



SEA Maine
SEAFOOD ECONOMIC ACCELERATOR

Best Practices Toolbox

*Sharing Statewide and
National Knowledge*



Acknowledgements

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About SEAMaine

SEAMaine, or the Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine, is an industry-led initiative bringing together leaders in Maine's commercial fishing, aquaculture, and seafood economy. Funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, with match funding from the Maine Technology Institute and FocusMaine, the statewide initiative is developing a roadmap and action plan for economic growth, market and workforce development, and greater resiliency in Maine's seafood economy.

The seafood that comes from Maine's coastal waters and the Gulf of Maine, and the working waterfront communities along the coast, support thousands of good-paying jobs, and already contribute to the state's \$6 billion tourism industry. Imagine what Maine could be if the wild-caught fisheries, aquaculture businesses, fishermen, sea-farmers, and communities were granted opportunities to diversify and grow our marine economy in Maine, the U.S., and across the globe, and create new market opportunities.¹

About TPMA

Since 1989, TPMA has provided consulting services across the United States, working with local and state governments, economic development organizations, workforce development agencies, industry associations, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions.

TPMA is headquartered in downtown Indianapolis with a staff of about 50 professionals, across twelve states, who possess diverse professional experience and educational backgrounds but work collaboratively to provide our clients with holistic solutions. TPMA provides expertise in assessing markets, identifying business sector opportunities, building innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems, and organizing social and economic resources to implement community and economic development strategies.



¹ "What is SEAMaine." *SEAMaine*. <https://www.seamaine.org/about/>.

About the Toolboxes

Recruitment, Talent Attraction, and Retention Toolbox: Examining Careers in Maine's Seafood Economy

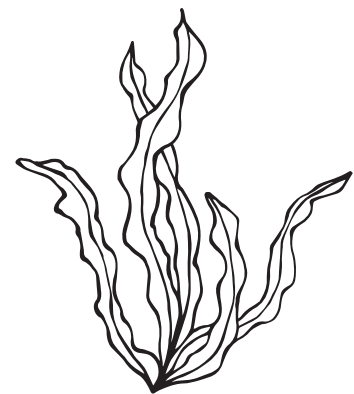
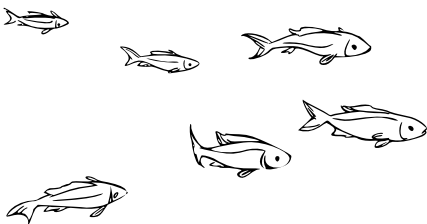
The first toolbox explains the Maine seafood economy, which encompasses six sectors and two subsectors. Occupations that are vital to the seafood economy are captured in occupational profiles. Occupational profiles have job descriptions, technical and employability skills, common certifications, and more. Additional relevant occupations are present in an appendix list by sector. Other information in the toolbox includes workforce gaps, case studies addressing those gaps, and resource links.

Education and Training Toolbox: Learning Skills for Maine's Seafood Economy

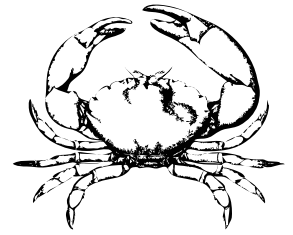
The second toolbox details education and training opportunities in Maine for those who want to work in the Maine seafood economy. The toolbox is organized by conventional education and training (such as K-12 or college/university programs that lead to a degree/credential); other education and training opportunities (such as short courses, field trips, and fellowships); and micro-credentials. The education and training offerings are organized by county in Maine and associated with the sectors explained in the first toolbox in order to provide some linkages between occupations and education and training. Other information includes skills gaps, case studies addressing those gaps, and resource links.

Best Practices Toolbox: Sharing Statewide and National Knowledge

The third toolbox is comprehensive in that it has information for multiple audiences: employers and job seekers; educators; students; human resources representatives; social service agency representatives; and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) advocates. This toolbox showcases information learned about Maine and workforce-related gaps. Summaries of best practices in Maine and throughout the United States are explained, which contribute to what Maine is already doing successfully and what it could do differently to support learning around the seafood economy. Resource links are included as well.



About this Toolbox



The Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine (SEAMaine) and Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) contracted together to create a number of informational toolboxes about the Maine seafood economy. SEAMaine has provided valuable expertise, connections, and insight to complement TPMA's extensive workforce and economic development knowledge. SEAMaine and TPMA launched their work together in April 2022 and finished their work in June 2023.

The *Best Practices Toolbox: Sharing Statewide and National Knowledge* has important information to support the Maine seafood economy. This information has been built up throughout the entire duration of work with TPMA and SEAMaine. Specifically, the information is responsive to identified workforce gaps in Maine. The best practices augment strong, current employers, organizations, and actors in Maine and/or supply ideas and quintessential practices for strengthening the seafood economy.

