

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building Programs & Systems to Last:



A CASE STUDY OF MAINE'S REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP EXPANSION EFFORT

OCTOBER 2023

As the U. S. Department of Labor (DOL) has invested in the growth, expansion, diversification and modernization of the Registered Apprenticeship system, states like Maine have developed infrastructure and capacity to support significant program growth. With federal grant investments totaling \$19.4 million and additional state appropriated investments, Maine has created a robust apprenticeship system that is vital to Maine's workforce and economic development strategy.

Maine's apprenticeship system has achieved a threefold increase in the number of Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) since the fall of 2016. In 2016, Maine had 55 RAPs supporting a total of 381 apprentices. Today, Maine has a total of 271 RAPs, 3,102 apprentices served, and over 400 employers engaged in apprenticeship as registered sponsors or sub-sponsors. This executive summary outlines the factors and strategies that have contributed to Maine's expansion success, which are fully described in the case study report [*Building Programs & Systems to Last: A Case Study of Main's Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Effort*](#).



About the State Apprenticeship Expansion Case Studies

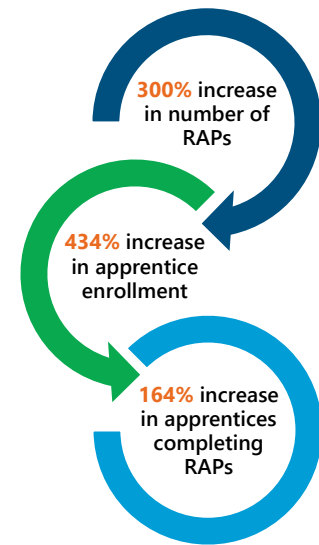
The apprenticeship expansion case studies document the growth, successful implementation, and key expansion strategies from two states, Idaho and Maine, offering scalable strategies and promising practices.

The case study reports on Idaho and Maine, along with executive summaries of those reports, are available on the [Apprenticeship Promising Practices: Expanding Registered Apprenticeship Systems page](#).

Apprenticeship Expansion Success Factors

Maine’s apprenticeship leaders identified three key factors to their success in growing their apprenticeship system:

- **Establishing a vision.** Maine apprenticeship leaders had a clear idea of how apprenticeship could address the state’s education, workforce, and economic and community development priorities.
- **Building state structure and capacity for growth.** Maine’s apprenticeship leaders knew that simply doing more would not support the kind of growth they needed. With this knowledge, they created a structure, partnerships, and processes that could scale.
- **Creating an Industry Intermediary strategy.** Maine apprenticeship leaders recognized opportunities to grow apprenticeship in traditional and emerging industries and sought to enlist industry directly in expansion efforts and in a cross-industry collaborative learning process.



MAINE’S REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM OUTCOMES (2016-2022)

Establishing a Vision: An Agile, Forward-Looking Apprenticeship System

Maine Apprenticeship is guided by a clear vision: to be a known and respected Registered Apprenticeship system that provides earn and learn opportunities for people of all backgrounds – through career exploration, certified pre-apprenticeship programs, and recognized credentials – and a solution to employers’ immediate and long-term talent needs. This vision is a product of a deliberate process of engaging leaders and partners and a willingness to think expansively. A broader vision for apprenticeship emerged from a 2019 visit to Germany where state leaders became open to new approaches and saw the link between apprenticeship and innovation.

Maine’s collaborative approach and willingness to think expansively resulted in the development of a set of guiding principles that provide a roadmap for partners engaged in the state’s expansion work.

“It’s not about one apprenticeship grant. Building better, more expansive pathways to good jobs is a cumulative effort.”

Joan Dolan
Director of
Apprenticeship &
Strategic Partnerships,
Maine Department of
Labor

Building State Capacity and Systems Infrastructure

Maine’s early expansion efforts adopted a broad approach rooted in engagement. By planting seeds through informal informational campaigns with colleagues and partners, Maine sought to “engage everywhere, learn everything, and share with everyone.”

Key strategies in this approach included engaging diverse stakeholders through apprenticeship advocacy across a wide range of meetings, conferences, strategy sessions, and community gatherings. Maine strengthened partner investment through collaborative, proactive investments and proposal efforts. Before applying for major apprenticeship implementation grants, Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) staff used pilots and informal partnerships to generate interest, strengthen partnerships, and learn about policies, program models, and practices that aligned with Maine’s vision. By participating in technical assistance and professional learning opportunities, MDOL staff created a visible presence within the community of state-level apprenticeship professionals, cultivating informal networks among educator, employer, and community-based partners and peer organizations from other states. As Maine secured and leveraged strategic federal investments, they were able to align federal grant resources with [Maine’s 10-year economic development strategy](#) targeting apprenticeship growth in eight high-priority sectors.

Launching an Apprenticeship Intermediary Strategy

Maine’s approach to apprenticeship expansion is rooted in creating ecosystems consisting of partnerships with large employers and industry and community-based intermediaries, each with their own contexts, networks, and reasons for advancing apprenticeship. Maine has invested in [14 intermediary partners](#) and sponsors representing key industry sectors and focusing on specific underrepresented groups. Leading sector-wide apprenticeship expansion, Maine’s intermediary partners can solve key workforce challenges in a specific context and become invested in the model through program and process improvement. MDOL provides technical assistance to intermediary partners and sponsors through quarterly Community of Practice convenings that encourage sharing of promising practices.

MAINE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL

Maine Apprenticeship staff partnered with the Maine Apprenticeship Council, leveraging their energy and content expertise to inform a broader state expansion strategy. The council is an advisory group with membership including representatives from union, employers, and public programs. Current council members represent strategic growth sectors and key educational institutions from across the state.

The council’s focused expansion agenda appealed to a more diverse group of apprenticeship partners and promotes the recruitment of champions. The council meets quarterly for sessions focused on advancing the state’s expansion goals, supported by MDOL staff. Meeting engagement is increasing with non-members attending who are interested in growing apprenticeships.

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