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COMMISSION TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO INCREASE POSTSECONDARY ACCESS, RETENTION AND COMPLETION FOR LOW-WAGE, LOW-SKILLED ADULTS

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Executive Summary

The Commission To Develop Strategies To Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-wage, Low-skilled Adults ("Commission") was established during the First Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature by Joint Order, Senate Paper 717. The 13-member Commission included seven Legislators and six individuals with experience in workforce development and training who represented the Maine Educational Opportunity Center, the public higher education system, a statewide organization representing the economic interests of women, a statewide organization with expertise in economic policy analysis and one employer with experience in supporting educational programs for its employees.

The Commission was established to study and make recommendations on ways to assist low-wage, low-skilled adults to overcome barriers to obtaining postsecondary degrees or occupational credentials to achieve the goals of improving the economy of the State and increasing the number of workers who earn a family-sustaining wage. The Commission was charged with examining the following:

1. The need for remedial or developmental education;

2. The availability of financial aid for nontraditional students that takes into account their need for flexible and part-time attendance;

3. The need for a financial aid package that recognizes the full array of education-related expenses that nontraditional students incur, including expenses for child care and transportation and lost wages as workers reduce their work hours to attend classes;

4. The need for additional resources for student advising and counseling to help students navigate academic challenges and social and economic barriers that affect attendance;

5. The alignment of related program resources in other departments of State Government to help students with access to postsecondary education; and

6. The design of program offerings, including modules, nontraditional hours and distance learning opportunities.

Commission members concluded that the Legislature -- together with officials in appropriate state agencies and public instrumentalities, and other key private sector partners in industry, small business and the non-profit community -- must restore the development and training of Maine's low-wage, low-skilled adult citizens as a priority policy issue. The Commission unanimously endorses the recommendations outlined below and requests that the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, pursuant to its authority under the Joint Order creating this study, or the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, pursuant to any authority it may have or acquire, report out appropriate legislation to implement the Commission's legislative recommendations.

Taken together, these recommendations chart the course for launching a series of "career pathways" that purposefully combine the existing programs and resources of the "loose federation" of postsecondary education, training and workforce development service providers into a more coherent system that can prepare low-wage, low-skilled adults for higher-wage jobs in industries and employers with significant demand for skilled workers.

The Commission makes the following recommendations within the framework of five overarching strategies that Commission members concluded are essential policy directions for the Legislature to pursue.

Strategy 1: Maximize the Use of Available Federal Resources.

Recommendation #1. *The Department of Labor should develop uniform procedures at all Career Centers to assist low-income, adult students in accessing a package of supports for which they are eligible and need to succeed in postsecondary education or occupational training. (See also Recommendation #16.)*

Recommendation #2. *Policymakers should strengthen the package of postsecondary education opportunity resources and support services available through the campuses and centers of the Maine Community College System. In regions of the state where low-income, adult students do not have reasonable access to the package of supports provided by a Career Center, the campuses and centers of the Maine Community College System should provide a comparable package of postsecondary education and occupational training support services. (See also Recommendation #17.)*

Recommendation #3. *Policymakers should seek to leverage federal Perkins funding to establish a "career pathways" pilot project in at least one sector of Maine's economy in order to prepare low-wage, low-skilled adults for high-wage jobs in industries with significant demand for skilled workers.*

Recommendation #4. *Maximize access to federal financial aid resources by encouraging student financial aid officers at Maine colleges to provide adequate notice to adult students and to apply the "professional judgment" standard in a more uniform manner when considering the "special circumstances" that determine adult students' eligibility for student financial aid resources. In order to accomplish this, the Commission, recommends the Maine Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (a) survey Maine financial aid officers on their institutions' current policies related to providing notice of the "professional judgment" standard to adult students, including whether and how notice of the institution's "professional judgment" policy is provided, and the criteria the institutions apply in defining "special circumstances"; (b) consider adopting a professional practice standard regarding providing notice to students of the institution's "professional judgment" policy, including notice posted in college catalogs, financial aid brochures and posted website, in the admissions and financial offices; and (d) report back their findings and any recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs no later than March 31, 2008.*

Strategy 2: Align Existing State Program Resources.

Recommendation #5. *Establish "career pathways" in order to prepare low-wage, low-skilled individuals for high-wage jobs in sectors of Maine's economy with significant demand for skilled workers. Career pathways include the integration of specific education and training for skilled occupations that combines the developmental education curriculum of the adult education program with the postsecondary education and training curriculum of our community colleges and universities. This should be accomplished by forging a public-private partnership among state agencies and private sector entities -- Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Career and Technical Education, Adult Education, Maine Community College System, University of Maine System, MELMAC Education Foundation, the Maine Compact for Higher Education, and employers -- to establish "career pathways" that can more effectively serve the needs of the adult workforce and employers needing skilled workers. (See also Recommendation #18.)*

Recommendation #6. *To the extent possible, Adult Education program resources should be used for remedial or "developmental education" that prepares low-wage individuals to enroll in a postsecondary education degree program (enabling the adult students to maximize eligibility for federal student aid resources to matriculate and complete a two-year or four-year degree program at a college or university). Adult education programs or college transition services should be co-located with community college campuses where feasible, to provide seamless remedial course offerings to low-wage adult students, and to maximize the value of federal financial aid to students. Where co-location is not feasible, the "memoranda of understanding" created between adult education and college programs that allows acceptance of competencies and a seamless transition should reviewed, updated as necessary, and fully implemented.*

Recommendation #7. *Continue to implement and expand the pilot programs of the "Maine College Transition Program" coordinated by the Adult Education system.*

Recommendation #8. *The recommendations of this Commission should be reviewed by the working group established under Public Law 2007, Chapter 240, Part UUU. In addition, the working group convened by the Commissioner of Education to study the current offering of remedial college courses at the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System, should be reconvened to develop a recommendation for an appropriate standard to ensure that adults receive "college preparation" in the most cost-effective manner possible. If the working group deems it necessary, the Department of Education should adopt or amend rules to implement such a standard.*

Recommendation #9. *Provide comprehensive and coordinated career counseling and postsecondary education access resources targeted to adult students in rural and urban areas of the state and located at the campuses or centers of the Maine Community College System in a manner that is sensitive to the particular needs of these students in rural and urban settings.*

Recommendation #10. *The Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System should implement a coherent policy on recognizing "prior learning assessments" for*

adult students. In order to increase appropriate referrals for a prior learning assessment, the public colleges should seek to create a single checklist that Career Centers, Adult Educators, and educational access providers can use to determine which adults are likely to benefit from prior learning assessments.

Recommendation #11. *To the extent possible, schedules of public kindergarten to grade 12 schools, including vacation breaks, should be coordinated with the scheduled breaks at the respective campuses of the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System in order to enable working adults with families to attend their college courses and provide childcare for their children.*

Strategy 3: Establish Benchmarks and Measure Results.

Recommendation #12. *The Legislature should work with the Career Centers, Adult Education programs, and community college and university systems to create a uniform data collection system relating to nontraditional-aged students, including but not limited to: household income and employment at time of entry into the system; prior training and learning; type of program sought; retention benchmarks; "stop-out" periods when the student, due to emergency or other necessity, must leave the system, and, to the extent possible, reasons for leaving; type of program completed; completion dates; duration of time in school; and outcome data, such as their employment and wages within four six month intervals after graduation. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet should undertake a review of all current indicators across systems, assess existing data collection systems, and recommend a uniform set of indicators, databases and surveys that should be established and updated. (See also Recommendation #14.)*

Recommendation #13. *Policymakers should create a system of benchmarks that track success in enrollment, retention and credential completion for low-income adults and reward institutions that achieve these benchmarks through an incentive payment system using additional sources of revenue. The system designed to measure performance must ensure a consistent measurement program for each program provider across the system. Incentive awards to institutions should be based on success in meeting benchmarks as well as on a matrix that considers and rewards, for example: student access to dedicated staff for advising and support; the extent to which federal financial aid is maximized for students through application of "professional judgment" or other strategies; the existence of a properly executed memorandum of understanding with a college transition program to provide seamless transition for these students to their campus; completion rates to certificate or degree (e.g., 3 years for 2-year program and 6 years for 4-year programs, while making appropriate distinctions between "drop outs" and "stop outs"). As part of this tracking system, the Maine Community College System, the University of Maine System and the Finance Authority of Maine should be directed to report on low-income Pell Grant recipients or Maine State Grant recipients in a manner that permits tracking the progress of and outcome data relating to these recipients. The tracking system should also track job acquisition, employment rate, wage rate of participants, and reduction of individuals receiving public assistance. (See also Recommendation #19.)*

Strategy 4: Strengthen Coordination and Accountability.

Recommendation #14. *Develop a consistent measurement and accountability system to track Maine's progress in increasing the number of low-wage, low-skilled adults who attain postsecondary education. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet should consider the feasibility of utilizing the Department of Education's three-year grant funding to track the path of secondary school students, including participation in Adult Education programs, enrollment in postsecondary education and training programs, through completion of a postsecondary education degree and certificate program, and into employment in a new or better job. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet should also design a measurement and accountability system to increase and to track Maine's progress in increasing the number of low-wage, low-skilled adults who attain postsecondary education built upon the existing data collection and management capacity of state agencies and postsecondary education systems and should report on its proposed system to the Education Committee and Labor Committee by July 1, 2008. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet should include in its report its recommendation for an appropriate oversight body to keep track of students and their success. (See also Recommendation #12.)*

Recommendation #15. *Policymakers should seek to coordinate the design and implementation of a public awareness campaign to inform low-skilled, low-wage adults about the package of postsecondary education and workforce development resources available to meet their education and training needs. (See also Recommendation #22.)*

Strategy 5: Provide New Resources to Meet the Needs of Low-income, Adult Students.

Recommendation #16. *Policymakers should provide additional resources to develop uniform procedures at all Career Centers to assist low-income, low-skilled individuals in accessing a package of supports for which they are eligible and need to succeed in a postsecondary education or training program. (See also Recommendation #1.)*

Recommendation #17 *Policymakers should provide additional resources for career counseling, program planning and other support services needed by low-wage individuals to access a postsecondary education or training program at the Maine Community College System. (See also Recommendation #2.)*

Recommendation #18. *Policymakers should provide resources to establish "career pathways" in order to prepare low-wage, low-skilled individuals for high-wage jobs in sectors of Maine's economy with significant demand for skilled workers. (See also Recommendation #5.)*

Recommendation #19. *Policymakers should provide resources to create a system of benchmarks that tracks performance in enrollment, retention and credential completion for low-wage, low-skilled adults and that rewards performance of the institutions that contributed*

toward the achievement of the relevant benchmarks with incentive funds from a pool of resources established for this purpose. Additional resources will be needed by the institutions participating in the indicator selection process and potentially for upgrades in data systems. Resources will also be needed by the entity that is responsible for collecting and aggregating the data. (See also Recommendation #13.)

Recommendation #20. *Policymakers should target new financial aid program funding to meet the unmet financial needs of low-wage, low-skilled adults to enable them to access education and training (e.g., similar to Parents and Scholars and the Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund to help adult students overcome barriers of transportation, childcare, and other supports). Policymakers should make postsecondary education and training more accessible and affordable for low-wage adults by creating a flexible, "consumer-friendly" state financial aid program to address the unmet needs of non-traditional students. The financial aid program should include funds for low-income adult students to enroll in summer school courses.*

Recommendation #21. *Policymakers should invest state dollars to match federal TRIO funds (funds provided under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965) to help low-income adults who are first-generation college students or students with disabilities succeed in college. For every additional $150,000, the Maine Education Opportunity Centers can fund programs that serve an additional other 500 students ($280 per student served).*

Recommendation #22. *Policymakers should provide funds necessary to design and implement a public awareness campaign to inform low-skilled, low-wage adults about the package of postsecondary education and workforce development resources available to meet their education and training needs. (See also recommendation # 15.)*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Commission to Develop Strategies to Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-wage, Low-skilled Adults ("Commission") was established during the First Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature by Joint Order, Senate Paper 717. A copy of the authorizing legislation is attached as **Appendix A**. The 13-member Commission included seven Legislators and six individuals with experience in workforce development and training who represented the Maine Educational Opportunity Center, the public higher education system, a statewide organization representing the economic interests of women, a statewide organization with expertise in economic policy analysis and one employer with experience in supporting educational programs for its employees. The roster of Commission members is attached as **Appendix B**.

The Commission was established to study and make recommendations on ways to assist low-wage, low-skilled adults to overcome barriers to obtaining postsecondary degrees or occupational credentials to achieve the goals of improving the economy of the State and increasing the number of workers who earn a family-sustaining wage. The Commission was charged with examining the following:

1. The need for remedial or developmental education;

2. The availability of financial aid for nontraditional students that takes into account their need for flexible and part-time attendance;

3. The need for a financial aid package that recognizes the full array of education-related expenses that nontraditional students incur, including expenses for child care and transportation and lost wages as workers reduce their work hours to attend classes;

4. The need for additional resources for student advising and counseling to help students navigate academic challenges and social and economic barriers that affect attendance;

5. The alignment of related program resources in other departments of State Government to help students with access to postsecondary education; and

6. The design of program offerings, including modules, nontraditional hours and distance learning opportunities.

The Commission was convened on September 18, 2007 and three other Commission meetings were held on October 5, 2007, November 1, 2007 and November 19, 2007. During its first two meetings, the Commission received descriptive information and preliminary data regarding the scope of career development programs, family assistance initiatives, postsecondary education programs, and workforce investment services in the state from officials representing the Maine Department of Labor, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, the Adult Education "Maine College Transitions Program," the Maine Education Opportunity Centers, and the Maine Community College System. Commission staff surveyed program providers and

developed a matrix of postsecondary education programs and workforce investment service initiatives. A national policy expert from the Center for Law and Social Policy provided technical assistance to the Commission regarding best practices in other states and jurisdictions related to strategies to increase workforce development and training programs for low-wage, low skilled workers. The program matrix is attached as **Appendix C** and a list of individuals who presented information to the Commission is attached as **Appendix D**.

Recognizing the extensive knowledge and experience of its collective membership, the Commission relied heavily on the expertise of its members in identifying and framing the policy issues and in developing its recommendations. During its second meeting, the Commission authorized the design of a "convenience sample" survey of low-wage, low-skilled adults to enable Commission members to gain a greater understanding of the extraordinary barriers facing this population and the supports and resources that individuals found to be valuable as they attempted to overcome these challenges and complete a postsecondary education program. The survey was sponsored by the Maine Center on Economic Development and the Maine Education Opportunity Center. The results of this survey are attached as **Appendix E**.

Commission members decided to prepare preliminary, written proposals for consideration by the full Commission during its third meeting. The Commission reviewed 14 proposals and determined that these preliminary recommendations should be forwarded to the Commissioner of Labor, the Coordinator of the Adult Education "Maine College Transitions Program," and the President of the Maine Community College System along with an invitation to provide feedback on these proposals at the final Commission meeting. A summary of the preliminary proposals prepared by Commission members is attached as **Appendix F**.

The Commission divided its fourth and final meeting between discussing its preliminary recommendations with the Commissioner of Labor, the Coordinator of the Adult Education "Maine College Transitions Program," and the President of the Maine Community College System and deliberating the elements of these recommendations that would be included in the final report. Following a healthy dialogue with these state officials, Commission members debated the merits of the preliminary recommendations and reached consensus on a series of strategic directions and policy recommendations.

