



## **Workforce & Employment Workgroup of the Maine Aging Initiative Key Workforce Messages for Employers**

### **What every business leader needs to know about Maine's aging workforce:**

- Maine is the oldest state in the nation by median age.
- The leading edge of the baby boom generation has reached retirement age and that entire group will pass age 65 in the next 13 years. As Baby Boomers reach retirement age, companies are in danger of losing employees with key skills and expertise.
- There will be a much smaller population of young adults to replace retiring baby boomers.
- Projections are that 411,000 Maine residents will leave the workforce in the next two decades, while only 302,000 residents will be available to enter the workforce. The resulting 109,000 gap between labor force leavers and entrants in a total labor force of 700,000 will pose a significant challenge. Maine's employers will be challenged to meet business objectives.
- Maine Chamber of Commerce and Maine Development Foundation Report on Growing Maine's Workforce: "If current trends do not change, if population growth continues on its projected path, and if participation rates do not change, the civilian workforce will cease growing entirely and decline by 20,000 by 2020."
- With declining workforce availability and small numbers of young adults entering the workforce, employers will compete to fill vacancies and higher wages will result.
- Developing Maine's workforce to fill job vacancies must be a key area of focus for the state and employers.

### **How can Maine increase the size of its workforce?**

- According to the report "Making Maine Work: Critical Investments for the Maine Economy" written by the Maine Development Foundation and the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, there are two strategies: 1. Increase participation in the workforce among the existing population and 2. Attract people from outside the state to come live and work here.
  - To increase participation, the report set goals for four groups: People with Disabilities, Seniors 65 Years and Over Not Currently Working, Disengaged Youth, and Veterans.
  - The largest groups to focus on in order to grow Maine's workforce, in order, are:
    - 1. Younger Workers, age 20-39 (goal – add 20,000 workers by 2020)
    - 2. Seniors 65+ Not Currently Working (goal – add 12,000 workers by 2020)
    - 3. Foreign Workers (goal – add 12,000 workers by 2020)

### **Many Resources are available for Employers**

- <http://www.mainechamber.org/documents/makingmainework/MMW5-PreparingMainesWorkforce-WEB.pdf>
- [http://maine.gov/bhr/employee\\_center/MaineWorkforce2025.pdf](http://maine.gov/bhr/employee_center/MaineWorkforce2025.pdf)
- <http://www.pressherald.com/2015/09/20/who-will-replace-maines-aging-workforce/>
- <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/employing-an-aging-workforce.aspx>

### **Key Message for Older Adults Considering Leaving the Workforce or Not Currently in the Workforce:**

- Maine's economy depends on building its workforce. This is a call-to-action for people of all ages with workplaces skills and abilities to engage or re-engage in the workforce.