



## MAINE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

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### **Maine State Chamber and Maine Development Foundation release “Making Maine Work: Growing Maine’s Workforce”**

**Fourth report in the Making Maine Work series proposes strategic actions  
to increase the size of Maine’s workforce by 65,000 by the year 2020**

Augusta, ME — The Maine State Chamber of Commerce (MSCC) and the Maine Development Foundation (MDF) released “*Making Maine Work: Growing Maine’s Workforce*” at a press conference on Tuesday, November 19, 2013. The “*Making Maine Work*” series provides strategies for raising incomes and improving productivity. Central to any strategy is an available and skilled workforce.

This fourth report in the series is about one aspect of the workforce problem – the size of the workforce. It is theoretically distinct from the issue of workforce skills, which will be the subject of the next “*Making Maine Work*” report (to be released in the spring of 2014). “*Making Maine Work: Growing Maine’s Workforce*” discusses the correlation between workforce quantity and quality as a critical factor in Maine’s economy.

“There is a real sense of urgency here—Maine’s economy will not have a workforce with diverse skills unless there are enough people of diverse talents to fill the openings,” said Dana Connors, president of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. “We need *both* quantity and quality to be successful. The two are interrelated, which is why Maine’s workforce is a priority focus for both the Maine State Chamber and the Maine Development Foundation.”

The most recent report in the “*Making Maine Work*” series examines the economic implications that the size of Maine’s workforce in the face of a declining population will have on our state. More importantly, it offers a comprehensive strategy for growing Maine’s workforce by 65,000 by the year 2020. Through the utilization of two basic strategies – increasing participation in the workforce among the existing population, and attracting people from outside the state to come live and work here – Maine would gain 45,000 workers, instead of losing 20,000.

“Expanding Maine’s workforce is vital to improving our economy,” said Cheryl Miller, interim president and CEO of the Maine Development Foundation. “It can also improve the lives of Maine citizens and add to our culture and social fabric. We all benefit when everyone who is already here is fully engaged in our economy, and increasing our diversity can make Maine an even better and more attractive place to live.”

The action plan outlines five recommendations, which encourage employment in targeted sectors of the population, specifically people with disabilities, seniors 65 Years and over who are not currently working, young adults, disengaged youth, veterans, and foreign workers. The strategy includes maximizing existing efforts to adopt measurable workforce growth goals for Maine; to establish an ongoing committee of state policy leaders and private sector interests to guide and coordinate Maine’s workforce goals; to create a private sector Maine Marketing Commission and elevate marketing efforts; to promote strategies to build the workforce for each of the specific groups; and, to create a resource for resettling refugees that Maine municipalities can use to prepare for, and benefit from, new community members.

This report builds on a number of prior reports released by the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and the Maine Development Foundation as part of its ongoing “*Making Maine Work*” series. A 2010 survey of 1,000 Maine business leaders conducted by the MDF to learn more about the critical issues businesses face revealed that Maine’s loyal and skilled workforce was a top benefit to operating a business in Maine. We need to ensure that it remains so.

“This is not a new issue – we’ve known that our demographic trends have been pointing in this direction for some time,” Connors added. “It’s been getting a lot of attention from a lot of different places recently. We’re here today to talk about the urgency of implementing our proposed solutions – realistic and meaningful targets to grow our workforce and straightforward recommendations for how we can get to where we want, and need, to be.”

Funding for this report was provided, in part, by Kaplan University, the University of New England, Unum, the Maine Community Foundation and Saint Joseph’s College of Maine.

The full document can be accessed online at [www.mainechamber.org/makingmainework](http://www.mainechamber.org/makingmainework).

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**About the Making Maine Work Series...**

*Making Maine Work: Critical Investments for the Maine Economy* is a comprehensive action plan for improving productivity, growing the economy, and providing a higher quality of life for all Maine people. Released in July 2010, the original report and recommendations were the result of a joint effort between the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and the Maine Development Foundation. It explored the investments needed to grow the economy and the factors that influence those decisions. Subsequent editions have provided in-depth looks at various issues that affect Maine’s economy – “*The Role of Maine’s Public University System*,” released in December 2010, and “*Investment in Young Children – Real Economic Development*,” release in January 2012.

Along with *Making Maine Work*, MDF published two background reports: *Maine’s Investment Imperative II: Unleashing the Potential*, an in-depth review of more than 100 reports and recommendations on key issues influencing investments in Maine, and the results of the *Investment Imperative Survey* with 1,000 Maine Businesses.

**About the Maine State Chamber of Commerce...**

As the state’s most influential business advocate, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce works to ensure a business climate in which Maine State Chamber members, large and small, can compete successfully in the local, regional, national, and world marketplaces. As *The Voice of Maine Business*, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce proudly represents a network of 5,000 businesses of all sectors, sizes, and regions. It advocates on their behalf daily before the Legislature, state departments, and various levels of state government.

**About the Maine Development Foundation...**

The Maine Development Foundation (MDF) is a private, non-partisan membership organization that drives sustainable, long-term economic growth for the State of Maine. MDF’s strategic focus is a productive workforce. We believe that a productive worker is one that is educated, healthy, innovative, and engaged in their community and the economy. MDF stimulates new ideas, develops leaders, and provides common ground for solving problems and advancing issues by empowering leaders; strengthening communities; and, guiding public policy with trusted economic research. Created in statute in 1978, MDF is a unique and trusted non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. MDF works statewide across all sectors.