, RSU 52 Adult Education

Started with Adult Education for confidence and support and now has Associate's Degree in Business. - Kristen, MSAD 61 & 72 Adult Education

High School Equivalency to Associates Degree in Applied Science - Ruth, RSU 16 Adult Education

[Website Link] maineadulted.org
Adult Education Facts

From the Coalition on Adult Basic Education...

More than 2,000 federally funded adult education programs operating across the US are achieving a 72% success rate, marking significant outcomes even though their teachers are paid 20 percent less than elementary and secondary educators and their programs are allocated only $200-$800 in spending per student annually, compared to $10,000 for elementary and secondary education.

Current Population
(Data Taken from 2018 American Community Survey)

| Working Age Adults Without a High School Credential | 55,467 |
| Disconnected Youth | 13,500 |
| Adults Receiving a High School Credential (2017-2018) | 715 |
| Adults Gaining One or More Skill Levels (2017-2018) | 1,651 |
| Adult Basic Education Students Served (2017-2018) | 2,970 |

| Adults With Language Difficulty | 4,224 |
| Adult English Language Learners Served (2017-2018) | 2,103 |

| Adults with High School Credential but Nothing Beyond | 310,724 |
| Employment Completion Certificates Annually (2018-2019) | More than 1,000 |

Focus for 2020

This year, 65% of jobs in the United States will require some sort of post-secondary education. It has been projected by the American Action Forum that the United States will be short an estimated 7.5 million private sector workers across all skill levels.
ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM FACT SHEET
REPORTING PERIOD: JULY 1, 2018 - JUNE 30, 2019

Purpose: Adult education programs in Maine assist in building skills and earning credentials that lead to postsecondary education, sustainable employment, and economic self-sufficiency.

Employer Skill Needs: In 2020, 65% of all jobs in the United States will require some level of postsecondary education. It is projected that, in 2020, the United States will be short an estimated 7.5 million private sector workers across all skill levels.

OUR PERFORMANCE

High School Credentials awarded to those enrolled in our program

Individuals improving one or more skill levels

INDIVIDUALS IN NEED OF ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES

55,467
Number of working-age adults (18-64) in the state without a high school credential

4,224
Number of adults in the state who do not speak English well or at all

Working-Age Adults (18-64) Without High School Diploma and Unemployed

3,696

FEDERAL FUNDS PER ADULT LEARNER

$289 Federal funds per adult learner

Our learners have the most barriers to employment and literacy, yet we receive limited funding compared to the $10,000 per pupil received by elementary education.

OUR FUNDING

1,733,882
FEDERAL

OUR ENROLLMENT

6,006

COABE

Sources: American Community Survey, 2013-17, 5-year estimate; National Reporting System: Recovery by Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce; Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center Published for Educate and Elevate, a joint initiative of COABE