

Ageing Worker Initiative: Strategies for Regional Talent Development

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.

Grantee: Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)

Industry Focus: Healthcare and Energy/Green Construction

Location of Grant Activities: Maine

Key Partners: Tri-County Workforce Investment Board (WIB); Central/Western Maine WIB; Local Area 1 Aroostook/Washington WIB; Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Elder Services; Maine Department of Education; Seasoned Workforce LLC; Goodwill Industries of Northern New England (Senior Community Service Employment Program-SCSEP grantee); National Able Network (SCSEP grantee); AARP (SCSEP grantee); University of Southern Maine-Muskie School of Public Service; Bonnie Staffing Center; Augusta Career Center; Kennebec Valley Community College (CC); Southern Maine CC; York County CC; Northern Maine CC; Eastern Maine CC; Maine Chambers of Commerce.

Grant Amount: \$1,000,000

Leveraged Funds: \$643,682

Challenge: Maine’s population, like our national population, is facing a significant demographic shift and aging rapidly. The state faces a severe workforce shortage with nearly a quarter of their workforce eligible to retire at age 65, and not enough younger workers to replace them. To combat this problem, assistance must be available to experienced older workers transitioning from full-time careers to part-time jobs, and employers must find ways to adjust to hiring entry-level older workers. These older workers will require alternative work arrangements and flexibility from employers, as well as specific skills training.

Addressing the Challenge: Through the development of a statewide education strategy, the *Seasoned Worker Opportunity Project* will promote strategies for connecting older workers to occupations critical to Maine’s economy and simultaneously educate employers about the value of older workers. The statewide education strategy will encourage older workers to remain on the job beyond the age at which they might retire, and will identify, recognize, and promote Maine employers whose practices match the needs of mature workers. The capacity of Maine’s Workforce Investment System will be expanded to connect older workers to employers by establishing Seasoned Worker Navigators in each local area, expanding the Seasoned Worker Forums and establishing pilot Service Network Access Points (SNAPs) in older worker-focused organizations. In addition, older workers will be offered education and training opportunities through work-readiness and short-term training programs.

Projected Outcomes:

- 200 older workers will begin education/training activities.
- 155 older workers will complete education/training activities and 153 will receive a degree/certificate.
- 126 older workers who complete education/training activities will enter employment, and 118 will enter training-related employment.
- Four Employer Educational Seminars will be conducted.
- 4,000 employers and job seekers will attend the Seasoned Workforce Forums.
- 1,920 older workers will be served by the Service Network Access Points.