This toolbox has information for multiple audiences: employers and job seekers; educators; students; human resources representatives; social service agency representatives; and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) advocates. The toolbox categorizes best practices with these audiences in mind.

The toolbox consists of (1) Employer & Job Seeker; (2) Education and Training; and (3) HR, Social Service Agencies, and DEI Advocates best practices. There are best practices for these categories for both Maine and the United States. Additional resources are provided at the end of the toolbox for more information.

Summary of Gaps

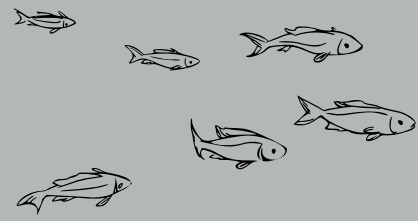
Each SEAMaine toolbox contains information about gaps. The bullet points below summarize them.

- Need to broaden recruitment, attraction, & retention to increase the talent pipeline for the Maine seafood economy and reduce labor shortages for employers.
- Focus efforts on attracting diverse talent, including, but not limited to: new Maine residents who immigrated from other countries; residents of various socio-economic, race/ethnic, sexual orientation, gender, etc. backgrounds.
- Increase the development and delivery of Maine seafood economy curriculum in grades K-12.
- Align short-term courses/programs with industry-recognized certificates or licenses.
- Expand apprenticeships for occupations in the Maine seafood economy.
- Increase advertising of education and training opportunities to expand the potential participant pool.
- Alleviate education and training costs to reduce barriers to employment in the Maine seafood economy.
- Need to expand access to education and training programs, especially in rural areas of Maine.



For more information, please see Toolbox 1, *Recruitment, Talent Attraction, and Retention* and Toolbox 2, *Education and Training*.

Understanding Best Practices



There is progress happening in Maine and around the nation to grow the seafood economy! There are two sections on best practices: Maine and National. The best practices focus on the gaps identified on the previous page and provide case studies of how states and businesses have addressed those gaps.

The best practices are organized based on their audience. More information on the audiences can be found below.



Employer & Job Seeker²

The Employer & Job Seeker best practices showcase information about how some of Maine's biggest names in its seafood economy are acting on recruitment, retention, and employee needs. The national best practices provide context about how North Carolina and Alaska--two states with booming seafood economies--are working toward similar aspects.



Education & Training

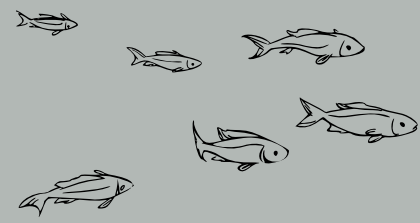
The Education & Training best practices present education and training programs that are working to grow the workforce pipeline for the Maine seafood economy. The national best practices address research, collaboration, and additional ways to grow partnerships to connect employers, educators, and others relevant to building the future pipeline of talent.



Human Resources, Social Service Agencies, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Advocates

This section relates to partners who have a role to play in conjunction with employers, educators, and others. It provides information about hiring, accommodations, equitable resources, and support for other services to help with consistent employment. The best practices in Maine and the United States emphasize those with commitments to DEI and supportive services.

² The Employer & Job Seeker best practices for the state of Maine used information from interviews, which were conducted by [Camoin Associates](#), for SEAMaine's Phase II *Workforce Needs Assessment*.



Human Resources, Social Service Agencies, and DEI Advocates Continued

Availability of job openings and being prepared with the right skills and education are certainly important for the local workforce. There are other related and essential workforce services for individuals to have the ability to work. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) instructs workforce services on the national level and it impacts state and local levels as well. WIOA uses the term “supportive services” to describe these related workforce services.³ Examples of supportive services include:

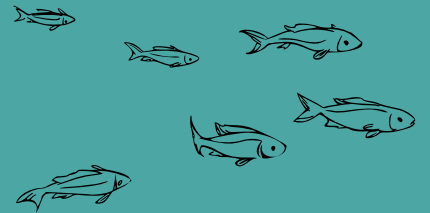


Having access to transportation, child care coverage, and a place to live, among others, are vital to being able to get to one’s job. Human resources, social service agencies, and DEI advocates play a significant role in offering or allowing for these services. Non-profit organizations often commit to providing services like food, vouchers, second-hand professional attire, and language assistance. The following best practices in Maine identify some organizations that are doing a wonderful job providing these supports.

³“Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.” *U.S. Congress*. <https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>.

⁴“20 CFR § 680.900- What are supportive services for adults and dislocated services?.” *Cornell Law School, Legal Information Institute*. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/20/680.900>.