The Commission submits this report and recommends the draft legislation attached be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs during the 2nd Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature. The Joint Order, Senate Paper 717, authorizes the Joint Standing Committee on Labor to report out a bill to the Legislature based on this Commission report. The following sections of the report summarize the discussion, findings and recommendations of the Commission.

II. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission To Develop Strategies To Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-wage, Low-skilled Adults ("Commission") was established to study ways to assist low-wage, low-skilled adults to overcome barriers to obtaining postsecondary degrees or occupational credentials to achieve the goals of improving the economy of the State and increasing the number of workers who earn a family-sustaining wage. In responding to this charge, Commission members reviewed existing workforce development and training programs for the low-wage, low-skilled adult population, including education and human service programs that address an individual's academic, social and economic needs, as well as postsecondary education and training programs that lead to an associates degree, a bachelors degree or to an occupational credential.

The Commission also considered the array of programs and services organized by public agencies at the state, regional and local levels, and provided by the private sector and the non-profit sector in the state. Commission members also reviewed best practices in other states and considered the Legislature's action to date on several bills related to the focus of this study that were considered and acted upon during the 1st Session of the 123rd Legislature in 2007.

Commission members concluded that the Legislature -- together with officials in appropriate state agencies and public instrumentalities, and other key private sector partners in industry, small business and the non-profit community -- must restore the development and training of Maine's low-wage, low-skilled adult citizens as a priority policy issue. The Commission unanimously endorses the recommendations outlined below and requests that the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, pursuant to its authority under the Joint Order creating this study, or the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, pursuant to any authority it may have or acquire, report out appropriate legislation to implement the Commission's legislative recommendations. The draft legislation is attached as **Appendix G**.

The findings and recommendations of the Commission are presented within the framework of five overarching strategies that Commission members concluded are essential policy directions for the Legislature to pursue:

1. Maximize the Use of Available Federal Resources;

2. Align Existing State Program Resources;

3. Establish Benchmarks and Measure Results;

4. Strengthen Coordination and Accountability; and

5. Provide New Resources to Meet the Needs of Low-income, Adult Students.

Taken together, these findings and recommendations chart the course for launching a series of "career pathways" that purposefully combine the existing programs and resources of the "loose

federation" of postsecondary education, training and workforce development service providers into a more coherent system that can prepare low-wage, low-skilled adults for higher-wage jobs in industries and employers with significant demand for skilled workers.

STRATEGY 1: MAXIMIZE THE USE OF AVAILABLE FEDERAL RESOURCES

Ways to Assist Low-Wage, Low-Skilled Adults to Overcome Barriers to Obtaining Postsecondary Degrees or Occupational Credentials

Discussion

Federally-funded programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit, subsidized child care, food stamps, Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) can fundamentally change the resource calculus for low-wage workers enabling them to consider college when they otherwise might not. Many low-income adults qualify for essential supports that would help them enter and stay enrolled in college, but do not know that this support may be available to them.

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), a non-profit policy research center, recently implemented the National Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration program to identifying effective strategies to enable low-wage workers find better-paying jobs and prepare for positions that require higher skills -- all the while assisting employers in the process. "Work advancement and support center" demonstrations were established in "one-stop" career centers, which were created under the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 and which, in most jurisdictions, have been used primarily to help unemployed people find jobs. Services are provided by teams consisting of WIA agency staff and human service agency staff who administer support programs. In most states, these separate systems operate in their own bureaucratic "silos" and have not made assisting low-wage workers a common cause.

Key elements of the "work advancement and support center" model demonstration project include: (1) job retention and career advancement services through career coaching, skills development, enlisting employers in efforts to help workers advance, and services offered to groups of participants at their workplaces; and (2) simplified and assisted access to financial work supports through simplified enrollment and recertification procedures, educating customers about work supports using the "work advancement and support center" income calculator, and guaranteeing child care subsidies to participants with children.

MDRC is still evaluating the impact of the demonstration programs at "one-stop" career centers to assess program operations and the impact of program services on job retention, wage progression and career advancement, and family income and poverty. Some of the critical challenges identified by researchers thus far include: (1) encouraging participation of low-wage workers who have little or no past connection with "one-stop" services or work support programs; (2) engaging employers; (3) integrating the functions of workforce staff and human service staff and changing how frontline workers interact with clients; (4) coordinating (or

"packaging") work supports with career advancement plans and making work supports more accessible; (5) identifying the agencies that offer work support products, the rules that govern the application processes, and gauging the willingness of these agencies to work together; and (6) program management to foster an ethos of "advancement" within the center.

The preliminary findings from the demonstration program may be instructive for Maine policymakers and education, human service and workforce program providers. MDRC researchers reported the following findings:

1. State policymakers should develop distinct approaches to "work advancement and support center" programs to respond to the demographic, institutional, and labor market conditions of urban and rural areas served by "one-stop" Career Centers;

2. In learning how to develop and adapt services aimed at assisting working people, both workforce and human service agency staff are bridging the substantial gaps between the workforce and human service systems. This entails a major culture change to transcend the systems' traditional isolation and lack of experience combining employment services with access to work supports for low-earners;

3. As part of their efforts to create an ethos of advancement, the sites are devising new management techniques and performance standards to keep the entire team focused on career advancement and income improvement; and

4. Sites have begun outreach campaigns that market economic advancement and are initiating partnerships with employers and community-based organizations to reach low-wage workers.

With the Legislature's passage of LD 1884 during the 2007 legislative session, we believe that Maine is taking the initial steps down a path toward a "work advancement and support center" model. Part A of Public Law 2007, Chapter 352 (LD 1884 as amended) established the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program to provide access to education, training and support through the Department of Labor's Career Centers, to prepare individuals for high-wage jobs in industries with significant demand for skilled labor, as designated by the Department of Labor.

Findings

Support services provided by workforce development and training programs should be packaged to provide the maximum resources available to meet the unique set of postsecondary education and training needs of low-wage, low-skilled adults. More effective packaging of these supports at Career Centers is a key element of the new Competitive Skills Scholarship Program. The proposed rules for this program include procedures for Career Center staff to assist adults by packaging supports that will help them succeed. The intake process should include a checklist for adults to complete indicating areas of need as their education and training plans are developed. We believe that training should be provided to Career Center staff to enable them to help low-wage, low-skilled adults identify and connect with the appropriate programs that will

meet their needs. The implementation of more effective procedures and consistent practices at Career Centers is a cost-effective means to helping adults overcome barriers and access postsecondary education and training programs for which they are already eligible.

Recommendation #1. *The Department of Labor should develop uniform procedures at all Career Centers to assist low-income, adult students in accessing a package of supports for which they are eligible and need to succeed in postsecondary education or occupational training. (See also Recommendation #16.)*

Community Colleges as the "Access Point" for Integrating Postsecondary Education and Workforce Training

Discussion

Our community colleges should also be serving as a primary "access point" for education and training programs for low-wage, low-skilled adults. Washington state researchers found that relatively few students transition to workforce training from adult basic education or English as a Second Language programs (see "career pathways" discussion below). If they did transition, it was typically to training for jobs on the lowest rung on the career ladder, with few advancing beyond this level to higher-wage and higher-skilled jobs. The training they received was often not aligned in pathways, but provided through a patchwork of credit and non-credit courses. The longer it takes to master basic skills, the less likely adults are to advance from one rung of the career ladder to the next. It is critical to find ways to accelerate learning to prepare low-skilled adults for higher-wage positions and career advancement, while increasing their contributions to our state economy.

Findings

Maine offers a broad range of opportunities and resources for providing postsecondary education and training. Just as the Career Centers have become the focal point for employment resources, the Maine Community College System should also be designated as a primary "access point" or gateway for access to postsecondary education and training resources to low-wage, low-skilled adults. The Maine Community College System has developed strong partnerships with employers and provides occupational training at its campuses and through employer-based programs. Education access counselors located at the community colleges could represent the panoply of available education and training programs and devise individually-tailored roadmaps for adult students, complete with a uniform package of available supports that are developed in conjunction with the Career Centers.

Recommendation #2. *Policymakers should strengthen the package of postsecondary education opportunity resources and support services available through the campuses and centers of the Maine Community College System. In regions of the state where low-income, adult students do not have reasonable access to the package of supports provided by a Career Center, the campuses and centers of the Maine Community College System should provide a*

comparable package of postsecondary education and occupational training support services. (See also Recommendation #17.)

Career Pathways

Discussion

Julie Strawn, a Senior Fellow with the Center for Law and Social Policy, provided technical assistance the Commission regarding best practices in other states and jurisdictions related to strategies to increase workforce development and training programs for low-wage, low skilled workers. One approach to address the disconnect between postsecondary education, workforce development programs, and economic development strategies is to create "career pathways" programs at community colleges where students are able to enroll in a defined track of coursework that leads to jobs in high-demand fields within a state or region.

One of the promising models identified by Ms. Strawn was the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (or "I-BEST") initiative developed and implemented by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Their research identified an "economic tipping point" for adult students. When they gain basic skills, complete one year of college level classes and receive a vocational certificate or two-year degree, they are in a better position to earn a living wage for themselves and their families.

The "perfect storm" of demographics, economics, workforce development and adult education led the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to develop this innovative education and training program. Workers need both literacy and job specific skills to get a good job today and the opportunity to continue their education to advance in their careers tomorrow. The community and technical college system provides that opportunity for adults, while helping employers find skilled workers to boost the state's economy.

The I-BEST initiative combines Adult Basic Education or English as a Second Language with professional-technical instructors in the classroom to concurrently provide students with literacy education and workforce training. It provides students with the opportunity to learn literacy and workplace skills at the same time. Adult literacy and vocational instructors work together to develop and deliver instruction. Students spend less time in school, demonstrate more skills gains, and have clear pathways from entry-level jobs to higher skilled and better paying employment. Colleges provide higher levels of support and student services to address the needs of non-traditional students.

Ten community and technical colleges piloted I-BEST programs that prepared students for jobs in nursing and allied health care, commercial truck driving, industrial maintenance, automotive, computers and early childhood education. Based on their success, support for all colleges was expanded to include professional development, technical assistance, and an enhanced funding model. Grant funding to support project leadership and address the needs of low-income students was also provided by the Ford Foundation.

Findings

A "career pathway" is a series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector. An opportunity exists to pilot career pathways projects through the federal Perkins IV Act that allows community colleges to fund pathways projects with Adult Education providers that are occupationally-oriented. Experience with this model in other states has proven successful in enabling working adults to progress along a carefully-structured path with visible rewards at each step, including educational or occupational credentials and higher wages.

Recommendation #3. *Policymakers should seek to leverage federal Perkins funding to establish a "career pathways" pilot project in at least one sector of Maine's economy in order to prepare low-wage, low-skilled adults for high-wage jobs in industries with significant demand for skilled workers.*

Professional Judgment

Discussion

Federal law permits student financial aid officers to use professional judgment on a case-by-case basis to change a student's financial aid award based on special circumstances (see 20 United State Code, Section 1087(tt)). The federal financial aid calculation relies on prior year income and asset information assuming that it is a good predictor of a family's financial strength in the upcoming year. In some circumstances it is not, and when those circumstances are adequately documented, a financial aid officer may adjust the data used to determine students' eligibility for aid often resulting in an increase aid to that student.

Special circumstances warranting the use of professional judgment include, but are not limited to: (1) recent unemployment by a family member; (2) medical or dental expenses not covered by insurance; (3) unusually high child care expenses; (4) the number of parents enrolled at least half-time in a credential program; or (5) other changes in the family's income or assets. Greater use of this type of "adult friendly" financial aid policy will go a long way to ensuring that we do not leave federal dollars on the table that could be used to increase access for many low-income Mainers.

There is currently no requirement that financial aid applicants be given notice of this potentially beneficial option; and there is no uniform practice throughout the state requiring maximization of student financial aid through the "professional judgment" provision. The National Association of Financial Aid Administrators report that on average across all institutional types, about 47% of all professional judgment reviews resulted in increased student total aid awards (Financial Aid Professionals as Work in 1999-2000: Results from the 2001 Survey of Undergraduate Financial Aid Polices, Practices and Procedures, NASFAA). National data also indicate that the "professional judgment" provision is an underutilized tool; and, as a result, many students lose an important opportunity.

Findings

The availability of student financial aid has a dramatic effect on the ability of low-income, working adults to access, persist and complete a post-secondary educational program. Greater use of "professional judgment" would result in increased aid for needy students. This strategy will also prevent state institutions from leaving federal dollars on the table that could be of value to low-income Maine students.

Low-income, low-skilled adults should be informed of the "professional judgment" standard available to financial aid officers in determining whether special circumstances related to a student's financial situation warrants consideration in the "needs analysis" process that determines eligibility for student financial aid. By providing notice of the "professional judgment" standard in a more uniform manner and in easy-to-understand and readable terms, low-income individuals may become eligible for additional financial aid.

Recommendation #4. *Maximize access to federal financial aid resources by encouraging student financial aid officers at Maine colleges to provide adequate notice to adult students and to apply the "professional judgment" standard in a more uniform manner when considering the "special circumstances" that determine adult students' eligibility for student financial aid resources. In order to accomplish this, the Commission, recommends the Maine Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (a) survey Maine financial aid officers on their institutions' current policies related to providing notice of the "professional judgment" standard to adult students, including whether and how notice of the institution's "professional judgment" policy is provided, and the criteria the institutions apply in defining "special circumstances"; (b) consider adopting a professional practice standard regarding providing notice to students of the institution's "professional judgment" policy, including notice posted in college catalogs, financial aid brochures and posted website, in the admissions and financial offices; and (d) report back their findings and any recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs no later than March 31, 2008.*

STRATEGY 2: ALIGN EXISTING STATE PROGRAM RESOURCES

Alignment of Program Resources as "Career Pathways" to Help Maine Low-income, Low-skilled Adults Complete Postsecondary Education and Occupational Training

Discussion

The emergence of a global economy in the 21st century has left many state policymakers increasingly concerned that the current workforce education and training systems are neither meeting the rapidly-evolving workforce needs of businesses nor preparing individuals to earn family-sustaining wages. A policy brief recently published by the Education Commission of the States highlights the need to align public policies in order to transform education and workforce development systems to support economic growth. The policy brief summarizes a number of

state initiatives that support the use of the "career pathways" concept to increase college completion and respond to the demand for state economic and workforce development.

> *Career pathways are helpful frameworks for making systemic changes that fill gaps in education and workforce-training systems by addressing the complementary goals of student and worker advancement, and regional economic development. With few exceptions, the nation's education and training systems operate in relative isolation from broader economic development efforts, largely because state policies governing adult and postsecondary education, workforce and economic development, and social and human services are designed and implemented with few meaningful connections. As a result, these systems do not effectively work together to produce the kinds of skilled workers needed in today's changing economy.* (ECS "Progress of Education Reform" Vol. 8, No. 2, August 2007)

While there have been very few practical strategies that enable states to better align their education system with regional economic and workforce needs, one interesting innovation gaining traction in a growing number of states is a system of aligned education and training programs called "career pathways." Since 2002, career pathways initiatives have been launched in Oregon, Kentucky, Arkansas, Ohio, Wisconsin, Washington, California, and Illinois.

As discussed earlier in this report, a career pathway is a series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector. Each step on a career pathway is designed explicitly to prepare for the next level of employment and education.

