



## Laying the Foundation for Growth

**Create the Maine Growth Authority as a single state entity dedicated to economic development, financing, and workforce training:**

- › Consolidate the more than 15 confusingly separate agencies into and under this new entity
- › Create an easy one-stop shop for small businesses who need help
- › Focus private-sector-style teams on helping find financing, train workers, and navigate regulatory issues for small businesses

**Establish a Maine Energy Commissioner with the mission of reducing costs for Maine ratepayers and promoting sustainable energy:**

- › Consolidate the three entities dedicated to energy policy into a single office with a high-profile leader to represent Maine people before the Public Utilities Commission
- › Direct the commissioner to ensure service quality by electric utilities
- › Require the maximum possible benefit to Mainers from any energy project

**Authorize the Creation of Broadband Expansion Districts to help enable communities and regions to increase access to broadband internet service:**

- › Model on existing utility district structures to create a vehicle for towns to collaborate in expanding and administering broadband service
- › Grant them the authority to raise funds for their efforts via fees similar to other districts
- › Prioritize these districts for grants from the ConnectME Authority

**Expand Medicaid & Insure More Mainers to address one of our greatest impediments to growth:**

- › Expand Medicaid, because it's the law
- › Help connect those receiving this coverage to educational and economic opportunities
- › Stabilize statewide health care infrastructure by funding these uncovered costs

**Upgrade Quality and Safety of State's Roads, Bridges and Other Critical Infrastructure from the "D-grade" it has received over the past eight years:**

- › Launch a three-month review of all state infrastructure based on external reviewers
- › After addressing safety, prioritize upgrade projects at the recommendation of a panel of business leaders to ensure the most essential needs for growth are met
- › Invest funding in projects that will show a long-term benefit, versus short-term appearances



## Supporting Small Businesses

Create a Small Business Accelerator as the “one stop shop” for Maine businesses and start-ups who need help accessing financing programs, training workers, or handling state regulations:

- Replace the limited Small Business Advocate office with a dedicated Small Business Accelerator Team within the Maine Growth Authority
- Staff with talented consultants to be on-call for businesses statewide
- Develop a robust, user-friendly web portal for small business owners to get 24-hour support issues for small businesses

Launch the Job Growth Loans Program to provide 18-month, no interest loans for small businesses to finance adding a new employee:

- Offer short-term loans to finance the addition of employees that a small business shows will generate enough revenue to pay back the up-front investment
- Forgive the amount of any income taxes withheld from that employee during the loan’s term
- Include this in the Small Business Accelerator consultant toolkit

Fund New Veteran Business Grants to provide up to \$100,000 capital investment grants through a competitive program for veteran-owned small businesses:

- Create a competitive grant program, administered by a panel of veteran business owners, to fund grants for new construction or new equipment at veteran-owned small businesses
- Select recipients on the basis of the likelihood of the investment to create and sustain new jobs

Offer Specialized Employee Ownership Financing to help employees take on ownership of their workplaces without the expensive loans they may currently be forced to use:

- Provide low interest financing through the Maine Growth Authority to help reduce the cost of private loans for companies converting to employee ownership
- Create a team to help provide technical assistance to any small business considering employee ownership and to help them access this new financing
- Work with venture capital and entrepreneurial philanthropies to identify ideal companies to target for inclusion in this program

Provide Entrepreneur Incentive Loans to Reduce the Student Loan Costs for Mainers who Create Jobs by opening new businesses in the state:

- Refinance up to \$25,000 in student loans down to a 1% interest rate for a business owner who has created at least \$100,000 in new payroll over the course of a year
- After refinancing, forgive loans equal to the entire amount of any state income tax withheld from that entrepreneur’s new payroll over the following three-year period



## Growing Our Workforce

**Establish the MaineWorks Consultants within the Maine Growth Authority to help businesses solve workforce challenges and help job-seekers locate opportunities:**

- Consolidate workforce efforts from across three state entities together in one team dedicated to ensuring employers can get the talent they need and to enabling job seekers' career pursuits
- Launch an interactive web presence to make it easy to access these resources
- Coordinate the efforts of educational institutions and career centers through close collaboration with the business community

**Deploy a Targeted Training Team to plan for and financially support the training needs of any business trying to add a new job:**

- Build a specialized team of consultants within MaineWorks to partner with businesses to assist them in getting the training program they need
- Provide up to \$5,000 in financing to fund each approved training effort supported by the team

**Launch the Welcome Home Program to help former and future Mainers bring their current job to the state remotely and move their lives to Maine:**

- Ensure that there are no tax or regulatory costs to out-of-state employers who allow one of their employees to permanently work remotely from Maine
- Create a web portal to make the transition easy and heavily promote it with advertising
- Allow up to \$500 in state income tax credits to finance the costs of the worker's move

**Create the Maine Seasonal Worker Hub to connect small businesses and seasonal workers from around the state and beyond:**

- Create a web-based job matching platform for small businesses to post their seasonal needs and for job-seekers to post their resumes in a program that will connect the two sets of needs
- Heavily market the program to potential workers in-state and around the country
- Dedicate staff and technology to reducing the administrative burden of these seasonal hires

**Establish the Maine State College as a single source for the state's online and extension offerings for higher education and vocational training**

- Rename the University of Maine – Augusta as the Maine State College and position it as a portal for the current remote learning programs from the University and Community College systems
- Work with business and health care communities to align these programs with emerging needs



## Building Our Communities

Provide the Rural Workplace Grant to help communities convert a downtown building into a co-working space with high-speed broadband for small businesses and remote workers:

- > Provide grants through a competitive process for rural Maine towns to fully fund plans to rehab buildings into workspace for small businesspersons and remote workers
- > Require that these efforts include collaboration with local contractors and tradespersonss
- > Provide technical assistance for towns to make plans and promote these spaces

Create New Age-in-Place Grants to finance communities' efforts to make it easier for elders to stay in their homes and live independently:

- > Provide financing through competitive grants to local governments or non-profits that have collaboratively developed a regional plan to help elders age-in-place
- > Target infrastructure upgrades to both community buildings, key businesses, and homes
- > Prioritize projects that involve local businesses in providing services

Develop and Launch the Drive ME Service to help elder citizens maintain their mobility through a phone-based ride sharing service:

- > Create a service for elders to call-in and request a ride within their community and develop an underlying technology to match certified drivers and pay the driver for the ride
- > Require all drivers to pass background and safety checks by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles
- > Control costs and subsidize the expense to the users on monthly, paper bills

Launch the Rural Landmark Grant Program to preserve historic buildings in rural communities without the resources or developers to pursue tax credits:

- > Create a competitive grant program to allow rural communities to seek funding to preserve important buildings like churches, granges, fraternal lodges, historic schools and the community programs they all provide
- > Require town sponsorship of the grant but provide the funding directly to local contractors
- > Allow churches to participate by involving local historical societies as grant recipients