

# Quick Study

A quarterly briefing from the Maine Adult Education Association

Spring 2004

Dear Reader,


Today when Maine businesses have a need for training, Maine Adult Education programs from Madawaska to Kittery are ready to help.

Sometimes, the assistance and training we provide is industry-specific. For example, MSAD 40 Adult Education trained 68 employees of **Taction**, a call center in Waldoboro, in Email and Internet Concepts. In Lewiston, 18 employees at **Great Falls Federal Credit Union** currently are mastering MS Word and MS Excel, thanks to professional trainers from Lewiston Adult Education.

At other times, we help growing industries locate qualified new job candidates through our certificate programs that offer health care, retail and office skills training. The demand for these well-trained prospects is high — 95% of the **Certified Nursing Assistant** graduates (CNAs) recently trained by the Massabesic and MSAD 17 Adult Education programs had jobs upon graduation.

We also give businesses the opportunity to invest in their employees. Portland Adult Education provided a class in Memo Writing for eight employees at **Peoples Regional Opportunities Program (PROP)**, while 23 employees at **New England Casting** participated in programs provided by MSAD 55 Adult Education.

The training and educational opportunities we offer are always an investment in the bottom line. So the next time your business has a need for training, Maine Adult Education will be ready to help.

  
Barbara Goodwin  
President, Maine Adult Education Association

## 6 ways adult education makes a difference for Maine businesses

Twenty-five years ago, educators from the Maine Adult Education system saw a need. Traditional manufacturing jobs were becoming increasingly scarce. At the same time, computers and other technological innovations were revolutionizing how Maine businesses were competing in markets throughout the world.

“We saw there was a skills gap

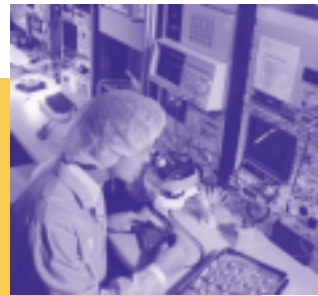
“The most important measure of economic development in Maine is the educational attainment of its people...”

Governor John Baldacci's  
Economic Strategy for Maine,  
January 21, 2004

between the old manufacturing economy and those that Maine workers would need for this ‘new economy,’” said Betty Gundersdorf, chair of Maine Adult Education’s Workplace Education Committee. So adult education started offering workforce education programs in communities throughout the state.

“We knew there would be a real advantage if we could provide programs including computer and technology training right in the communities where people lived and worked,” recounted Gundersdorf.

Maine Adult Education started offering computer training and other courses that focused on



### 2. Work skills that are ‘certified’

Maine adult Education launched its first certificate programs in the early 1990s to match local businesses with highly qualified job candidates. Working with businesses to develop curricula that match the needs of their operations, Maine Adult Education

building skills for the “new economy.” Today, two and a half decades later, Maine Adult Education enrolls more than 25,000 Maine workers in its workforce development programs.

Here are six ways Maine Adult Education is making a difference for workers and businesses throughout the state:

### 1. Computer and technology training

More than one-third of all Maine Adult Education programs help build computer and technology literacy. From basic office applications to industry specific technologies, MAEA’s professional educators provide technology training that can help Mainers and Maine businesses thrive.

expanded the selection of certificate programs over the past 15 years to cover many different disciplines, including the health care professions, service and financial industries. Recent examples include Web-Based Design, Certified Nursing Assistant, Culinary Arts, Office Skills, Refrigeration/Air Conditioning and ParaPro training.

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# MAINE Adult Education Association

P.O. Box 187  
Greenwood, ME 04255  
(207) 875-2722  
www.maineadulted.org



### 3. Helping good employees become great ones

Over the years, MAEA has developed a solid offering of workforce development programs. These cover skills essential for any workplace — from basic skills such as reading, writing and math, to advanced interpersonal skills including critical thinking, team building, problem solving and conflict resolution.

### 4. Training when and where it's needed

With programs in more than 100 communities across Maine, Maine Adult Education can provide cost-effective training almost anywhere in the state. They can provide the classroom facilities or arrange to set up training at most business locations.

### 5. Tapping into new labor markets

As the state's primary provider of adult ESOL educational services (English for Speakers of Other Languages), they can help businesses tap into this valuable employment resource. As students build their language skills, employers benefit from a new labor pool.

### 6. Inspiring excellence in the workplace

Maine Adult Education gives employers cost-effective ways to invest in their workers' education. From GED and High School completion to on-the-job-training and college transition programs, their workforce specialists can design programs that give employees the tools to be confident, productive and successful at work.



## QuickFacts

More than 25,000 workers from businesses throughout the state enroll annually in Maine Adult Education work-related training programs.<sup>1</sup>

30% of all adult education participants age 16 and older in the U.S. participated in work-related training.<sup>2</sup>

Higher educational attainment was associated with participation in overall adult education activities, work-related training, and personal interest courses.<sup>3</sup>

Between 2001 and 2010, nearly 70% of total job openings will require work-related training.<sup>4</sup>

1 Maine Department of Education, 2003.

2 & 3 U.S. Department of Education, 2003.

4 U.S. Department of Labor, 2001.

## On the frontline in Maine's changing economy

### In the past eighteen months, Maine Adult Education worked with more than 3,000 dislocated workers from 72 businesses.

Maine Adult Education provided significant assistance to dislocated Maine workers looking for work or transitioning to post-secondary education from July 2002 to December 2003, according to a survey conducted by the Maine Adult Education Association.

The survey found that nearly 30% of Maine workers laid off during that time participated in classes and counseling provided within the Maine Adult Education system. At the same time, adult educators in the areas hardest hit by the economic slowdown are concerned about their programs' ability to fund future job skills and relocation services should this trend of job loss continue.

Forty-three adult education programs responded to the survey — nearly 1/3 of all the programs in the Maine Adult Education system. Program directors reported they had provided free and low-cost training, education and counseling services to 3,064 dislocated Maine workers from 72 businesses throughout Maine between July 2002 and December 2003. According to the Maine Department of Labor, approximately 10,000 Maine workers were laid off by 186 Maine employers during that same period.

The survey found that, in some cases, the Department of Labor's Maine CareerCenters funded the computer and vocational training provided by Maine Adult Education. Respondents said that their local education departments often underwrote other services, such as counseling and adult literacy, GED or high school completion courses. In a few cases, respondents reported, students paid class fees personally.

While towns and businesses from all over the state participated in the survey, programs with the highest influx of dislocated workers reported some difficulty funding the extra classes needed to meet the increased demand. The survey also found that programs frequently partner with Maine's CareerCenters and Community Colleges to respond to the needs of dislocated workers. These partnerships allow many unemployed workers to transition to new employment opportunities.