Findings

The Commission finds that Maine currently has a loose federation of state agencies, public instrumentalities, non-profit and private sector entities that use a "joint decision making model" to provide programs and services to meet the social, economic, education and employment needs of Maine citizens. A "career pathways" approach can be a key strategy for bringing together disjointed public systems. Ultimately, the career pathways framework strengthens the systems that keep a region's workforce globally competitive. This framework allows state and local governments to better align policy goals that simultaneously support student and worker advancement, and regional economic growth.

Recommendation #5. *Establish "career pathways" in order to prepare low-wage, low-skilled individuals for high-wage jobs in sectors of Maine's economy with significant demand for skilled workers. Career pathways include the integration of specific education and training for skilled occupations that combines the developmental education curriculum of the adult education program with the postsecondary education and training curriculum of our community colleges and universities. This should be accomplished by forging a public-private partnership among state agencies and private sector entities -- Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Career and Technical Education, Adult Education, Maine Community*

College System, University of Maine System, MELMAC Education Foundation, the Maine Compact for Higher Education, and employers -- to establish "career pathways" that can more effectively serve the needs of the adult workforce and employers needing skilled workers. (See also Recommendation #18.)

Remedial or Developmental Education

Discussion

As a vehicle for remedial education, adult education programs are more cost-effective than those programs offered through community college and university campuses; because college-based remedial courses trigger federal financial aid, thereby limiting the amount of funding left for completing the academic program, adult education programs can help low-wage, working students maximize their resources. At the same time, the presence of remedial courses on college campuses has been shown to remove the stigma of "adult education" and encourage adult students to continue on a "college track" and persist to completion of a postsecondary degree or an occupational credential.

Findings

Most "developmental education" courses are provided in the most cost-effective manner through an Adult Education program; however, there may be some remedial coursework that is more cost-effectively provided at a community college or university campus -- science courses, for example. Part of the problem is that taxpayers are paying twice -- once for the Adult Education class and again for the community college course. Yet, the difficulty for low-income adult students is that they typically need more time to complete their degree program; and, once the student is awarded federal student aid, there is a "time limit" to complete a college degree program and remain eligible to receive additional federal student aid.

Maximizing the use of Adult Education program resources for remedial or "developmental education" that prepares low-wage individuals to enroll in a postsecondary education degree program will enable adult students to take full advantage of their eligibility to use federal student aid resources to matriculate and complete a two-year or four-year degree program at a college or university. By utilizing the state and local funding provided for "remedial education" through the Adult Education program, adult students will ensure that they have access to the maximum federal student aid resources available to them to attain their college degree in the most affordable manner.

The "Maine College Transition Program" is one of the most effective programs established to coordinate the resources of the Adult Education system, the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System. This program can become one of the first steps along a career pathway for low-wage, low-skilled adults. It would be ideal if every community college and university had Adult Education "developmental education" classes located on campus. It is possible to package a student's financial aid in a manner that separates

funding "developmental education" classes from the award of federal student aid resources for the rest of their college coursework.

The Department of Education has considered some of these same issues in an evaluation report titled: "Transitioning to New Worlds: Maine's Adult Education to College Transition Project." A "memorandum of understanding" between adult education programs and the community colleges that would address many of these issues has been prepared and signed, but it has not been widely implemented.

The Commission notes that another working group has been convened to study the current offering of remedial college courses at the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System and to provide a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs with its findings and recommendations for changes in the delivery of remedial college courses by February 1, 2008 (Public Law 2007, Chapter 240, Part UUU). Also, the Commissioner of Education recently formed a working group to study the current offering of remedial college courses at the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System.

Recommendation #6. *To the extent possible, Adult Education program resources should be used for remedial or "developmental education" that prepares low-wage individuals to enroll in a postsecondary education degree program (enabling the adult students to maximize eligibility for federal student aid resources to matriculate and complete a two-year or four-year degree program at a college or university). Adult education programs or college transition services should be co-located with community college campuses where feasible, to provide seamless remedial course offerings to low-wage adult students, and to maximize the value of federal financial aid to students. Where co-location is not feasible, the "memoranda of understanding" created between adult education and college programs that allow acceptance of competencies and a seamless transition should reviewed, updated as necessary and fully implemented.*

Recommendation #7. *Continue to implement and expand the pilot programs of the "Maine College Transition Program" coordinated by the Adult Education system.*

Recommendation # 8. *The recommendations of this Commission should be reviewed by the working group established under Public Law 2007, Chapter 240, Part UUU. In addition, the working group convened by the Commissioner of Education to study the current offering of remedial college courses at the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System, should be reconvened to develop a recommendation for an appropriate standard to ensure that adults receive "college preparation" in the most cost-effective manner possible. If the working group deems it necessary, the Department of Education should adopt or amend rules to implement such a standard.*

Needs of Adults in Rural Communities

Discussion

Through discussions with Commissioner Fortman and President Fitzsimmons, Commission members realized that the current education and workforce development systems were missing the "rural pieces of the puzzle." Existing models of academic counseling and support services that work for an urban population should be adapted to meet the different dynamics and needs of individuals who reside in rural areas of the state. Three pieces of legislation considered during the 2007 session of the Maine Legislature focused on the needs to sustain these resources in rural communities:

- LD 1060, "Resolve, To Study the State's Career Center Network and Create a Sustainable System," sponsored by Rep. Saviello, proposed to study the job opportunities in the State with the intent of creating a sustainable Career Center network. The resolve was "carried over" by the Labor Committee to the 2nd Regular Session with the understanding the Department of Labor would study this matter and report back to the Labor Committee.

- LD 801, "An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Infrastructure Improvements for Canton Village and To Provide Funding for the Career Center in Rumford, sponsored by Sen. Bryant, proposed to appropriate $159,000 in fiscal year 2007-08 and $200,000 per year beginning in fiscal year 2008-09 for three Consultant positions for the Career Center in Rumford. However, the bill was reported out as "Ought Not to Pass" with the understanding that the Department of Labor would study the Rumford pilot program -- that connects Adult Education, Career and Technical Education, and Maine Community College System programs to serve the needs of rural areas -- and report back to the Labor Committee.

- LD 572, "An Act To Fund the Western Maine Career Centers," sponsored by Rep. Mills, was enacted as Private & Special Law 2007, Chapter 31, and provided a one-time General Fund appropriation of $15,000 in fiscal year 2007-08 to sustain the Career Centers in Wilton, Rumford and South Paris.

As the Commission was convened in September, President Fitzsimmons of the Maine Community College System was in the midst of a statewide "listening tour" of rural communities to determine how Maine's community colleges could better serve the workforce and economic development needs of the state's rural areas. He noted that 44% of Maine's population resides in rural areas and expressed concerns about the growing gaps in educational attainment and income levels between urban and rural areas of the state. President Fitzsimmon's initial observations were that the workforce and economic development needs of the state's rural areas are significant and cannot be addressed solely by the Maine Community College System. He suggested that our current state-driven, workforce education and economic development approaches need to be reframed as regional or community-driven models to become workable for our rural areas.

The Franklin County Community College Network (FCCCN) is a shining example of how this can be done in rural Maine. It is a partnership of community leaders, business leaders, the Community College, Adult Education programs, and the Career Center, among others. Until 2005, Franklin County lacked the physical presence of a community college campus or satellite

center. The convergence of existing education, community and business resources has helped to launch and expand educational and training opportunities for county residents.

The network has established a pathway program to provide students with a seamless transition from high school to a successful career path and has been involved in creating a trades pre-apprenticeship program, where students learn welding and other manufacturing-specific training. The Adult Education programs continue to provide services to adults seeking to enroll in college, including college readiness programs. Community college classes are offered in partnership with Central Maine Community College and are located at area high schools, career and technical education center, and the regional applied technology center. The network was instrumental in providing scholarships in 2007 to every Franklin County student who applied for financial support to enroll in a community college course.

Findings

Workforce development needs to be at the top of the Legislature's policy agenda. Issues for rural areas of Maine are very different from the urban areas of the State. State policymakers and workforce education providers need to be sensitive to the particular needs of rural and urban areas in order to provide sustainable models that work for the circumstances of each setting. Partnerships with community leadership and employers, including industry and small business, must be part of the equation as we reframe existing programs that provide employment services to rural communities. We must engage with business to find out what their needs are and tailor programs where education and training actually leads to a job. The "Fitzsimmons report" from the Maine Community College System "statewide listening tour," together with Labor Commissioner Fortman's transmittal of both the "Rep. Saviello report" and the "Rep. Bryant report" on the roles of Career Centers in rural areas, can provide the Legislature with some of the missing pieces to the puzzle.

Recommendation #9. *Provide comprehensive and coordinated career counseling and postsecondary education access resources targeted to adult students in rural and urban areas of the state and located at the campuses or centers of the Maine Community College System in a manner that is sensitive to the particular needs of these students in rural and urban settings.*

Prior Learning Assessments

Discussion

Prior learning assessments are offered on most college campuses in Maine, but are not well advertised or understood by the general public. After going through an assessment process, adult students may achieve college credits for relevant training or work experience as approved by the college faculty. The Department of Labor initiated a workgroup in 2006 to advance public awareness of this process and coordination among campuses. This workgroup has surveyed all campuses to assess current "prior learning assessment" systems, created a generic "prior learning assessments" presentation and made it available at key venues, and spawned a University of Southern Maine group to coordinate across the university system. The University of Southern

Maine and the University of Maine at Augusta lead this effort and now have a formal agreement to accept "prior learning assessments" between the two institutions. A web page with a "prior learning assessment" matrix is now available on the Department of Labor website.

Findings

Prior learning assessments are a vehicle to speed up the time frame for completion of postsecondary education for adults with relevant work or training experience, which would reduce the time to credential and substantially reduce the cost of education for eligible adults.

There is a need for the campuses of the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System to implement a coherent policy on recognizing "prior learning assessments" for adult students. After going through an assessment process, adult students should achieve college credits for relevant training or work experience as approved by the college faculty.

Recommendation #10. *The Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System should implement a coherent policy on recognizing "prior learning assessments" for adult students. In order to increase appropriate referrals for a prior learning assessment, the public colleges should seek to create a single checklist that Career Centers, Adult Educators, and educational access providers can use to determine which adults are likely to benefit from prior learning assessments.*

Design of Program Offerings, Including Nontraditional Hours and Learning Opportunities

Discussion

It is often difficult for low-income parents in college to arrange full-day child care when their children's vacation schedule does not correspond to scheduled breaks at their college. This can result in additional cost and unnecessary family stress that could be avoided by coordinating the scheduling of these breaks.

Findings

A recent survey of adult students at Kennebec Valley Community College indicated a strong preference for the coordination of vacation schedules. Failure to coordinate these breaks results in additional cost to students and puts additional stress on discretionary funds available at these institutions for child care costs.

Recommendation #11. *To the extent possible, schedules of public kindergarten to grade 12 schools, including vacation breaks, should be coordinated with the scheduled breaks at the respective campuses of the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System in order to enable working adults with families to attend their college courses and provide childcare for their children.*

STRATEGY 3: ESTABLISH BENCHMARKS & MEASURE RESULTS

Discussion

In her presentation to the Commission, Julie Strawn, Senior Policy Analyst for the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), also noted that one of the biggest data challenges confronting Maine is the lack of longitudinal outcome data, across the continuum of education and training programs serving adults, and including wage data. She indicated that without this kind of information we cannot identify gaps in services, transition points at which adults fall through the cracks, or demonstrate which approaches improve success. Steps to align and improve the data collection systems in Maine include: (1) documenting what workers and employers most need from public workforce education and training programs; (2) mapping the biggest leaks in the skilled worker pipeline; (3) having the data capacity to follow individual adults over time, across programs, and into the labor market; (4) having the ability to disaggregate results by income, gender, age, race; (5) having the ability to demonstrate which new approaches work best; and (6) taking what works to scale.

Findings

It is critically important that the State assess its progress in helping low-wage adults achieve postsecondary education. This requires a consistent system of data collection across Adult Education programs, Career Centers, community college and university campuses, as well as a commitment to track these data collectively on an annual statewide basis. While these entities currently collect pieces of these data, it is not done in a uniform way -- even among campuses in the same systems. Data can help to identify the "critical filter points" where many students drop out and determine what sorts of practices help students advance to further education and better jobs. It can also help to evaluate progress on critical state policy goals in this area.

It is important to create a set of benchmarks to track success in enrollment, retention and program completion for low-wage adults and reward institutional achievement of these benchmarks with an incentive payment system from additional sources of revenue. For example, additional revenues to create a state-funded flexible financial aid program to help students with child care and transportation might be used to incentivize institutions to reach benchmarks. This aid would help their students as well as their retention rates which need improvement on many campuses throughout the state.

Low-income students face many barriers to enrollment, retention and completion and thus need highly motivated college personnel to help them make progress at each stage. The clarity provided by a system of benchmarks, plus the availability of extra support services funding, should help further motivate colleges to focus on this student population and increase these students' chances for successful credential completion.

Recommendation #12. *The Legislature should work with the Career Centers, Adult Education programs, and community college and university systems to create a uniform data*

collection system relating to nontraditional-aged students, including but not limited to: household income and employment at time of entry into the system; prior training and learning; type of program sought; retention benchmarks; "stop-out" periods when the student, due to emergency or other necessity, must leave the system, and, to the extent possible, reasons for leaving; type of program completed; completion dates; duration of time in school; and outcome data, such as their employment and wages within four six month intervals after graduation. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet should undertake a review of all current indicators across systems, assess existing data collection systems, and recommend a uniform set of indicators, databases and surveys that should be established and updated. (See also Recommendation #14.)

Recommendation #13. *Policymakers should create a system of benchmarks that track success in enrollment, retention and credential completion for low-income adults and reward institutions that achieve these benchmarks through an incentive payment system using additional sources of revenue. The system designed to measure performance must ensure a consistent measurement program for each program provider across the system. Incentive awards to institutions should be based on success in meeting benchmarks as well as on a matrix that considers and rewards, for example: student access to dedicated staff for advising and support; the extent to which federal financial aid is maximized for students through application of "professional judgment" or other strategies; the existence of a properly executed memorandum of understanding with a college transition program to provide seamless transition for these students to their campus; completion rates to certificate or degree (e.g., 3 years for 2-year program and 6 years for 4-year programs, while making appropriate distinctions between "drop outs" and "stop outs"). As part of this tracking system, the Maine Community College System, the University of Maine System and the Finance Authority of Maine should be directed to report on low-income Pell Grant recipients or Maine State Grant recipients in a manner that permits tracking the progress of and outcome data relating to these recipients. The tracking system should also track job acquisition, employment rate, wage rate of participants, and reduction of individuals receiving public assistance. (See also Recommendation #19.)*

STRATEGY #4: STRENGTHEN COORDINATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

Discussion

The current education and workforce development system, so far as it exists, is fragmented, lacks focus and is without clear priorities. There is a need to strengthen the current system, to create a seamless process that moves the adult education participant and the high school graduate along the path to a good-paying job.

Coordination built upon the "Career Center" model is useful, but there is also a need to address the perception that the career center is the "unemployment office" and not a place to begin college preparation. The main purpose of Career Centers is to connect people to employment; a secondary role is to retrain people for employment. There is a need to refocus programs and resources into a "consumer-driven" system in order to make a uniform "package of supports" available in a convenient manner, so that people in need (regardless of whether they

are at a Career Center or a community college system) receive the necessary information and resources to enter or continue along a career pathway.

