

**§3304. Industry partnerships**

**1. Objectives.** The objectives of an industry partnership are to:

A. Organize businesses, employers, workers, labor organizations and industry associations into a collaborative structure that supports the sharing of information, ideas and challenges common to their industry cluster; [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

B. Identify the training needs of multiple businesses, especially a shortage of skills that are critical to the competitiveness and innovation of the industry cluster; [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

C. Facilitate economies of scale by aggregating training and education needs of multiple employers; [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

D. Help educational and training institutions align curricula and programs to industry demand, particularly for high-skill occupations; [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

E. Foster and strengthen relationships between and among education programs working to address the needs of related industry sectors; [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

F. Facilitate relationships, remove barriers and leverage and align resources between participating departments and agencies of State Government and employers working to address the needs of related industry sectors; [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

G. Inform and collaborate with the career and technical education centers, the boards of the local workforce investment areas designated pursuant to the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Public Law 113-128, youth councils, business-education partnerships, secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, parents and career counselors for the purpose of addressing the challenges of connecting disadvantaged adults and youth to careers; [PL 2017, c. 110, §31 (AMD).]

H. Help companies identify and collaborate to address common organizational and human resource challenges, including, but not limited to, recruiting new workers, retraining dislocated workers, hiring foreign-trained professionals, retaining incumbent workers, implementing a high-performance work organization, adopting new technologies and fostering experiential and contextualized on-the-job learning; [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

I. Develop and strengthen career ladders within and across companies, enabling entry-level workers to improve skills and advance to higher-wage jobs; [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

J. Help companies in an industry partnership to attract potential employees from a diverse pool of persons seeking jobs, including veterans and individuals with barriers to employment, such as persons who are economically disadvantaged, people with disabilities, youth, older workers, ex-offenders and others; and [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

K. Strengthen connections among businesses in industry clusters, leading to cooperation beyond workforce issues that would improve competitiveness and job quality, such as joint purchasing, market research or centers for technology and innovation. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2017, c. 110, §31 (AMD).]

**2. Responsibilities of the collaborative.** The collaborative shall:

A. Provide support and staffing assistance to the industry partnerships established under this chapter; [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

B. Create an industry partnership to advise the collaborative, the State Workforce Board established in section 2006 and the boards of the local workforce investment areas designated pursuant to the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Public Law 113-128 on aligning state policies and leveraging resources across systems, including workforce development, education and economic development; [PL 2017, c. 110, §32 (AMD).]

C. Include requirements that support industry partnerships in all relevant programs, grants and new initiatives; and [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

D. Use industry partnerships as a connective framework across systems and programs when applying for federal and private funds. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2017, c. 110, §32 (AMD).]

**3. Agency and educational program roles and responsibilities.** The collaborative shall provide staffing assistance to industry partnerships and shall assist the industry partnerships in achieving the objectives described in subsection 1. Other agencies that by statute, rule, funding or other policies affect employers and employees shall cooperate with the collaborative by:

A. Maintaining up-to-date information on jobs, wages, benefits, skills and careers of workers affected by such agency actions; [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

B. Developing and implementing policies that improve the jobs and careers of workers affected by such agency actions; and [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

C. Reporting their job creation strategies and workforce needs to the collaborative. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

**4. Evaluation information.** Upon request, all departments and agencies of this State shall provide to the collaborative any information that will assist the collaborative in carrying out the provisions of this chapter, including any performance measurement information necessary to evaluate any program or policy affecting workforce development in the State.

[PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

**5. Agency cooperation.** At a minimum, the following departments and agencies shall work with the collaborative in the following manner.

