

Adult Education in Maine Historical Highlights

19th Century - Industrial Revolution – post Civil War Maine

1871 – Maine passed legislation for free education in industrial and mechanical drawing for persons over 15 – day or evening

1889 – legislation allowed cities and towns to raise money for the support of evening schools under the direction of the local school board to teach the “elementary” branches.

20th Century

1908 – blossoming of vocational education as a movement

World War I – concerns arose about illiteracy at the time of the draft

Immigration – need for English language and citizenship classes

Depression Era – a disaster for adult education

Programs seen as a frill

Adults too concerned about finding any work to consider schooling

Post-World War II – GED established; pre-empted the adult diploma programs

Post-War – some resurgence of local programs primarily in larger communities in Maine.

1950's – Low point for adult education in Maine

Legislative subsidy cut

State Department separates Adult Education from Vocational Education

Lack of full-time leadership at state level

Local efforts, part-time and fragmented.

1960's – Great Society and War on Poverty

1964 – First Adult Basic Education Funding available to states

John Moran and Richard Adams hired as full-time adult education consultants at MDOE

Tremendous growth of local programs; ABE funds led to establishment of programs, full-time director positions.

Development of a state plan

Emphasis on staff development

1965 – State Adult Education Association established (MAEA/MAPS/AE)

Model Cities funds for urban learning center in Portland

1970's – early 1980's Growth Era

Vocational Education emphasized; adult education back to Bureau of Voc. Ed.

Community Education grants from Mott Foundation

Major Staff Development Emphasis

USM's Adult Education Masters Program

Staff Development Office (later CALL) established at USM, later moved to UMO

LD #231 expands eligible state subsidy categories of adult education

Strong Leadership from Department of Education and MAPSAE (later MAEA)

Effective Program Review Process designed to foster program growth, often followed by incentive grants from MDOE.

Late 1980's - Era of More with Less

GED Emphasis; more marketing, fees eliminated

Literacy Emphasis – Quality Indicators, Standards Movement

State Association becomes more independent of the MDOE

Robert Howe becomes MAEA lobbyist (1988-present)

Serious state funding problems – regular prorations

Reduction of MDOE personnel
Programs seek increased local and grant funding
Subsidy for community education courses eliminated; become fee-based

1990's - New Opportunities

Family Literacy Grant Programs (Even Start and Bush Foundation)
Discretionary Perkins Funds become available to adult education
University System ITV sites located at adult education programs
Technology hits in a big way; administration & instruction
Service to Maine's many dislocated manufacturing workers
Workforce Literacy – classes at worksites
Federal grants received for Corrections Education, Equipped for the Future and Reading Excellence Act
MAEA addresses more formal approach to organizational structure and financial stability

21st Century – Recognition of Adult Education as a Resource for Maine

2001 – Maine legislature tried to address funding issues with successive 6% increases
MAEA hires Executive Director
2002 – State funding shortfall
Data released identifying key demographic issues; an aging and under-educated workforce.
College Transition Blossoms
Access with Success White-paper issued by MAEA
Nellie Mae Foundation Grants
Local initiatives
English for Speakers of Other Languages becomes an increasing need
More than 90% of Maine's adult education programs join MAEA
2003 – Signing of Collaborative Agreement between MAEA and MTCS
2004 – Maine Compact for Higher Education identifies Adult Education College Transition as a key strategy for increasing the number of Maine people with college degrees
2005 – MELMAC adds adult education to its grant focus
Even Start suffers substantial cuts at federal level
2006 - \$200,000 in state funding launches the pilot sites for college transition
Perkins Act reauthorized resulting in major loss of funding for adult education
MAEA hosts COABE regional institute
2007 – Governor Baldacci proposed full-funding of the Compact's College Transition strategy.
By April, revenue forecasts reduced this by 1/3, and we await the final budget.
Adult Education Statutes revised and pass in legislature.

Notes prepared by C. Newell from [A History of Adult Education in Maine](#) (Wright/Rice) and [An Historical Perspective on Public School Adult Education 1976-1994](#) (Macdonald).