The recently-established Governor's Workforce Cabinet is designed to focus attention of state agencies on workforce development and training needs in Maine and to foster coordination across state agencies. The cabinet meets monthly and includes the Department of Labor, Department of Economic & Community Development, Maine Department of Education, Department of Health & Human Services, University of Maine System, Maine Community College System, Maine State Housing Authority, and Finance Authority of Maine.

The Maine Department of Education has reported to the Cabinet that it received $3.5 million, 3-year grant for data collection to track students from high school into postsecondary education and into employment, tracking where they are employed and what they earn along the way. This grant offers an opportunity for developing greater accountability within the system. Commissioner Fortman and President Fitzsimmons indicated to the committee that the Cabinet will review the opportunities provided by this grant to track the performance of our education and workforce development system.

As the Commission was in the midst of its deliberations, the Maine Department of Labor began to promulgate rules for the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program, which was established through legislation enacted during the First Regular Session; funding for the program will begin in April 2008 and it is too early to know what we can learn from it.

Findings

Accountability in the system is difficult to achieve but essential. As we know from the low college achievement rate of our current adult population as a whole, we must do more to help adults enroll and succeed. Low-income students need even more assistance. It is critical to track performance and results at each step along the pathway, from getting students enrolled in college through completion of a degree program and into new or better jobs.

Commission members support the "reward for performance" concept as an incentive for reallocating existing resources to program delivery and service providers in order to: (1) increase the number or availability of counselors provided to advise low-wage, low-skilled individuals; (2) increase the number of low-wage, low-skilled individuals that enter a preparation program or enroll in a postsecondary education or training program; (3) increase the number of low-wage, low-skilled individuals that complete a degree or certificate program that prepares them for high-wage jobs in industries with significant demand for skilled workers; (4) increase the number of low-wage, low-skilled individuals that obtain a higher-wage job as compared to the wages earned for their job prior to entering the career pathway; and (4) decrease the number of low-wage, low-skilled individuals that are eligible for public benefits.

Recommendation #14. *Develop a consistent measurement and accountability system to track Maine's progress in increasing the number of low-wage, low-skilled adults who attain postsecondary education. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet should consider the feasibility of*

utilizing the Department of Education's three-year grant funding to track the path of secondary school students, including participation in Adult Education programs, enrollment in postsecondary education and training programs, through completion of a postsecondary education degree and certificate program, and into employment in a new or better job. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet should also design a measurement and accountability system to increase and to track Maine's progress in increasing the number of low-wage, low-skilled adults who attain postsecondary education built upon the existing data collection and management capacity of state agencies and postsecondary education systems and should report on its proposed system to the Education Committee and Labor Committee by July 1, 2008. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet should include in its report its recommendation for an appropriate oversight body to keep track of students and their success. (See also Recommendation #12.)

Recommendation #15. *Policymakers should seek to coordinate the design and implementation of a public awareness campaign to inform low-skilled, low-wage adults about the package of postsecondary education and workforce development resources available to meet their education and training needs. (See also Recommendation #22.)*

STRATEGY #5: PROVIDE RESOURCES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LOW-INCOME, ADULT STUDENTS

The Need for Additional Resources for Student Advising and Counseling to Help Students Navigate Past the Academic, Social and Economic Barriers that Affect Attendance

Discussion

Julie Strawn, Senior Policy Analyst for the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), presented the Commission with a number of contextual factors that frame the need for providing additional resources to meet the needs of low-income, adult students.

There is a widespread problem of low wage work:

- Nearly one in four Maine workers (22%) earns below poverty-level wages;
- A higher percentage of Maine workers (7.9%) hold more than one job than in most other states – the 12th highest rate in the U.S; and
- Higher rates of citizens are poor or near poor in Maine than in other New England states, and Maine has the lowest median household income in New England.

Education and earnings increasingly are linked:

- Earnings rise and unemployment falls at each higher level of educational attainment; and
- Postsecondary education or training is not a panacea to problem of low wage work, but in a good labor market the right kind of credential can be a ticket out of poverty.

There are looming skills shortages in some sectors and regions:

- Between 2004 and 2014, 24 of the 30 fastest-growing occupations nationally will require postsecondary education or training -- either an occupational certificate or a degree;
- For almost two-thirds of Mainers' the highest education credential is a high school diploma or less (8% lack a high school diploma or general educational development (G.E.D.) equivalency diploma, 36% have a high school diploma or G.E.D. equivalency diploma. only, and 20% have some college, but no degree);
- Between 2004 and 2014, the largest percentage growth in jobs in Maine will be in jobs requiring associates degrees, which will pay (on average) $22.48 an hour (nearly as much as jobs requiring a bachelors degree);
- Between 1992 and 2001, the number of associates and bachelors degrees conferred in Maine both fell (in-migration has offset this situation for a bachelors degree, but there has been little or no growth in the number of Mainers with associate degrees, and large numbers of Maine adults have some college, but no degree); and
- National data finds that nearly two-thirds of our 2020 workforce is already beyond the reach of our elementary and secondary school systems; younger adults (age 25 to 34) are less educated than previous generation (age 45 to 54).

These facts and trends suggest that we need to "grow our own" skilled workforce from within the workforce we already have.

The wages and earnings of workers with increasing levels of education are indicators of how much value the labor market places on postsecondary education. There is a significant wage premium for Maine workers who have an associate degree or higher. Workers with an associate degree earn $6.79 (or 47%) more per hour than those with only a postsecondary vocational certificate.

Both in Maine and nationally, annual earnings of full-time workers increase significantly with each successive level of educational attainment. In Maine, workers with some college earn 17% more per year than those with a high school diploma, and workers with bachelor's degrees earn 48% more than those with only a high school diploma. The differences are larger in the U.S. as a whole (22% and 70%, respectively). Between 1999 and 2005, annual real earnings increased only for workers with higher levels of education. In Maine, only workers with advanced degrees earned more on average (in real terms) in 2005 than in 1999. In the U.S., workers with bachelor's and advanced degrees earned more in 2005 than in 1999.

New resources are needed to fund additional counselors to help adult students navigate the existing postsecondary education and training system and the workforce development system. The Commission's "navigation counseling" proposals overlap with the "maximize existing resources" and "aligning existing systems" proposals to realign programs and services with the needs of adults who seek skills to secure good-paying jobs in high-demand occupations.

<u>Issues Maine Adults Face to Enroll In and Complete Postsecondary Education</u>

The Commission authorized the design and launch of a survey of low-wage, low-skilled adults to enable Commission members to gain a greater understanding of the extraordinary barriers facing these individuals and the supports and resources they found to be valuable as they attempted to overcome these challenges and complete a postsecondary education program. The survey was sponsored by the Maine Center on Economic Development and the Maine Education Opportunity Center; and the following summarizes the report presented to the Commission at its November 19, 2007 meeting. Survey results are attached as **Appendix E**.

Methodology. In October 2007, two computer-based surveys were conducted of Maine adults using a convenience sample methodology. One was intended for adults currently attending college and the other was intended for adults who are not attending college but would like to be. The surveys were created on surveymonkey.com and distributed by email to already established lists of adults available through the Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods, community college personnel and the Maine Education Opportunity Center. The identity of the respondents was not requested.

There are many limitations to this study. These are not random samples; and, as a computer-based survey, there was no control over the population distribution. There was no way of controlling for whether or not the same individuals responded to the survey more than once. The resulting sample sizes were small. **These results are not to be considered statistically significant and should not be quoted as such**. They may be considered illustrative of the experiences of some Maine adults when considering or trying to complete postsecondary education.

Summary of Survey Findings. Based on ***"convenience sample" surveys*** conducted in October 2007, the following findings may be considered illustrative of experiences Maine adults face when considering whether to enroll in postsecondary education or how to complete programs once enrolled.

- About two-thirds of the respondents who were not attending college currently had previously enrolled in a degree program, but stopped before completion. Over one-third of those currently in college had done the same.

- Finances are the most frequently cited reason for not attending college and for dropping out once started. Likewise, help with finances was considered the main form of assistance that would help adults enroll in and complete degree programs. Finances included the cost of tuition as well as the cost of maintaining health care, child care, and reliable transportation.

- After help with financial aid, respondents noted that having counselors to help navigate the system would be the next most important help in getting them to enroll in college or getting them through their current degree program.

- Most currently enrolled respondents were working. One out of ten respondents was working more than one paid job. Nearly two-thirds were going to school part-time -- some taking one class at a time. Some noted that they were ineligible for financial aid because they were going part-time.

- Respondents noted that not having enough time to juggle all responsibilities while in school was a major challenge. Some noted family needs and others conflicts with work time as reasons they dropped out. Nearly three-quarters of those respondents who were working and in college were not getting any help from their employer for tuition, books or paid time off to go to school.

- Of those who were not attending college, about one out of five had student loans from previous college courses and most of these loans were in default, presenting another challenge for getting back into school.

- Of those attending college, nearly one out of five estimated they would have more than $20,000 in school loans by the time their program was completed. Four out of ten had also had to borrow from a bank or accrue credit care debt to cover school and living expenses. Only one-quarter got federal education tax credits in 2006.

Reprioritizing State Budget Decisions and the Need for Additional Resources

In an era of tight budgets and limited resources, Maine state government must reconsider its policy choices and funding priorities if state policymakers are to make meaningful progress in addressing the workforce education and development of needs Maine adults and the economic development goals of all regions of the state – urban and rural.

President Fitzsimmons reported that the expansion of Maine Community College System student enrollment has been accomplished with little state support. Over last 4 years, Maine Community College System added 3,500 students, at an average cost of $4,000 per student, for a total of $14,000,000; but in the past 4 years has received an increase in funding of only $500,000, leaving Maine Community College System under funded by $13,500,000. The Maine Community College System is only funded to meet needs of 25% of population that needs our help.

Findings

Unless the State invests additional resources to support college students, it will not be possible to meet the postsecondary education and occupational needs of our low-wage and low-skilled adult population.

Packaging workforce development and training resources, including appropriate information technology resources, will help maximize resources available to meet the unique postsecondary education and training needs of individual consumers.

An opportunity exists to establish "career pathways" pilot projects through the federal Perkins IV Act that allows Community Colleges to fund pathways projects that are occupationally-oriented with Adult Education providers. Experience with this model in other regions of the country has proven successful in enabling working adults to progress along a carefully structured path with visible rewards at each step including credentials and wage increases.

Recommendation #16. *Policymakers should provide additional resources to develop uniform procedures at all Career Centers to assist low-income, low-skilled individuals in accessing a package of supports for which they are eligible and need to succeed in a postsecondary education or training program. (See also Recommendation #1.)*

Recommendation #17 *Policymakers should provide additional resources for career counseling, program planning and other support services needed by low-wage individuals to access a postsecondary education or training program at the Maine Community College System. (See also Recommendation #2.)*

Recommendation #18. *Policymakers should provide resources to establish "career pathways" in order to prepare low-wage, low-skilled individuals for high-wage jobs in sectors of Maine's economy with significant demand for skilled workers. (See also Recommendation #5.)*

Recommendation #19. *Policymakers should provide resources to create a system of benchmarks that tracks performance in enrollment, retention and credential completion for low-wage, low-skilled adults and that rewards performance of the institutions that contributed toward the achievement of the relevant benchmarks with incentive funds from a pool of resources established for this purpose. Additional resources will be needed by the institutions participating in the indicator selection process and potentially for upgrades in data systems. Resources will also be needed by the entity that is responsible for collecting and aggregating the data. (See also Recommendation #13.)*

Recommendation #20. *Policymakers should target new financial aid program funding to meet the unmet financial needs of low-wage, low-skilled adults to enable them to access education and training (e.g., similar to Parents and Scholars and the Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund to help adult students overcome barriers of transportation, childcare, and other supports). Policymakers should make postsecondary education and training more accessible and affordable for low-wage adults by creating a flexible, "consumer-friendly" state financial aid program to address the unmet needs of non-traditional students. The financial aid program should include funds for low-income adult students to enroll in summer school courses.*

Recommendation #21. *Policymakers should invest state dollars to match federal TRIO funds (funds provided under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965) to help low-income adults who are first-generation college students or students with disabilities succeed in college. For every additional $150,000, the Maine Education Opportunity Centers can fund programs that serve an additional other 500 students ($280 per student served).*

Recommendation #22. *Policymakers should provide funds necessary to design and implement a public awareness campaign to inform low-skilled, low-wage adults about the package of postsecondary education and workforce development resources available to meet their education and training needs. (See also recommendation # 15.)*

APPENDIX A

Authorizing Joint Order

Senate Paper 717, Joint Order
123rd Legislature, First Regular Session

ORDERED, the House concurring, that the Commission To Develop Strategies To Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-wage, Low-skilled Adults is established as follows.

1. Commission established. The Commission To Develop Strategies To Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-wage, Low-skilled Adults, referred to in this order as "the commission," is established.

2. Membership. The commission consists of the following 13 members:

A. Two members of the Senate, who may not be from the same political party, appointed by the President of the Senate;

B. Five members of the House of Representatives, of whom no more than 2 may be from the same party, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

C. One representative of a low-income advocacy group, appointed by the President of the Senate;

D. One representative of the Maine Educational Opportunity Center, appointed by the President of the Senate;

E. One representative of a public higher education system with expertise in financial aid and access programs, appointed by the President of the Senate;

F. One representative of a statewide organization representing the economic interests of women, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

G. One representative of a statewide organization with expertise in economic policy analysis, especially relating to challenges faced by low-wage, low-skilled adults, appointed by the President of the Senate; and

H. One employer with experience in, and who has demonstrated support of, educational programs for employees, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The commission may invite the participation and input of the Commissioner of Labor or the commissioner's designee.

3. Commission chairs. The first-named Senator is the Senate chair of the commission and the first-named member of the House is the House chair of the commission.

4. Appointments; convening of commission. All appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the passage of this order. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been made. When the appointment of all members has been completed, the chairs of the commission shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission.

5. Duties. The commission shall study and make recommendations on ways to assist low-wage, low-skilled adults to overcome barriers to obtaining postsecondary degrees or occupational credentials to achieve the goals of improving the economy of the State and increasing the number of workers who earn a family-sustaining wage. In performing its duties, the commission shall consider:

A. The need for remedial or developmental education;

B. The availability of financial aid for nontraditional students that takes into account their need for flexible and part-time attendance;

C. The need for a financial aid package that recognizes the full array of education-related expenses that nontraditional students incur, including expenses for child care and transportation and lost wages as workers reduce their work hours to attend classes;

D. The need for additional resources for student advising and counseling to help students navigate academic challenges and social and economic barriers that affect attendance;

E. The alignment of related program resources in other departments of State Government to help students with access to postsecondary education; and

F. The design of program offerings, including modules, nontraditional hours and distance learning opportunities.

6. Staff assistance. The Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the commission.

7. Report. No later than December 5, 2007, the commission shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. Pursuant to Joint Rule 353, the commission is not authorized to introduce legislation. Upon receipt of the report required by this section, the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, pursuant to Joint Rule 353, may introduce a bill during the session to which the report is submitted to implement its recommendations on matters relating to the study.

