

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-ONE

—
H.P. 1253 - L.D. 1684

Resolve, To Strengthen Maine's Workforce by Expanding English Language Acquisition and Workforce Training Programs

Sec. 1. Department of Education to establish a grant process for adult education programs for English language acquisition and workforce training programs. Resolved: That the Department of Education's office of adult education, referred to in this resolve as "the office," shall establish a grant process to provide funding on a competitive basis to adult education programs of school administrative units in communities experiencing an increase in immigrant populations or demand to reduce the waiting list for English language acquisition classes or to increase the levels, frequency or intensity of English language acquisition instruction offered as needed by the communities and to provide industry-specific English language acquisition combined with workforce training in the specific skill areas required for identified workforce needs of employers in this State in accordance with this resolve. The office shall award grants to eligible adult education programs in a number and amount determined by available funding.

Sec. 2. English language acquisition courses and workforce training grants. Resolved: That the amount of a grant under this resolve is determined by the office based upon the needs of the area to be served and the availability of funding. The office shall consider grants to cover all areas of the State with an emphasis on areas with large immigrant populations, where there is a need for skilled workers that training under this resolve may provide or areas with growing industries.

1. English language acquisition courses grants. An eligible proposal for an English language acquisition course grant under this subsection must include provisions for initiating or expanding English language acquisition courses for participating students.

2. Industry-specific English language acquisition workforce training grants. An eligible proposal for a grant under this subsection must include provisions for:

A. Intensive industry-specific English language and vocabulary classes for participating potential employees, including immigrants who have not yet received federal work permits, newly hired employees and incumbent employees;

B. Intensive workforce training classes for participating potential employees, including immigrants who have not yet received federal work permits, newly hired employees and incumbent employees that include habits of work, including but not limited to basic skills necessary to obtain, maintain and advance in employment, such as interviewing and communications skills, and that acquaint immigrants with the culture of the workplace;

C. Interviewing immigrant participants and identifying the education level, English language ability, skill sets, work experience, qualifications and credentials of each immigrant participant;

D. Collaboration with participating employers to:

(1) Identify the employers' specific workforce needs;

(2) Identify skills needed for positions required by the employers;

(3) Receive input from the employers for the design of the training classes under this subsection, including information on required English language proficiency, workplace culture, on-site space or other vocational training elements such as tools, manuals or site tours;

(4) For proposals by specific employers to train newly hired or incumbent employees, ensure that the employers provide the time and space to offer training classes under this subsection on site at the employers' workplaces or, where that is not feasible, that employers provide at no cost to participants supports such as transportation and incentives to prioritize, encourage and facilitate employee participation;

(5) Unless participating employers can establish that they have already undergone such training within the 12 months prior to the grant submission date, ensure that, within the first 12 months of participating in the grant process, employers receive at least 12 hours of formal training on systemic bias and inequities and cultural competency regarding bridging effectively across a wide variety of cultural similarities and differences to help establish an inclusive workplace environment. The office is not responsible for arranging for or providing this training; and

(6) Create industry-specific skills trainings in which small employers in a specific sector can participate collectively where it is not practicable for them to offer trainings as individual employers. These collective trainings need not take place at an employer's workplace;

E. One or more training classes to prepare the immigrant participants as potential employees to enter into and retain livable wage employment within 6 to 24 months of the beginning of the training; and

F. Collection and reporting of data including outcomes of employment and job retention.

The office shall give special consideration to proposals for grants under this subsection that provide incentives for immigrants to participate in the training classes under this subsection, such as agreements by employers to pay an employee the employee's hourly rate while attending the training classes.

3. Criteria for applicants. An applicant for a grant under subsection 2 must have demonstrated expertise and experience in the following:

- A. Providing English language acquisition training, including the administration of appropriate academic and vocational assessments and research-based instructional approaches appropriate for English language learners;
- B. Working with employers to develop relevant employee training; and
- C. Working with partners in the state workforce and state agencies with expertise in serving and preparing immigrants for employment through a case management approach.

Sec. 3. Report. Resolved: That the office shall provide a report concerning grants awarded pursuant to this resolve to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by November 1, 2022 that includes:

- 1. The number and amount of grants awarded;
- 2. The training and services provided by the grant recipients or progress toward establishing new programs to deliver the training and services;
- 3. Aggregate demographic information about immigrant participants in the training, participating employers, employment opportunities, employment placements and retention by employers of immigrant participants placed under this section; and
- 4. An evaluation of programs and services most effective in carrying out the purposes of this resolve.

The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters may report out a bill to the First Regular Session of the 131st Legislature to continue the grant process or to make it permanent.

Sec. 4. Fund established. Resolved: That the Industry-specific English Language Acquisition and Workforce Training Grant Fund is established as a nonlapsing fund under the Department of Education for the purpose of administering state grants funded by state and federal allocations and other sources, including donations from private citizens, corporations and entities for the purposes of this resolve. The department shall distribute any available funds to support the purposes of this resolve.

Sec. 5. Appropriations and allocations. Resolved: That the following appropriations and allocations are made.

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF

Industry-specific English Language Acquisition and Workforce Training Grant Fund N386

Initiative: Provides base allocations to authorize expenditures of funds received from federal sources for grants to adult education programs for English language acquisition and workforce training programs.

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	2021-22	2022-23
All Other	\$500	\$500
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND TOTAL	\$500	\$500

**Industry-specific English Language Acquisition and Workforce Training Grant
Fund N386**

Initiative: Provides base allocations to authorize expenditures of funds received from private donations for grants to adult education programs for English language acquisition and workforce training programs.

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2021-22	2022-23
All Other	\$500	\$500
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$500</u>

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2021-22	2022-23
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	\$500	\$500
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	\$500	\$500
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	<u>\$1,000</u>	<u>\$1,000</u>