A. The Department of Labor shall:

(1) Coordinate the collaborative and serve as lead agency in convening collaborative members;

(2) Advise the collaborative of the Department of Labor's workforce and economic development strategies, programs and initiatives; and

(3) Align existing training programs with industry partnerships. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

B. The Department of Economic and Community Development shall:

(1) Advise the collaborative of the Department of Economic and Community Development's workforce and economic development strategies, programs and initiatives;

(2) Align existing training programs with industry partnerships;

(3) Make relevant business assistance programs available to industry partnerships;

(4) Coordinate with the collaborative on areas of business retention; and

(5) Advise the collaborative of the Department of Economic and Community Development's programs to improve competitiveness in industry and strategies for forming industry clusters. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

- C. The Department of Corrections, within existing resources, shall:
- (1) Align training for inmates with industry clusters and high-priority occupations and annually review these training programs to ensure that the training programs prepare inmates for high-priority occupations; and
  - (2) Align reentry programs to take advantage of information and career opportunities provided by industry partnerships. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]
- D. The Department of Education shall:
- (1) Develop curricula and build cross-agency and program partnerships to support career pathways;
  - (2) Support innovative programs to address literacy, including English as a second language, numeracy shortcomings and soft skills training, especially in those occupations critical to targeted industry clusters;
  - (3) Work with the collaborative to develop programs and strategies to reduce barriers to adult education;
  - (4) Coordinate career education initiatives in middle and secondary schools, career and technical education programs and adult education;
  - (5) Facilitate employer engagement with local adult education and career and technical education programs to align training with employer needs;
  - (6) Advise the collaborative in developing industry partnerships and career pathways in cooperation with employers;
  - (7) Coordinate educational initiatives with postsecondary education programs;
  - (8) Support initiatives to develop industry-recognized credentials and new programs providing academic credits in the State's public and private postsecondary institutions, especially in occupations critical to targeted industry clusters; and
  - (9) Work cooperatively with the collaborative and other agencies and education programs to leverage resources and share data regarding statewide workforce needs. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]
- E. The Department of Health and Human Services shall:
- (1) Create and maintain innovative programs that connect qualified clients of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, as defined in Title 22, section 3762, subsection 1, with employment opportunities in the targeted industry clusters;
  - (2) Support strategies to prepare those clients for success in postsecondary education and training programs;
  - (3) Work with other agencies and education programs to develop career pathways and education initiatives that provide those clients with information to guide their education and training plans; and
  - (4) Collect and share aggregate employment information with the relevant industry partnership to the extent allowed by applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]
- F. The Department of Professional and Financial Regulation shall:
- (1) Advise the collaborative on professional licensing opportunities and criteria;
  - (2) Provide the collaborative aggregate information on active professional licenses as needed in analyzing data that will support or sustain industry partnerships; and

(3) Assist the collaborative in developing strategies that will reduce barriers to obtaining professional licensure within industry clusters where it may be required. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

G. The Maine Community College System shall:

- (1) Develop curricula and build cross-postsecondary institution and program partnerships to support career pathways;
- (2) Support innovative programs to address literacy, including English as a second language, numeracy shortcomings and soft skills training, especially in those occupations critical to targeted industry clusters;
- (3) Work with the other members of the collaborative to develop programs and strategies to reduce barriers to adult education;
- (4) Advise the collaborative in developing industry partnerships and career pathways in cooperation with employers;
- (5) Coordinate educational initiatives with adult education and other postsecondary education programs;
- (6) Support initiatives to develop industry-recognized credentials and new programs providing academic credits, especially in occupations critical to targeted industry clusters; and
- (7) Work cooperatively with the collaborative and other agencies and education programs to leverage resources and share data regarding statewide workforce needs. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

H. The University of Maine System shall:

- (1) Develop curricula and build cross-postsecondary education institution and program partnerships to support career pathways;
- (2) Support innovative programs to address literacy, including English as a second language, numeracy shortcomings and soft skills training, especially in those occupations critical to targeted industry clusters;
- (3) Work with other members of the collaborative to develop programs and strategies to reduce barriers to adult education;
- (4) Advise the collaborative in developing industry partnerships and career pathways in cooperation with employers;
- (5) Coordinate educational initiatives with adult education and other postsecondary education programs;
- (6) Support initiatives to develop industry-recognized credentials and new programs providing academic credits, especially in occupations critical to targeted industry clusters; and
- (7) Work cooperatively with the collaborative and other agencies and education programs to leverage resources and share data regarding statewide workforce needs. [PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. FFFFF, §1 (NEW). PL 2017, c. 110, §§31, 32 (AMD).

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