APPENDIX B

Membership List, Commission To Develop Strategies To Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-wage, Low-skilled Adults

Commission to Develop Strategies to Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-wage, Low-skilled Adults

Joint Order, SP 717

Wednesday, August 22, 2007

Appointment(s) by the President

Sen. Elizabeth H. Mitchell 277 Cushnoc Road Vassalboro, ME 04989	Senate Members (one from each major political party)
Christine Hastedt Maine Equal Justice Project 126 Sewall Street Augusta, ME 04330	Representing Low-income Advocacy Groups
Karen Hadley Keim 28 Arbor Drive Veazie, ME 04401	Representing Maine Educational Opportunity Center
Kathleen M. Moore 56 Burleigh Street Waterville, ME 04901	Representing a Public Higher Education System
Lisa Pohlmann Maine Center for Economic Policy P.O. Box 2422 Augusta, ME 04338-2422	Representing a Statewide Organization with Economic Expertise
Sen. Dana L. Dow 30 Kalers Pond Road Waldoboro, ME 04572	Senate Member

Appointment(s) by the Speaker

Rep. Dawn Hill - Chair P.O. Box 701 Cape Neddick, ME 03902	House Members (no more than 2 from each political party)
Rep. Jayne Crosby Giles 15 Tozier Street Belfast, ME 04915	House Members (no more than 2 from each political party)
Rep. Patricia B. Sutherland 1738 Chapman Road Chapman, ME 04757	House Members (no more than 2 from each political party)

Rep. Christopher Rector 30 Knox Street Thomaston, ME 04861	House Members (no more than 2 from each political party)
Rep. Thomas Saviello 60 Applegate Lane Wilton, ME 04294	House Members (no more than 2 from each political party)
Judy Katzel 22 Scrimshaw Lane Saco, ME 04072	Representing Employers with Experience in Employee Education Programs
Sarah Standiford 109 Toothaker Road Richmond, ME 04357	Representing a Statewide Organization Representing Economic Interests of Women

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Staff:

Phillip D. McCarthy, Ed.D.
Legislative Analyst
Office of Policy & Legal Analysis
Maine State Legislature

APPENDIX C

An Overview of Workforce Development Programs in Maine

	PROGRAM FOCUS	PROGRAM SERVICE POPULATION AND ACCESSIBILITY				PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION			
	Program Goal & Services Model	**Numbers Served**	**Demographics**	**Service Population Eligibility**	**Location**	**Budget and Funding**	**Primary Administrative Authority**	**Partners**	**Program Contact Information**
Parents as Scholars	Student financial aid program for low-income parents. Goal is to enable parents in low-income families to pursue post-secondary education as a path to self-sufficiency. Provides financial aid equivalent to TANF benefit, MaineCare and support services equivalent to those provided to TANF recipients: (1) Monthly Cash Assistance Benefit - same amount and eligibility criteria as TANF Program; and (2) Support Services - to support completion of 2 or 4-year degree program - including, but not limited to: Child Care, Transportation reimbursement, Auto Repair and Insurance, Books, Supplies, and Education Expenses (not covered by financial aid), and Eye Care.	Maximum of 2000 participants at any one time. Average monthly caseload is 930. In 2006, 2400+ individuals were served.	In 2006, # Males = 323 # Females = 2,081 Avg. age = 28 Avg. household size = 2.8	Qualify for TANF assistance and must not possess a marketable bachelor's degree. Children in household must be deprived of the care & support of a parent - most PaS participants are in single-parent households. Household Income less than $12,275 for family of 3 (TANF income guidelines). Age: No age requirement , but must be head-of-house or h-o-h spouse. To remain eligible, must be enrolled in a 2-year or 4-year post-secondary education program, must maintain a 2.0 GPA and participate in education, training, study and work-site activities.	Statewide: Access to services available at all 16 regional DHHS offices.	Budget FY06: $12,253,480 Funding: 2006 Federal TANF Block Grant expenditures of $4,929,540; and 2006 State General Fund expenditures of $5,423,940.	DHHS, Office of Integrated Access and Support	Parents as Scholars partners with community colleges and universities, Career Centers, MEOC, Community Action programs, Child Care Resource Development Centers, Maine Centers for Women, Work & Community and other agencies.	Dean Henderson ASPIRE Program Manager DHHS, Office of Integrated Access and Support 11 State House Station Augusta, ME 04330 (207) 287-5089 dean.e.henderson@maine.gov
Maine Education Opportunity Centers	MEOC provides postsecondary educational planning information and assistance to adults of a low-income and/or first generation background. Goal is to increase the number of adults attending college by providing quality admissions, financial aid and career exploration counseling.	In 2006, 2,500 participated in workshops, 631 enrolled in college and 1,694 developed career and educational plans.	Not Available	MEOC assists any adult, age 19 or above, wishing to re-enter a formal education setting. At least 2/3 of students must be low-income, first generation college students and in need of services to go to college.	Located at University of Maine; provide public workshops across the state.	Budget FY06: $660,785 Funding: Funded entirely by the U.S. Dept. of Education and sponsored by the University of Maine's College of Education and Human Development (in-kind services).	MEOC	Partner with 900 agencies across state, including Adult Education programs, MDOL Career Centers, community colleges and universities, and public and private non-profit agencies (e.g., Women, Work & Community).	Karen Hadley Keim Associate Director Maine Educational Opportunity Center 310 Chadbourne Hall Orono, Maine 04469-5713 800-540-0493
Maine College Transition Program	Goal is to enable 10,000 Maine adults who are not academically prepared to receive supports they need to successfully transition to college and earn a degree. Services include a comprehensive course of study leading to college admission and completion. Includes classes combined with counseling and college readiness activities. The model includes individual educational planning; individual assessment, basic skills development instruction, use of a peer cohort and coaching system as participant transitions to college.	Program took effect in FY07. Pilot programs in 6 sites 2003-2006 enrolled 684 people in total.	Male: 216 Female: 468 Avg. age: 28.5	18 years or older	Pilot sites: Caribou, Rockland, Portland, E. Sullivan, S.Berwick, Lewiston and Belfast. (Note: with funding in FY08 budget, the program will expand to 22 sites statewide)	Budget: FY06: Sites received $45,000+/- annually. FY08: General Fund funding for sites range from $15,000-$30,000 Funding: FY06: Nellie Mae Foundation FY07: $200,000 General Fund, Betterment Fund grant, Nellie Mae Foundation grant, MELMAC FY08: $600,000 General Fund FY09: $700,000 General Fund	FY06: Nellie Mae Foundation FY07: Maine DOE	FY06: n/a FY07: Local Adult Education programs, Maine colleges and universities, and the Maine Compact for Higher Education	Larinda Meade 32 Willow Lane Portland, Maine 04102 756-8560, 228-3457 (cell) LarindaM@maine.rr.com or MaineCollegeTransitions@gmail.com
MELMAC Education Foundation Grant Program	Provides grants to Adult Ed programs to help more Maine adults aspire to and go on to college by funding programs designed to increase students' aspirations for higher education and to help students connect those aspirations to a plan that ensures enrollment in college. Foundation provides grants to Adult Ed programs; some high schools partner with their local Adult Ed program; and some Adult Ed programs work with multiple Adult Ed programs and sites. Services include college visits, college access programs targeted to aspiring adults, and increased advisor time to work one-on-one with students.	11,000 total Adult Ed students. 1,200 targeted with college access grants.	Not Available	Adult Ed students in developmental courses, in college access programs or in general GED/diploma track	25 Adult Ed program sites (see MELMAC slide #4)	Budget: FY06 $72,000 Funding: FY06 $72,000 in total grants awarded from foundation; $4,000 grants awarded to selected programs.	MELMAC Education Foundation	Adult Education programs	Wendy L. Ault Executive Director MELMAC Education Foundation 620-7050 info@MELMACFoundation.org
Governor's Training Initiative	GTI provides partial reimbursement of training costs to employers who hire new employees and/or retain or upgrade their existing workforce. Investment is intended to assist innovative skill development that advances the company and the worker to a higher level of winning performance including assessment and job task analysis, workplace literacy, high performance skills, technical training, higher education, on-the-job training, workplace safety, and competitive retraining.	Number of companies assisted = 43. Number of new hires trained = 480. Number of incumbent workers trained = 1691. Number of Maine workers impacted by GTI = 2171.	Not Available	Maine employers, new hires and incumbent workers	Statewide - 22 Career Centers	Budget: Program Year 2006 expenditures: $5,703,364 Funding: State General Fund expenditures in PY06: $1,253,021 and Private Sector match in PY06: $4,449,320.	Maine Bureau of Employment Services	Maine Department of Labor, Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, Center for Workforce Research and Information	McCann, Edmund, Director Bureau of Employment Services (BES) Dept. of Labor 45 Commerce Drive Augusta, ME 04330 (207) 623-7996 edmund.j.mccann@maine.gov
Career Centers	Career Centers treat every worker as an individual and help him or her to return to work as quickly as possible. Services offered range from self-directed job search and career exploration using the Internet and library resources to staff-assisted services in the form of individualized career counseling and access to financial resources to pay for education and training. Centers also offer businesses valuable services including, helping them fill job openings, train new and existing workers, and developing long term solutions to skill gap issues.	On average, 59,000 people a year seeking work are served by Career Centers. Bureau of Rehabilitation Services assists over 11,500 people with disabilities. Employers list about 18,500 job openings each year.	Not Available	Maine workers are eligible for Career Center services	Not Available	Budget: Program Year 2006 expenditures: $4,266,528 Funding: Federal expenditures in PY06: $3,946,538 and State expenditures in PY06: $319,990; funding provided by Federal Workforce Investment Act and State General Funds	Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services	Maine's four Local Workforce Investment Boards, Maine Jobs Council, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (Maine Department of Labor), Veterans Employment and Training Services, Maine Apprenticeship Program, Maine's North Star Alliance (WIRED)	McCann, Edmund, Director Bureau of Employment Services (BES) Dept. of Labor 45 Commerce Drive Augusta, ME 04330 (207) 623-7996 edmund.j.mccann@maine.gov

An Overview of Workforce Development Programs in Maine

	PROGRAM FOCUS	PROGRAM SERVICE POPULATION AND ACCESSIBILITY				PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION			
	Program Goal & Services Model	**Numbers Served**	**Demographics**	**Service Population Eligibility**	**Location**	**Budget and Funding**	**Primary Administrative Authority**	**Partners**	**Program Contact Information**
Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund	CSSF provides access to education, training and support to prepare individuals for high-wage jobs in industries with significant demand for skilled labor, to improve the economic well-being of the participants in the program and to provide employers with a skilled labor force.	Not Available (program to begin in April 2008).	Not Available (program to begin in April 2008).	Eligible applicants are at least 18 years old, do not have a marketable postsecondary degree, income is less than 200% of federal poverty level, apply for education or training for a job in an approved industry, and are determined to have aptitude to undertake and complete education or training.	Statewide - 22 Career Centers	Budget: FY08: $1,350,000 FY09: $2,950,000 (Note: Department of Labor estimates) Funding: Other Special Revenue Fund allocations estimated to be $1,350,000 in FY08 and $2,950,000 in FY09; program funded by employer contributions based on a predetermined yield.	Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services	Maine employers	McCann, Edmund, Director Bureau of Employment Services (BES) Dept. of Labor 45 Commerce Drive Augusta, ME 04330 (207) 623-7996 edmund.j.mccann@maine.gov
Maine Apprenticeship Program	MAP provides customized, systematic training through on-the-job training and related classroom instruction. MAP works collaboratively with industry leadership to define and develop competency models to provide workers with quantifiable skills that meet industry needs.	In 2006, MAP served a total of 767 individuals in all 16 counties. There were 196 active employers at the end of the year.	In 2006, Male: 78%; Female: 23%; 130 youth served in pre-apprenticeships	Maine workers are eligible for full-time apprenticeships; and juniors and seniors enrolled full-time in H.S. are eligible to participate in part-time work in pre-apprenticeship programs (must be 16 years of age or older to participate in either program)	Statewide - 22 Career Centers	Budget: FY07 $582,000 Funding: $582,000 General Fund appropriation for FY07.	Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services	Maine Community College System, Maine Department of Labor, Maine Association of Cooperative Educators, Maine's Career & Technical Education schools	McCann, Edmund, Director Bureau of Employment Services (BES) Dept. of Labor 45 Commerce Drive Augusta, ME 04330 (207) 623-7996 edmund.j.mccann@maine.gov
Maine Quality Centers	MQC established in 1994 with the dual mission to meet the workforce education and training needs of new and expanding businesses and to provide new employment and advancement opportunities for Maine people. Program purposes are job creation, workforce preparation and partnership creation. Project funding supports customized training provided by a Community College.	To date, MQC has worked with over 200 businesses throughout Maine's 16 counties to train over 12,000 individuals.	Of all businesses served, 59% had less than 100 employees, and 66% were in 1 of the State's 7 economic development targeted industry sectors.	Businesses with Maine locations that meet program requirements of expansion, skill levels, competitive wage and employer supported benefits. Trainees must be Maine residents and meet any College training requirements.	Statewide - services delivered through any of Maine's seven Community Colleges	Budget: FY08 $846,610 Funding: Maine Community College System General fund appropriation.	Maine Community College System	MQC partners with the Maine Dept. of Economic & Community Development, Maine Dept. of Labor, local education providers, Maine & Company and other regional economic development entities to coordinate resources and offerings.	James McGowan, Director Maine Quality Centers Center for Career Development, SMCC 2 Fort Rd South Portland, ME 04106 (207)767-5210, ext. 4107 jmcgowan@ccd.me.edu
Maine's North Star Alliance	Maine's North Star Alliance (NSAI) is an industry focused, industry driven economic and workforce development initiative devised to grow and sustain the industry cluster of boat building, marine trade, and composites through the advancement of technology, expansion of markets, improvements in infrastructure, and the creation of high skilled, high quality jobs in coastal Maine.	Not Available	Not Available	Eligibility requirements differ by program: Business Training Initiative New Hire On-the-Job Training Educational Award Program Apprenticeship Program Pre-Apprenticeship Program Lifelong Learning Accounts (NSAI-assisted)	Maine's NSAI partnership focuses on transforming the workforce and economy of coastal Maine and includes the eight Maine coastal counties (York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, Hancock, Waldo, and Washington), as well as the additional four counties most affected by the closure of the Brunswick Naval Air Station (Androscoggin, Kennebec, Penobscot, and Piscataquis)	Budget: $15,000,000 over the 3-year period of the grant (2006-2008). Funding: $15,000,000 grant funding (awarded over 3-years) by U.S. Department of Labor's "Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development" Initiative (WIRED).	Governor's Office of Redevelopment, Reemployment and Business Support	Brunswick Municipal Government, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Eastern Maine Development Corp., Maine Built Boats, Maine Community College System, Maine Community Foundation, Maine Composites Alliance, Maine Departments of Labor and Economic and Community Development, Maine Marine Trade Assn., Maine Technology Institute, Midcoast Business Development and Planning, Private Industry Representation, Small Business Administration, Small Business Development Corp., University of Maine Advanced Engineered Wood Composites Center, Venture Capital Representation, Workforce Investment Boards of Aroostook/Washington, Central/Western Maine, Coastal Counties, and Tri-County.	Christina Sklarz-Libby Program Manager (207) 287-4599 Christina.Sklarz-Libby@Maine.gov

APPENDIX D

INFORMATION PRESENTED OR DISTRUBUTED TO THE COMMISSION TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO INCREASE POSTSECONDARY ACCESS, RETENTION AND COMPLETION FOR LOW-WAGE, LOW-SKILLED ADULTS

MEETING 1: September 18th, 2007

Presentations:

John Dorrer, Director of Labor Market Information Services, Department of Labor: A profile of the population of low-wage, low-skilled adults that need access to postsecondary degrees or occupational credentials.

