

Maine Adult Promise Program Request for Proposal

Maine Development Foundation invites organizations that serve adult (25 years and older) students to apply to the Maine Adult Promise Program Request for Proposal.



The Background

Facing the challenge of the looming workforce skills and education gap in Maine, a diverse group of leaders from education, business, philanthropic, nonprofit, and government sectors convened for the purpose of setting a postsecondary educational attainment goal and defining a plan to realize that goal by 2025. This statewide **Workforce & Education Coalition, now called MaineSpark (mainespark.me)**, provides the framework for organizing and aligning existing and new efforts and resources to close the education gap. MaineSpark is powered by a coalition with a common goal: **by 2025, 60% of Mainers will hold education and workforce credentials that position Maine and its families for success.**

Supported by a Lumina Foundation grant, Maine's Adult Promise (MAP) is one of MaineSpark's four strategic tracks. MAP seeks to increase opportunities for Maine's adult learners to attain a college degree or credential of value with the goal of increasing the number by **63,200 over the next 10 years.**



The Promise

To that end, the MAP partners envision a Promise Program that includes comprehensive wrap around support services for targeted adult learner populations, coordinated services across institutions and service providers, and robust transition services, including heightened attraction, retention, persistence, and completion programming within our educational institutions, service providers, and adult learner programming. This foundation will be coupled with a Promise to Maine's adult learners that focuses on eliminating the barriers of debt and creative strategies to increasing affordability of post-secondary degree and credential attainment. ***Simply put, we promise to make it easier for adults to attain their education goals.*** MAP's priority is to **create a stronger and more transparent system** to reach adult learners where they are in their life or work and support them to achieve their education and career goals. A high-level review of existing programming shows that Maine has programs, organizations, and institutions that support adult learners; but the efforts are fragmented, disjointed, and often do not align in student eligibility requirements, credit transfer, nor match personal career needs. Recognizing our strengths and our gaps is critical to attracting adult learners and ensuring that they see completing or continuing their education as possible and desirable.

The MAP Program will expand upon existing work already underway in Maine, using a learning laboratory/pilot approach to identify best practices and spread those to other communities across the state. MAP will provide grant support, technical assistance (TA), and peer-to-peer learning and professional development opportunities to two local/regional collaborating organizational partnerships (formal or informal) focused on supporting adult learners in their pursuit of a post-secondary credential of value. MAP will support leadership and local/regional provider partners as you share training resources and lessons learned with other providers in the state.

As a collaborative partnership, you will have access to funds for the purpose of intentional convenings to augment, encourage, develop, trouble-shoot, and discuss specific ways the providers in your partnership can better work in concert to provide wrap-around support services to adult learners seeking a post-secondary credential of value in your area. These convenings will be designed and facilitated to provide mentoring support, best practice sharing, and professional development trainings. Pilot sites will be on the ground floor of work, with the MAP team, to develop scalable practices to advance the larger attainment goal of 60% by 2025.

This is a pilot program for one year, with the possibility of ongoing funding for up to two additional years.

 **Selected Adult Learner Collaborative Partnership Benefits:**

- Receipt of \$10,000 in the first year to support the operations and growth of your collaboration;
- Participation in monthly facilitation calls to discuss needs of the pilot group, concerns, questions, and requests for trainings or materials;
- Engagement in three peer-to-peer or expert-led discussion sessions;
- Participation in one self-identified professional development opportunity;
- Access to a newly developing online resource HUB with helpful tools and resources, a list of upcoming events, and a means for submitting technical assistance requests, questions, and comments;
- Receipt of regular communications and e-newsletters that will share promising practices, upcoming trainings, and new resources;
- Receipt of assistance for building lasting partnerships and networking connections with state-wide adult learner professionals;
- Serve as a testing ground for new and augmented financial resources for students and be on the “ground-floor” of various MAP support mechanisms;
- Benefit from feedback and insight of peers and the MAP project team; and
- Access to scholarships for eligible students served by the collaborative.

In return, participating Collaboratives will be expected to:



- Identify all organizations committed to participating as a group in the pilot project, with the name, title, and contact information of the dedicated staff representing each organization or institution engaging in the activities of the pilot;
- Participate in all professional development opportunities, and learning collaborative convening sessions;
- Develop, in coordination with MAP, a shared tracking system for students identified as the target population within the pilot project;
- Provide MAP with feedback on pilot goals and promising practices that lower barriers for adults to pursue and complete credentials of value;
- Respond to regular program evaluation surveys;
- Provide feedback on training materials and the online resource HUB developed for the project and eventually shared with the field; and
- Ensure access to participating students to gain consent for data collection, such as feedback and evaluation surveys, and project tracking.



An eligible pilot collaborative will:

- Be two or more organizations willing to work together and with the MAP team for the term of the pilot;
- Be fundamentally focused on working with adult learners (defined as ages 25+). *Programs may serve traditional students as well, but adult learners should form a core constituency;*
- Have established programs, with demonstrable success, focused on providing support for adults entering or returning to college. *This can include: assistance applying to college, academic assessment and preparation, and career, college, and financial aid advising;*
- Have a lead organization that is a 501c3 or operate under the auspices of a 501c3 organization; and
- Be willing to work on strengthening emerging or existing local/regional partnerships to augment support services to adult students.



Within your 5 to 10 page proposal, please share:

What you're about now -

- Introduce your collaborative partners and the program strengths of each partner. Who will act as your administrative lead for the pilot?
- Explain how your existing or proposed collaboration is/will be structured; how it is working; and what relationships already exist or would be developed with other educational institutions and service providers in your area.

- Identify barriers for adult learners in your area, then describe how your collaborative addresses or would address those barriers (please include mention of affordability barriers and existing financial resources used to address them).
- Describe strategies you are currently using or would use to meet the goals of this project, as individual organizations and collectively, if applicable.
- Explain how you currently or do you intend to evaluate success? Set goals? Please share with us any related performance metrics, either from your existing collaborative or as individual entities.
- Provide a sign-off of key partners within the collaborative to indicate their commitment and participation.



How you would work with the MAP team on the pilot -

- Identify who within your adult learner population you would target with these wrap around service efforts.
- Describe how you would support people to complete a credential by the 2025 goal and how your collaboration does or will help you meet the goals of the Adult Promise Program.
- Explain how you would track your target population from entrance to credential.
- Describe in what ways you could see this funding, and the MAP supporting mechanisms, contributing to your existing or planned efforts.



Selection Process for the Pilot Collaboratives

To participate in the Maine Adult Promise Pilot Program, proposals should be submitted no later than February 28, 2018 to [Lisa MacDonald Cooper, Program Director \(lcooper@mdf.org\)](mailto:lcooper@mdf.org). Questions about the Collaborative and selection process also can be submitted using this email address.

Timeline for Collaborative Activities:

As the TA needs of pilot sites are identified, we will develop the timeline for specific activities. However, applicants should plan for the following:

- Q&A Webinar: January 19, 2018
- February 28, 2018: **PROPOSALS DUE**
- March 2018: MAP Project Team reviews proposals, finalizes short list of candidates, and schedules conference calls with selected finalists.
- April 2018: Two Pilot Site Collaboratives selected and MOU's developed.
- May – June 2018 Pilot sites craft expected benchmarks and timelines.
- June 2018- January 2019:
 - Pilots begin implementing outlined strategies
 - MAP Project Team will work with Collaborative to develop and deliver peer-to-peer learning and professional development sessions and conduct monthly coaching calls.
 - Project Team will be collecting information, evaluations, and conducting interviews to identify promising practices and lessons learned.