Barbara VanBurgel, Director, Office of Integrated Access and Support, Department of Health and Human Services: A review of barriers to postsecondary access, retention and completion.

Judy Pelletier, Program Coordinator, Trade & Rapid Response, Department of Health and Human Services: An overview of Career Centers, Trade & Rapid Response and the Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund.

Larinda Meade, Project Coordinator, Maine College Transition Program: An overview of the Maine College Transition Program.

Karen Hadley Keim, Associate Director, Maine Educational Opportunity Center: An overview of Maine Educational Opportunity Centers.

Materials Distributed:

PowerPoint presentation: Labor Market Information Services, Maine Department of Labor presentation, titled "Maine Employment and Workforce Dynamics: Trends and Developments Shaping the Future."

PowerPoint presentation: Office of Integrated Access and Support, Maine Department of Health & Human Services, titled "Postsecondary Education Access: Benefits of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families ("TANF") Program and the Parents as Scholars ("PaS") Program for Eligible Adults."

Brochures: Maine Department of Labor ("MDOL") programs: (1) The newly-created "Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund"; (2) "One-Stop Career Centers"; (3) The Trade Adjustment Assistance ("TAA") and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance ("ATAA") Services and Benefits; (4) Workforce Investment Act ("WIA") Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs; (5) The Governor's Training Initiative; (6) Maine's Apprenticeship Program; and (7) Maine's Lifelong Learning Accounts.

Handout: Maine College Transition Program, including a timeline of programs and initiatives that pre-dated and led to the Maine College Transition Program, as well as a listing of the 22 programs across the State and their fiscal agents.

Reports: Overview of the federally-funded Maine Educational Opportunity Centers ("MEOC"), including the "TRiO in Maine Yearbook 06-07" and a 7-minute videotape titled "Getting Through the Barriers: The Support You Need to Succeed in College."

MEETING 2: October 5th, 2007

Presentations:

Laura Fortman, Commissioner, Maine Department of Labor: A review of Department of Labor programs, resources and initiatives.

John Fitzsimmons, President, Maine Community College System and Dr. Barbara, President, Kennebec Valley Community College: A review of Maine Community College System programs, resources and initiatives.

Julie Strawn, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), CO: "Increasing Skills, Wages and Growth" – A review of best practices in other states and jurisdictions.

Materials Distributed:

Report: "The Progress of Education Reform 2007: Economic & Workforce Development", Education Commission of the States.

Report: "Indicators of Higher Education Achievement in Maine", Maine Compact for Higher Education.

Survey: Maine Center for Economic Policy/Maine Educational Opportunity Center Surveys (Adults attending college, adults not attending college).

Presentation: Connect to Aspirations to a Plan Grants Adult Education Transitions Programs, Wendy L. Ault, Executive Director, MELMAC Education Foundation.

General information: A "Snapshot" of the National Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration (WASC), Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC).

MEETING 3: November 1st, 2007

Presentations:

Study Commission Member Lisa Pohlmann, Maine Center for Economic Policy: A presentation of survey results from the Maine Center for Economic Policy/Maine Educational Opportunity Center Survey.

Materials Distributed:

General Information: Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) Program, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Materials distributed include:

- One-Page Brochure

- September 2007 PowerPoint Presentation to the RISE Leadership Conference
- December 2005 Research Report: *I-BEST: A Program Integrating Adult Basic Education and Workforce Training.*

General Information: Maine's North Star Alliance Workforce Development Program Overview.

General Information: Maine's Software & Information Technology Industry Association (MESDA) Initiatives. Materials distributed include information about:

- MESDA's Software Testing and Usability Design Lab
- The status of software and IT jobs in Maine
- 2007 Technology Cluster Overview
- MESDA Communities of Practice.

MEETING 4: November 19th, 2007

Presentations:

Study Commission Members Lisa Pohlmann, Maine Center for Economic Policy and Karen Keim, Maine Educational Opportunity Center: A presentation of survey results from the Maine Center for Economic Policy/Maine Educational Opportunity Center Survey.

Materials Distributed:

Report: "Issues Adults Face to Enroll in and Complete Postsecondary Education: A Survey Report from the Maine Center for Economic Policy and the Maine Education Opportunity Center", November 19, 2007.

Article: "Parents as Scholars Program: A Maine Success Story" (Under review for publication in the Maine Policy Review). Sandra Butler, Professor, School of Social Work, University of Maine and Louisa Deprez, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Southern Maine.

APPENDIX E

Issues Adults Face to Enroll in and Complete Postsecondary Education

A Survey Report from the Maine Center for Economic Policy and the Maine Education Opportunity Center

November 19, 2007

Summary

Based on ***convenience sample surveys*** conducted in October 2007, the following findings may be considered illustrative of experiences Maine adults face when considering whether to enroll in postsecondary education or how to complete programs once enrolled.

- About two-thirds of the respondents who were not attending college currently had previously enrolled in a degree program but stopped before completion. Over one-third of those currently in college had done the same.

- Finances are the most frequently cited reason for not attending college and for dropping out once started. Likewise, help with finances was considered the main form of assistance that would help adults enroll in and complete degree programs. Finances included the cost of tuition as well as the cost of maintaining health care, child care, and reliable transportation.

- After help with financial aid, respondents noted that having counselors to help navigate the system would be the next most important help in getting them to enroll in college or getting them through their current degree program.

- Most currently enrolled respondents were working. One out of ten respondents were working more than one paid job. Nearly two-thirds were going to school part-time – some taking one class at a time. Some noted that they were ineligible for financial aid because they were going part-time.

- Respondents noted that not having enough time to juggle all responsibilities while in school was a major challenge. Some noted family needs and others conflicts with work time as reasons they dropped out. Nearly three-quarters of those respondents who were working and in college were not getting any help from their employer for tuition, books or time to go to school.

- Of those who were not attending college, about one out of five had student loans from previous college courses and most of these loans were in default, presenting another challenge for getting back into school.

- Of those attending college, nearly one out of five estimated they would have more than $20,000 in school loans by the time their program was completed. Four out of ten had also had to borrow from a bank or accrue credit care debt to cover school and living expenses. Only one-quarter got federal education tax credits in 2006.

Methodology

In October 2007, two computer-based surveys were conducted of Maine adults using a convenience sample methodology. One was intended for adults currently attending college and the other was intended for adults who are not attending college but would like to be. The surveys were created on surveymonkey.com and distributed by email to already established lists of adults available through the Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods, community college personnel and the Maine Education Opportunity Center. The identity of the respondents was not requested.

There are many limitations to this study. These are not random samples and as a computer-based survey there was no control over the population distribution. There was no way of controlling for whether or not the same individuals responded to the survey more than once. The resulting sample sizes were small. In sum, **these results are not to be considered statistically significant and should not be quoted as such**. They may be considered illustrative of the experiences of some Maine adults when considering or trying to complete postsecondary education.

Survey 1 Tables:
Adults Not Currently Attending College Who Might Like to Attend

Table 1: Summary Characteristics (n = 85)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Demographics		
Female	**82%**	**70**
Living with a spouse or partner	**52%**	**44**
Have dependent children at home	**59%**	**50**
Household Income		
Less than $10,000	**14%**	**12**
$10,001 - $20,000	**27%**	**23**
$20,001 - $30,000	**20%**	**17**
$30,001 - $40,000	**18%**	**15**
More than $40,001	**21%**	**18**
College Experience		
Have attended some college	**79%**	**66**
Have taken college courses when not enrolled in a degree/certificate program	**50%**	**35**
Have started a college degree/certificate program and later stopped	**66%**	**48**
Have received help from the Maine Educational Opportunity Center	**82%**	**68**
College Finance		
Have student loans from previous college courses	**23%**	**17**
Have student loans currently in default (of the 17 with student loans)	**77%**	**13**
Current Employment		
Have one paid job	**56%**	**41**
Have more than one paid job	**14%**	**10**
Work more than 30 hours per week	**6%**	**5**

Table 2: Main Reasons Why Not Attending College Now (n=71)

(based on how many respondents chose these as their first, second or third choice)

	Response Count
Can't afford it	**57**
I have to work and don't think I can balance family, work and college	**41**
I don't think I can get financial aid	**35**
I would need child care and it would cost too much	**12**
I would not have access to health insurance	**11**
I don't have access to reliable transportation	**9**

Table 3: Main Things that Would Make it Possible to Attend College (n=70)

(based on how many respondents chose these as their first, second or third choice)

	Response Count
Financial aid from college	**48**
Federal financial aid	**46**
Counselors to help navigate the system	**23**
Access to affordable health insurance	**16**
Financial help with child care	**12**
Tutoring	**10**
Financial help with transportation	**9**

Table 4: Other Things That Would Make it Possible to Attend College

(open-ended option following multiple choice question depicted in Table 3)

1.	Financial Aid for a student who wishes to go very part time. (Even if I pay half and they pay half).
2.	enthusiasm
3.	More time in my day! Or VERY flexible course schedules, possibly online
4.	Health insurance coverage as a student
5.	On line classes
6.	Time away from work
7.	When I went to college for 4 years, I struggled tremendously because of transportation. My car was not really reliable and I'm low income and had problems keeping the car in the road, it kept breaking down, low income for repairs and gas. I barely made through to get my degree. I'm not doing this survey for myself, but my experience may help other students get all the help they need to stay in college. I was also on extreme financial stress, because I never received child support or help from my family members to keep me in school. Being on disability is not enough to live on when you are trying to get ahead. The government won't let us. During this survival process, I've had health problems due to financial stress. I had a pell grant which kept me in college, but not everything helps with a reliable car.
8.	better health care
9.	Can not afford to not work full time.
10.	I have savings, but with my retirement income I'm reluctant to use them. I know others need financial help more than I do.
11.	Being able to figure out a way to do it all and work full time.
12.	Simply the cost of education per credit hour and the worry of spending money that my kids will need one day
13.	financial help with the application fees
14.	flexibility at work
15.	do not want the extra debt at my age
16.	Disability help, the degree I would like is to far away for disability to handle it.
17.	Per credit cost and the cost of books could have a cash discount
18.	Time. Perhaps an agreement with my employer for time off to attend classes.
19.	fear of exams
20.	3rd - a clear idea of what degree I want
21.	affordable housing
22.	Not have to work full time & be able to afford health insurance & afford to take the classes.
23.	financial assistance that would allow me to not have to work
24.	having classes that aren't during my work hours & being able to find time to work and go to school
25.	If I didn't have kids to raise and bills to pay that I wouldn't be able to if I quit my job to go back to school
26.	Time & supportive employer

Survey 2 Tables:
Adults Currently Attending College

Table 5: Summary Characteristics (n = 187)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Demographics		
Female	**84%**	**156**
Living with a spouse or partner	**70%**	**128**
Have dependent children at home	**57%**	**106**
Household Income		
Less than $10,000	**25%**	**46**
$10,001 - $20,000	**22%**	**41**
$20,001 - $30,000	**17%**	**31**
$30,001 - $40,000	**12%**	**21**
More than $40,001	**24%**	**44**
College Experience		
Attending Kennebec Valley Community College	**82%**	**150**
In an associate's degree program	**70%**	**126**
Attending college full time (12 credits or more)	**40%**	**73**
Expect it will take longer than four years to complete the program	**22%**	**40**
Have started a college degree/certificate program and later stopped	**39%**	**72**
Have received assistance from the Maine Educational Opportunity Center	**7%**	**12**
Current Employment		
Have one paid job	**52%**	**96**
Have more than one paid job	**12%**	**22**
Work more than 30 hours per week	**37%**	**66**
Employer does not pay for tuition, books, or time to go to school (of the 118 employed)	**70%**	**83**
Working in health care	**27%**	**36**
Working in social services	**16%**	**21**
Working in retail	**9%**	**12**

Table 6: College Finance (n = 187)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Have student loans	**51%**	**93**
Will have to pay all financial aid back	**38%**	**68**
Estimate will have more than $20,000 in loans when program is completed	**18%**	**31**
Had to get an extra bank loan or accrue credit card debt for college or living expenses while in school	**42%**	**76**
Got federal Education Tax Credits in 2006	**24%**	**43**

Table 7: Biggest Challenges Faced Getting through Current Degree/Certificate Program (n=187)

(based on how many respondents chose these as their first, second or third choice)

	Response Count
Not enough time to do everything	**117**
Not enough money to live on while in school	**94**
Navigating the system and finding available resources	**45**
Not enough money for tuition	**44**
Not enough money for books and supplies	**43**
Don't qualify for financial aid	**26**
Poor grades	**26**
Unreliable transportation	**24**
Lack of affordable health care	**21**
Difficulty finding or paying for dependable child care	**15**

Table 8: Biggest Aids to Getting through Current Degree/Certificate Program (n=187)

(based on how many respondents chose these as their first, second or third choice)

	Response Count
Federal financial aid	**110**
Counselors to help me navigate the system	**67**
Financial aid from current college	**64**
Tutoring	**46**
Access to affordable health care	**28**
Financial help with child care	**21**
Financial help with transportation	**20**

Table 9: Other Aids to Getting through Current Degree/Certificate Program (n=197)

(open-ended option following multiple choice question depicted in Table 8)

1.	The MOST important aid to staying in school has been the Parents as Scholar's Program through DHHS. Without PaS I would not be looking forward to my bachelor's degree today. However, as a user of states services, their are many programs offered at the local, regional and state level that are not communicated to adults needing re-training and continuing ed. A one-stop shop is needed to empower this population to improve their skills.
2.	Family Reassurance
3.	Great professors who encourage me!
4.	Parent going into debt to pay tuition, books, supplies, and pay my living expenses
5.	PAS Program
6.	My employer is paying for me to continue my education, without that support I don't think I would be attending college.
8.	Student loans put me in school. I could not attend without them.
9.	LOCATION IT IS ALSO WHERE I WORK
10.	I did not use any of the above aids.
11.	my wife working three jobs so that I can go to school!!
12.	living expenses
13.	my gear up scholarship
14.	available programs

Table 9 cont.

15.	Student loans
16.	Professors spending time with me
17.	Parents and Advisors
18.	advisor made adjustments in start of class time so that I could attend required classes
19.	Having most of my classes being at night or online
20.	support from my husband (financial etc.)
21.	Great Professors
22.	I found strength in my friend who took classes with me. We did our studying together and convinced each other that we could get through this!
23.	student loans
24.	Emotional support from family
25.	any would help when you live alone as a non-traditional student you still have all the bills to pay plus college.
27.	Having money to live on while in school
28.	Support system at work
29.	Flexibility on school hours
30.	College tuition, and supplies are 100% scholarships and grants this year!!!
31.	not much is helping!
32.	Family Support
33.	MaineCare, Fiancé'
34.	Finding time to study
35.	family
36.	a workplace that is willing to pay the cost of tuition through reimbursement program.
37.	spouse for support
38.	Student loans
39.	My wife supporting my plan and cutting corners to save money
40.	Help from employer
41.	dependable child care
42.	Student Loans, Flexible Employer, Supportive Spouse
43.	family support and support from other students
45.	Knowing others who have higher ed experience.
46.	My mom has been helping me pay for college as much as she can so I'd have to say her
47.	As a night/online only student the school is not very accommodating. Only giving help to day/fulltime students
48.	A course in managing time and resource
49.	employer paying for books and tuition

APPENDIX F

Commission To Develop Strategies To Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-wage, Low-skilled Adults

Summary of Proposals Presented Nov. 1, 2007

1. Title:	**Coordination of public K-12 school vacation breaks with scheduled breaks at the Community College and University.**
Submitted by:	**Karen Keim**
Summary:	It is often difficult for low-income college parents to arrange full day child care when their children's vacation schedule does not correspond to scheduled breaks at their institution. This can result in additional cost and unnecessary family stress that could be avoided by coordinating the scheduling of these breaks. A recent survey of adult students at Kennebec Valley Community College indicated a strong preference for this coordination. Failure to coordinate these breaks results in additional cost to students and puts additional stress on discretionary funds available at these institutions for child care costs. These breaks should be coordinated between these educational systems to the greatest extent possible.
Benefits:	This is an effort to make college more affordable for returning parents.
Supporting data or research:	
Timeline:	Implement for the 08-09 school year, incorporating at least the October and February breaks.
Fiscal Impact:	This should not have a fiscal impact.
Funding Sources:	
2. Title:	**Develop uniform procedures at all Career Centers to assist low income adult students in accessing a package of supports for which they are eligible and need to succeed in college.**
Submitted by:	**Karen Keim; Kathy Moore; Lisa Pohlmann; Sarah Standiford; Christine Hastedt**
Summary:	Many low income adults qualify for essential supports that would help them enter and stay enrolled in college, but do not know that this support may be available to them. Programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit, subsidized child care, MaineCare, SCHIP and food stamps can fundamentally change the resource calculus for low wage workers enabling them to consider college when they otherwise might not. More effective packaging of these supports at Career Centers is a key element in the new Competitive Skills Scholarship Program. A hearing will be held shortly on proposed rules for the CSSP including a procedure for Career Center employees to assist students in packaging supports that will help them succeed. The process will include a check list for prospective students to fill out indicating areas of need as part of the development of their education and training plans. Staff will respond by helping students identify and access programs that may meet those needs. We strongly recommend that the Career Centers apply this same procedure when assisting any low income adult who expresses interest in seeking to access higher education. We further recommend that this responsibility be codified in statute and that Career Center performance be evaluated to determine if this requirement is being uniformly applied.

Benefits:	It is well documented that that low-wage workers frequently encounter obstacles to entering college or staying enrolled that could be overcome if additional resources were available to the family. A more effective procedure for helping individuals gain access to programs for which they are already eligible is a cost-effective means to achieve this goal.
Supporting data or research:	Much of the literature in this area is focused on supporting low wage families in employment. But the literature also notes that this strategy is equally effective to help low income students enter and complete education and training programs. http://www.asu.edu/president/media/pdf/WSC_workingtogether_12.1.06_3.pdf http://www.mdrc.org/publications/424/full.pdf http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_howto_10.16.06.pdf http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/history/herman/reports/futurework/conference/low-wage.pdf http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_workingtogether_12.1.06_3.pdf http://www.mdrc.org/publications/186/workpaper.html Strawn, Julie, presentation to this Commission
Timeline:	We recommend that this requirement be included in any legislation recommended by this Commission to be implemented upon enactment.
Fiscal Impact:	This should have no fiscal impact as the procedure will already be in place in Career Centers with implementation of the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program.
Funding Sources:	
3. Title:	**Provide career counseling and postsecondary access resources at Maine's Community Colleges.**
Submitted by:	**Rep. Tom Saviello**
Summary:	• The program needs to utilize existing resources (Community Colleges, career centers and adult education). No new committees or programs needed. • Build on successful ideas like the Franklin County Community College Network (FCCCN) • Use the ideas identified by President Fitzsimmon's gain while on his listening tour. • Decentralize the efforts especially in rural areas. That the educational opportunity to identified students. Make is easy for them to continue • Work with business to find out what their needs are and tailor programs where education enhancement actually leads to a job. • The lead role needs to be the community leadership.
Benefits:	• Make is simple and affordable and they will come. • People that have the beginning success whether it be in an Adult Education program or the community college will realize they CAN go further to grow and support themselves.
Supporting data or research:	The Franklin County Community College Network is a shinning example of how this can be done in rural Maine. It is a partnership of the community college, community

	leaders, adult education, business leaders and the career centers. (We should invite them to speak to the committee). Their ideas work!
Timeline:	A successful model is already in place. This model can be implemented immediately with proper guidance and facilitation.
Fiscal Impact:	• The state needs to reevaluate it priorities. New funding will be difficult to get. However, DOE needs to prioritize adult education as being at the top of the list and not the bottom. Special emphases on rural areas. Little $$ goes a long way. • The career center deserves continued support especially in areas where the community college has no physical presence. DOL needs to make this a priority. • The community college needs more support when deciding how to allocate scarce resources.
Funding Sources:	New funding is not going to be available. DOE and the state college system needs to reset it priorities to address these needs.
4. Title:	**Consolidate post-secondary opportunity resources at Maine's Community Colleges.**
Submitted by:	**Judy Katzel**
Summary:	Maine offers a broad range of opportunities among disparate programs for providing post-secondary opportunities to low-wage, low-skilled adults. Federal and State grant-supported programs as well as on-going fully funded programs, independent (often for-profit) programs and employer based programs offer pieces of the whole panoply of opportunities available to Maine adults. Just as the Career Centers have become the focal point for employment resources, Maine's Community Colleges should be designated as the focal point—the hub--for post-secondary education access. Future Education Access Teams (FEATs) at the Community Colleges will represent all available programs and devise independently tailored roadmaps for each client, complete with available supports.
Benefits:	• One-stop. • Simplify the post-secondary education landscape. • Personal, ongoing, tailored service. • Uses a logical access point for information about post-secondary options (i.e., potential users of post-secondary opportunities would logically associate their availability at a post-secondary institution.) • Avoids barriers/stigmas possibly associated with other outlets (Career Centers were initially created to separate job seekers from those collecting unemployment. Today, many still associate Career Centers with government assistance programs.)
Supporting data or research:	http://www.mdrc.org/project_31_2.html (Opening Doors Project) http://www.mdrc.org/project_31_77.html Student Support Partnership Integrating Resources and Education (SSPIRE) http://workforcestrategy.org/publications/bysection/all (various)
Timeline:	Pilot program 2008, full program 2009.
Fiscal Impact:	Little or no fiscal impact using available resources.
Funding Sources:	

Commission To Develop Strategies To Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-wage, Low-skilled Adults

Summary of Proposals Presented Nov. 1, 2007

5. Title:	**Establish a "career pathways" pilot project in one sector of Maine's economy.**
Submitted by:	**Kathy Moore**
Summary:	A career pathway is a series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector. Each step on a career pathway is designed explicitly to prepare for the next level of employment and education. An opportunity exists to pilot career pathways projects through the Perkins IV Act that allows Community Colleges to fund pathways projects with Adult Education providers that are occupationally-oriented.
Benefits:	Experience with this model in other regions of the country has proven successful in enabling working adults to progress along a carefully structured path with visible rewards at each step including credentials and wage increases.
Supporting data or research:	http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_howto_10.16.06.pdf http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/promising_practices.pdf Julie Strawn's PowerPoint as presented to the Commission. Dept. of Education recently issued guidance on Adult Articulation Agreements with the Community Colleges: Perkins and other funding sources.
Timeline:	Perkins pilots could begin in Fall2008; More comprehensive pathway projects designed in 2009; implement in 2010 and monitor for two years based on designated outcome measures.
Fiscal Impact:	Resources will be needed for the process of creating the pathway as well as monitoring and evaluating its impact.
Funding Sources:	Perkins funds to be used for initial pilot projects. Federal and state funds to be used for more comprehensive process.
6. Title:	**Create a system of benchmarks that track success in enrollment, retention and credential completion for low-income adults and reward achievement in these benchmarks with an incentive payment system for the institutions from additional sources of revenue.**
Submitted by:	**Lisa Pohlmann and Christine Hastedt**
Summary:	A set of benchmarks should be created to track success in enrollment, retention and program completion for low-wage adults and reward achievement in these benchmarks with an incentive payment system for the institutions from additional sources of revenue. For example, additional revenues made available to create a state-funded flexible financial aid program to help students with child care and transportation might be used to incentivize institutions to reach benchmarks. This aid would help their students as well as their retention rates which need improvement on many campuses throughout the state. Incentive awards should be based on success in meeting these benchmarks as well as on a matrix that considers and rewards, for example: • Student access to dedicated staff for advising and support • The extent to which federal financial aid is maximized for students through application of "professional judgment" or other strategies;

	• The existence of a properly executed memorandum of understanding with a college transition program to provide seamless transition for these students to their campus.
Benefits:	Low-income students face many barriers to enrollment, retention and completion and, thus, need highly motivated college personnel to help them make progress at each stage. The clarity provided by a system of benchmarks plus the availability of extra support services funding should help has been shown to further motivate colleges to focus on this student population and increase their chances for successful credential completion.
Supporting data or research:	See CLASP Power point on Setting Goals and Developing Accountability Systems at: http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/reports_and_pubs_more2.html KY, WA and FL have academic institutions with model data systems and outcome measures. KY accountability report (see 5 questions on page 3). http://cpe.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/ECCAF923-3D17-4F69-972F-E5516970D99D/0/Accountabilitysummary0506_FINAL.pdf Other measurements for KY: http://cpe.ky.gov/planning/statusreports/ Washington state also has a performance report: http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/docs/data/research_reports/performance_reporting/2005-07_performance_reporting_plan.pdf They have lots of data here: http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/d_index.aspx including the IBEST program as referenced in Julie Strawn's report.
Timeline:	Establish this incentive system and tie new support services funding by statute to the system.
Fiscal Impact:	The creation of the incentive system will require short-term staffing for a stakeholder group and staffing to monitor the funding allocations and results.
Funding Sources:	
7. Title:	**Develop a consistent measurement and accountability system to track Maine's progress in increasing the number of low-wage adults who attain postsecondary education.**
Submitted by:	**Lisa Pohlmann and Christine Hastedt**
Summary:	It is critically important that the state assess its progress in helping low-wage adults achieve postsecondary education. This requires a consistent system of data collection across Adult Education, Career Center, community college and university campuses as well as a commitment to track these data collectively on an annual statewide basis. Data can help to identify the "critical filter points" where many students drop out and determine what sorts of practices help students advance to further education and better jobs. It can also help to evaluate progress on critical state policy goals in this area. The state should work with the Career Center, Adult Education, community college and university systems to create a uniform data collection system on nontraditional aged students, including but not limited to their household income and employment at time of entry into the system, prior training/learning, type of program sought, retention benchmarks, "stop-out" periods, type of program completed, completion dates,

	duration of time in school, and outcome data (such as employment and wages within four six month intervals after graduation). All of these systems currently collect data but not in a uniform way – even among campuses in the same systems. The work involves assessing all current indicators across systems, selecting a uniform set of indicators, and updating databases, surveys, etc. to begin systematic collection. One source of outcome data would be the Maine Department of Labor.
Benefits:	Accountability in this system is difficult but essential. As we know from the low college achievement rate of our current adult population as a whole, we must do more to help them enroll and succeed. Low-income students need even more assistance.
Supporting data or research:	See CLASP Power point on Setting Goals and Developing Accountability Systems at: http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/reports_and_pubs_more2.html
Timeline:	Implement over a five year time period, beginning in the school year 09-10.
Fiscal Impact:	Additional resources will be needed by the institutions participating in the indicator selection process and potentially for upgrades in data systems. Resources will also be need by the entity that is responsible for collecting and aggregating the data.
Funding Sources:	
8. Title:	**Prioritize the use of adult education as the most affordable vehicle for remedial education for low-wage adults.**
Submitted by:	**Karen Keim and Sarah Standiford**
Summary:	As a vehicle for remedial education, adult education programs are more cost-effective than those programs offered through community college and university campuses. And because college-based remedial courses trigger the use of federal financial aid, thereby limiting the amount of funding left for completing the academic program, adult education programs can help low-wage, working students maximize their resources. At the same time, the presence of remedial courses on college campuses has been shown to remove the stigma of "adult education" and encourage adult students to continue on a college track. Adult education programs should be co-located with community college campuses where feasible, to provide seamless remedial course offerings to low-wage adult students, and to maximize the value of federal financial aid to students. Where co-location is not feasible, there must be memorandums of understanding created between adult education and college programs that allows acceptance of competencies and a seamless transition. The Department of Education has considered some of these same issues and noted related recommendations in a report: http://www.maine.gov/education/aded/dev/transitions/cteval.pdf A memorandum of understanding between adult education programs and the Community College system that would address many of these concerns has also been prepared but has not been widely implemented throughout the state: http://www.maine.gov/education/aded/dev/documents/MOU9%2005.pdf

	These agreements should be finally executed as soon as possible. Finally, another working group has been convened to consider and address some of these same issues. (PL 2007 Ch. 240 Section UUU). Our commission's recommendations should be forwarded to that group. A member of ours Commission (or a subgroup of the Commission) should be added to that working group for purposes of follow through on these issues.
Benefits:	This will provide seamless remedial course offerings to low-wage adult students, and maximize the value of federal financial aid to students. It will make college more affordable and more accessible.
Supporting data or research:	See Julie Strawn's presentation to the Commission.
Timeline:	Create a five year plan in statute.
Fiscal Impact:	This will have a fiscal impact for relocation purposes only.
Funding Sources:	
9. Title:	**Make post-secondary education more accessible and affordable for low wage workers by creating a flexible, adult-friendly state financial aid program to address the unmet needs of non-traditional students.**
Submitted by:	**Christine Hastedt; Karen Keim; Kathy Moore ; Lisa Pohlmann; Sarah Standiford**
Summary:	We recommend the establishment of a flexible state-funded financial aid supplement to fill the gaps in federal financial aid by helping low-income adults access these critical services. In addition to providing assistance with child care, transportation, and similar supports necessary to participate in their educational program, this program would also cover tuition and mandatory fees for needy students who do not qualify for federal aid. Rules establishing eligibility for, and assistance available under this program, would be promulgated by a public agency such as the Department of Education or FAME in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act. These funds could be administered through the Community Colleges and University campuses in accordance with program rules as part of an eligible student's financial aid package.
Benefits:	It is well documented that lack of income to access child care, transportation and similar supports is a key barrier to entry and success in college for low-income working adults. The results of our own informal survey corroborate these findings. Access to these supports will significantly improve the ability of low income adults to enroll, persist and complete a post-secondary degree program.
Supporting data or research:	http://www.asu.edu/president/media/pdf/WSC_workingtogether_12.1.06_3.pdf http://www.mejp.org/PaSeduworks.htm http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_workingtogether_12.1.06_3.pdf
Timeline:	We recommend that this fund be established in statute and funded on an ongoing basis as general fund appropriation.
Fiscal Impact:	This recommendation will have a fiscal impact.
Funding Sources:	

10. Title:	**Maximize access to federal financial aid through more uniform application of "professional judgment" by financial aid officers in determining eligibility and amount of aid.**
Submitted by:	**Christine Hastedt, Sarah Standiford**
Summary:	Federal law permits a financial aid administrator to use professional judgment on a case-by-case basis to change a student's financial aid award based on "special circumstances" (20 USC 1087tt). The federal financial aid calculation relies on prior year income and asset information assuming that it is a good predictor of a family's financial strength in the upcoming year. In some circumstances it is not, and when those circumstances are adequately documented, a financial aid officer may adjust the data used to determine students' eligibility for aid often resulting in an increase aid to that student. Special circumstances warranting the use of professional judgment include, but are not limited to, recent unemployment by a family member; medial or dental expenses not covered by insurance; unusually high child care expenses; the number of parents enrolled at least half-time in a credential program; or other changes in the family's income or assets. Greater use of this kind of "adult friendly" financial aid policy will go a long way to ensuring that we do not leave federal dollars on the table that could be used to increase access for many low-income Mainers. There is currently no requirement that financial aid applicants be given notice of this potentially beneficial requirement, and there is no uniform practice throughout the state requiring maximization of aid through this provision. National data indicates that that the professional judgment tool is underutilized and, as a result, many students lose this important opportunity. Therefore, we recommend that each institution be required to adopt a written policy related to the use of professional judgment in financial aid determinations to maximize the availability of federal aid to students with "special circumstances" in accordance with federal law; that this policy be made available to students applying for federal financial assistance; and ensure that financial aid applicants are given written notice of the opportunity to apply for additional assistance on the basis of special circumstances and given assistance in developing adequate documentation when requested by the applicant. We further recommend that the State Department of Education provide institutions of higher education within the state with a model policy for the exercise of professional judgment including guidelines for appropriate documentation of "special circumstances" to minimize the incidence of audit exceptions to financial aid determinations based on the use of professional judgment.
Benefits:	Availability of aid has a dramatic effect on the ability of low-income working adults to access, persist and complete a post-secondary educational program. Greater use of professional judgment would result in increased aid for needy students. Data published by the National Association of Financial Aid Administrators indicate that professional judgment decisions resulted in increases in aid of 44-46% in public two and four year institutions. This strategy will also prevent state institutions from leaving federal dollars on the

	table that could be of value to low income Maine students.
Supporting data or research:	www.nasfaa.org/subhomes/annualconference2004/handouts2004/5003ProfessionalJudgmentPhobia.ppt http://www.nasfaa.org/PDFs/2001/2001sufapppfinalreport.pdf http://www.finaid.org/educators/pj/ See also Strawn presentation to this Commission
Timeline:	We recommend that this requirement be included in any legislation proposed by the Commission this year and implemented as soon as possible.
Fiscal Impact:	Since this recommendation seeks to improve the administration of a provision currently in law we do not believe it will have significant financial impact. Uniform application of this provision with adequate notice to students will, however, produce a significant increase in the amount of federal financial aid received by Maine students.
Funding Sources:	
11. Title:	**Make funds available for summer school for low income adult students.**
Submitted by:	**Kathy Moore**
Summary:	Low income adults often need and want to take summer courses in an effort to complete their programs as quickly as possible. However, they seldom have access to sufficient financial aid to pay for the tuition and fees required for these courses. Financial aid for summer courses is not available for adults who have attended full-time during the regular school year. A fund should be created to support needy adult student who wish to attend summer courses authorizing up to $1,000 per person for this purpose.
Benefits:	This would help "speed up" the timeframe for school completion and also serve to make college more affordable. Adults who complete in a more timely fashion are more likely to persist to graduation, thereby adding more trained workers to the economy.
Supporting data or research:	Greater Expectations: College As a Right and Responsibility for all Maine People; Prepared by J. Harvey, Executive Editor, Connection: the Journal of the New England Board of Higher Education, May 2004 COLLEGE COMPLETION: Additional Efforts Could Help Education with its Completion Goals; GAO: Report to Congressional Requesters, May 2003. MELMAC Education Foundation: Education Needs Assessment and Strategy in collaboration with Foundation Strategy Group, Feb. 2003
Timeline:	This fund should be created legislatively and made available through college financial aid offices.
Fiscal Impact:	This has a fiscal impact.
Funding Sources:	

Commission To Develop Strategies To Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-wage, Low-skilled Adults

Summary of Proposals Presented Nov. 1, 2007

12. Title:	**Investing state dollars to match federal TRIO funds to help low-income, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities succeed in college.**
Submitted by:	**Karen Keim, Lisa Pohlmann, Kathy Moore, Sarah Standiford, Christine Hastedt**
Summary:	National studies clearly demonstrate the remarkable success of the federally supported TRIO programs in helping low-income adults enroll in college, increase grade point averages and year to year retention rates. We recommend that the state match the federal TRIO funds for adults to increase the number of staff available for this service in order to meet the burgeoning demand. Federal restrictions need not apply to these additional state funds. In addition we understand that not all campuses of the University of Maine and community colleges apply for TRIO funds from the federal Department of Education that would support staff to perform this critical advising and support. We strongly recommend that each institution apply for TRIO Student Support Service grant (SSS) federal funds available for this purpose. The next competitive grant competition for SSS is Fall of 08.
Benefits:	In Maine during the last five years 2,937 low-income adults started college at a cost of $280 per participant. Yearly 2,500 adults are enrolled in the program. To expand services to more adults, additional staff would need to be hired.
Supporting data or research:	Annual Performance Reports are filed with the Federal Department of Education that verify placement rates of the Maine Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC) that has provided educational access for low-income adults continuously since 1991.
Timeline:	Establish this matching program in statute and implement beginning in the 2009-10 school year.
Fiscal Impact:	This will have a fiscal impact.
Funding Sources:	
13. Title:	**Coordinate "prior learning assessments" among public college campuses.**
Submitted by:	**Karen Keim**
Outline/Summary:	Prior learning assessments are offered on most college campuses in Maine, but are not well advertised or understood by the general public. After going through an assessment process, adult students may achieve college credits for relevant training or work experience as approved by the college faculty. The Maine Department of Labor initiated a workgroup in 2006 to advance public awareness of this vehicle and coordination among campuses. This workgroup has surveyed all campuses to assess current PLA systems, created a generic PLA presentation and made it available at key venues, spawned a UMS group to coordinate across the university system. USM and UMA lead this effort and now have a formal agreement to accept PLA's between the two institutions. A web page with a PLA matrix is now on the MDOL website. Create a single instrument (i.e., checklist) that career centers/ adult educators/ educational access providers can use to determine which adults are likely to benefit from PLA to increase appropriate referrals for PLA assessment.
Benefits:	Prior learning assessments are a vehicle to speed up the time frame for completion of postsecondary education for adults with relevant work or training experience, which would reduce the time to credential and substantially reduce the cost of education for eligible adults.

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Supporting data or research:	The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning at http://www.cael.org/pla.htm ***Earn College Credit for What You Know, fourth edition,*** by Janet Colvin ***Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles & Procedures, second edition,*** by Morry Fiddler, Catherine Marienau, and Urban Whitaker
Timeline:	September 2008
Fiscal Impact:	None.
Funding Sources:	
14. Title:	**Establishment of an entity to promote interdepartmental collaboration on policy development of workforce development strategies that increase economic security for low income working adults and ensure a skilled workforce to meet the needs of Maine employers in the future.**
Submitted by:	**Christine Hastedt, Karen Keim, Lisa Pohlmann, Sarah Standiford**
Summary:	The only entity that currently exists with apparent responsibility to focus on the development, implementation and coordination of workforce policy goals throughout state government is the Workforce Cabinet. There is however, no statute, executive order, or similar authority creating this entity or clearly setting out its responsibility and authority. Neither does this effort have the staff nor other resources necessary to meet the daily responsibilities required to set comprehensive workforce policy and ensure that it is effectively implemented and well coordinated. As a result policy goals and initiatives in this area remain fragmented between several departments and the institutions of higher education We recommend that the Workforce Cabinet be codified in a statue that clearly sets out its membership, responsibility and authority. We further recommend that the Workforce Cabinet be responsible for developing, implementing, coordinating and evaluating policies to increase the economic security and qualify of life for low income working adults and ensure a skilled workforce to meet the needs of Maine's employers in the future. The Workforce Cabinet would also be responsible for the establishment of benchmarks supporting goals for increased access, persistence and completion of low income adults in post-secondary credential or degree bearing programs; collection of performance data from institutions of higher education; and award any incentive funds available to institutions that meet or exceed established benchmarks for this population.
Benefits:	This recommendation will ensure continued policy development, focus and oversight on increasing the economic security of low wage workers while at the same time ensuring a greater supply of skilled workers to meet the needs of employers. It will further ensure that existing programs operate in accordance with a set of clear policy goals and are better coordinated and more efficiently administered
Supporting data or research:	
Timeline:	We recommend that this recommendation be included in legislation recommended by this Commission and introduced into the next regular session of the Legislature.
Fiscal Impact:	This recommendation will require additional staff and resources for the Workforce Cabinet.
Proposed Funding Sources:	

APPENDIX G

DRAFT LEGISLATION
To implement certain recommendations of the Commission

An Act to Implement Certain Recommendations of the Commission To Develop Strategies To Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention And Completion For Low-Wage, Low-Skilled Adults

PART A
[Implements Recommendations 1 and 16]

Sec. A-1. The Department of Labor shall develop uniform procedures at Career Centers. To the extent funds permit or are provided, the Department of Labor shall develop uniform procedures at all Career Centers to assist low-income, adult students in accessing a package of supports for which they are eligible and need to succeed in postsecondary education or occupational training. It is the intent of the Legislature that as State budgets are reviewed and developed additional resources should be provided to support this effort.

PART B
[Implements Recommendations 2, 9, 10, 11 and 17]

Sec. B-1. 20-A MRSA §12704, sub§§8 and 9 are enacted to read:

8. Package of support services. Where low-income, adult students do not have reasonable access to the package of supports provided by career centers of the Department of Labor, provide a comparable package of postsecondary education and occupational training support services.

9. Rural and urban settings; career counseling and post-secondary access resources. Working with the Department of Labor, provide comprehensive and coordinated career counseling and postsecondary education access resources targeted to adult students in rural and urban areas of the state and located at the campuses or centers of the Maine Community College System in a manner that is sensitive to the particular needs of these students in rural and urban settings.

Sec. B-2. Prior learning assessments. The Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System shall seek to implement a coherent policy on recognizing prior learning assessments for adult students. In order to increase appropriate referrals for a prior learning assessment, the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System shall seek to create a single checklist that Department of Labor career centers, adult educators, and educational access providers can use to determine which adults are likely to benefit from prior learning assessments.

Sec. B-3. School vacation schedules. The Department of Education, The Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System shall seek to coordinate schedules of public kindergarten to grade 12 schools, including vacation breaks, with the

scheduled breaks at the respective campuses of the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System in order to enable working adults with families to attend their college courses and provide childcare for their children.

Sec. B-4. Consolidation of resources at the Maine Community College. It is the intent of the Legislature that as State budgets are reviewed and developed additional resources should be provided to strengthen the package of postsecondary education opportunity resources and support services available through the campuses and centers of the Maine Community College System, including career counseling, developmental education classes, and other support services needed by low-wage individuals to access a postsecondary education or training program at the Maine Community College System.

PART C

[Implements Recommendations 3, 5, 15, 18, 21 and 22]

Sec. C-1. Career pathways pilot project. As State budgets are reviewed and developed the Governor and the Legislature shall seek to leverage Federal Perkins funding to establish a career-pathways pilot project in at least one sector of Maine's economy in order to prepare low-wage, low-skilled adults for high-wage jobs in industries with significant demand for skilled workers.

Sec. C-2. Career pathways public-private partnership. To the extent funds allow or are provided, the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Maine Community College System, and University of Maine System shall seek to forge public-private partnerships with Career and Technical Education, Adult Education, the MELMAC Education Foundation, the Maine Compact for Higher Education, and employers that will establish career pathways to more effectively serve the needs of the adult workforce and employers needing skilled workers. It is the intent of the Legislature that as State budgets are reviewed and developed the Governor and the Legislature should seek to provide funding to support these public-private partnerships in order to create such career pathways.

Sec. C-3. Financial aid. As State budgets are reviewed and developed the Governor and the Legislature shall seek to target new financial aid program funding to meet the unmet financial needs of low-wage, low-skilled adults to enable them to access education and training, including summer school courses.

Sec. C-4. TRIO funds. As State budgets are reviewed and developed the Governor and the Legislature shall seek to invest state dollars to match federal TRIO funds provided under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to help low-income adults who are first-generation college students or students with disabilities succeed in college.

Sec. C-5. Public awareness campaign. As State budgets are reviewed and developed the Governor and the Legislature shall seek to provide funds necessary to design and implement a public awareness campaign to inform low-skilled, low-wage adults about the package of

postsecondary education and workforce development resources available to meet their education and training needs.

PART D

[Implements Recommendation 6]

Sec. D-1. 20-A MRSA §8612 is enacted to read:

§8612. Use of resources; collocation. To the extent possible, adult education program resources must be used for remedial or developmental education that prepares low-wage individuals to enroll in a postsecondary education degree program and enables such individuals to maximize eligibility for federal student aid resources to matriculate and complete a two-year or four-year degree program at a college or university.

1. Co-location. The commissioner shall work with Maine Adult Education Association and the Maine Community College System to co-locate adult education programs with community college campuses where feasible, to provide seamless remedial course offerings to low-wage adult students, and to maximize the value of federal financial aid to students. Where co-location is not feasible, the commissioner shall work with Maine Adult Education Association and the Maine Community College System to review, update and implement memorandums of understanding that allow acceptance of competencies and a seamless transition between adult education and college programs.

PART E

[Implements Recommendation 7]

Sec. E-1. Maine College Transition Program. The Department of Education shall continue to implement and expand the pilot programs of the "Maine College Transition Program" coordinated by the Adult Education system.

PART F

[Implements Recommendation 12, 13, 14]

Sec. F-1. Data collection system; collaborative effort. To the extent resources allow or are provided, the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System shall seek to create a uniform data collection system relating to nontraditional-aged students, including but not limited to: household income and employment at time of entry into the system, prior training and learning, type of program sought, retention benchmarks, stop-out periods (when the student, due to emergency or other necessity, must leave the system), type of program completed, completion dates, duration of time in school, and outcome data.

Sec. F-2. Benchmarks. As State budgets are reviewed and developed the Governor and the Legislature shall seek to provide resources necessary to create a system of benchmarks that track performance in enrollment, retention and credential completion for low-wage, low-skilled adults and that rewards performance of the institutions that contributed toward the achievement of the relevant benchmarks with incentive funds from a pool of resources established for this

purpose. The benchmark and tracking system should be designed in accordance with the recommendations of the January 2007 final report of the Commission to Develop Strategies to Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for Low-Wage, Low-Skilled Adults.

Sec. F-3. Governor's Workforce Cabinet; data collection and accountability system. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet shall consider the feasibility of utilizing the Department of Education three-year grant funding to track the path of secondary school students, including participation in Adult Education programs, enrollment in postsecondary education and training programs, through completion of a postsecondary education degree and certificate program, and into employment in a new or better job. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet shall also design a measurement and accountability system to increase and to track Maine's progress in increasing the number of low-wage, low-skilled adults who attain postsecondary education built upon the existing data collection and management capacity of state agencies and postsecondary education systems. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet shall undertake a review of all current indicators across systems, assess existing data collection systems, and recommend a uniform set of indicators, databases and surveys that should be established and updated. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet shall report its findings and recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Labor by July 1, 2008. The Governor's Workforce Cabinet shall include in its report a recommendation for an appropriate oversight body to keep track of students and their success.

SUMMARY

This Act implements certain recommendations of the Commission To Develop Strategies To Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention And Completion For Low-Wage, Low-Skilled Adults, which was submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Labor in accordance with Joint Order, Senate Paper 717.