Maine Best Practices

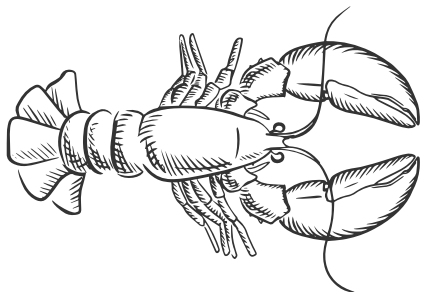


Ready Seafood, the new Mainer Community, and Beyond

Ready Seafood is a live and value-added lobster products company based in Maine, with facilities in both Maine and Massachusetts. Lobster processing is a labor-intensive industry, where most of the work is not automated. As a result, Ready Seafood employs over 150 people in their processing plant alone, many of whom are from the New Mainer community, and are still understaffed.⁵ To meet their staffing needs and overcome workforce challenges, Ready Seafood takes a proactive approach, planning workforce needs in advance and utilizing a hands-on recruitment and retention strategy.

When thinking about workforce needs, the company considers everything from immediate needs to ten years in the future. To reach future workers, they've developed an education outreach program for K-12 students focused on coastal communities; this program reaches about 1,200 students per year to make them aware of the possibilities in the industry.

For nearer-term needs, they partner with adult education and college education programs to develop programming and a workforce pipeline to create the skills they need. For example, Curt Brown, Ready Seafood's staff marine biologist, taught a ten-week course on the opportunities within the lobster industry at Washington Community College.⁶ By utilizing these avenues, Ready Seafood proactively builds its talent pipeline.



To meet their immediate workforce needs, Ready Seafood employs a take-charge recruiting and retention strategy. First, they cast their net wide, looking for talent not just locally, but globally. As mentioned previously, the new Mainer community is a critical part of their workforce and Brown attributes much of their success to the new Mainer community.⁷ Ready Seafood uses their diverse team members to reach potential employees around the world. They also use more traditional methods, such as word-of-mouth and job fairs.

"For us, when we talk about workforce development, that means everything from immediate needs on a daily basis, to trying to think out five, ten years in advance to develop that workforce for the future"

- Curt Brown

Retention is critical to the company. Ready Seafood realized that they need to offer more than just a paycheck; they need to provide employees with the resources they need to succeed outside of work. They provide transportation (both to work and outside locations, such as the grocery store or the laundromat), assist with housing, and provide education, including language, culture, and job training. Finally, Ready Seafood seeks to grow from within, providing advancement opportunities for their employees, which increases their retention. They recognize that the new Mainer community is highly skilled and highly educated, but often aren't given opportunities to use the education and experience gained in their home countries. Ready Seafood works to advance individuals from entry-level positions to more advanced opportunities where their skills are more utilized.⁸ By planning ahead, embracing diversity, and providing supportive services, Ready Seafood serves as a model for workforce development in the region.

⁵"Innovative Workforce Strategies in Maine's Seafood Economy." Alliance for Maine's Marine Economy. https://video.maine.edu/media/Dec+9%2C+2021_Innovative+workforce+strategies+in+Maine%E2%80%99s+seafood+economy/1_07clh9g5.

Cooke Aquaculture and the Importance of Automation

As a family-owned business, Cooke Aquaculture began in 1985, with just one sea site, and has since grown into a vertically integrated, global seafood company. First started in New Brunswick, Canada, Cooke has been in Maine since 2004, which marked the start of their global expansion. Now, they have operations in seven states and five continents.⁹



To meet their workforce needs, Cooke focuses on attraction and retention. For attraction, Cooke Aquaculture works with organizations, such as the University of Maine, Washington County Community College, and Maine Maritime, to inform students about their business and available job opportunities. They also utilize an innovative program to reach those in secondary schools. Instead of bringing students to their sites, Cooke brings secondary school teachers, so they can learn about the work and share that with their students.

To retain talent, Cooke invests in automation. While this may seem counterintuitive to many, it's a strategy that has worked for Cooke. Much of the work that needs to be done at their sea sites, hatcheries, and processing facilities is very labor intensive. Through automation, the physicality of the work is decreased, which enables workers to stay in their roles due to the reduction of physical labor stresses, and Cooke is able to retain their experienced and well-trained staff.¹⁰ By viewing automation as a work partner, instead of a replacement, Cooke maintains their workforce.

"Automation does not mean you're going to lay a bunch of people off because you brought in automated equipment to do things. It means you're going to be able to retain your people."

- Andrew Lively



Photo by Jack Sullivan, Island Institute

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "New Mainers' are key to seafood industry." Island Institute. <https://www.islandinstitute.org/working-waterfront/new-mainers-are-key-to-seafood-industry/>.

⁸ "Innovative Workforce Strategies in Maine's Seafood Economy." *Alliance for Maine's Marine Economy*. https://video.maine.edu/media/Dec+9%2C+2021_Innovative+workforce+strategies+in+Maine%E2%80%99s+seafood+economy/1_07clh9g5.

⁹ "Corporate Timeline & Key Achievements." Cooke Seafood. <https://www.cookeseafood.com/about-cooke/>.

¹⁰ "Innovative Workforce Strategies in Maine's Seafood Economy." *Alliance for Maine's Marine Economy*. https://video.maine.edu/media/Dec+9%2C+2021_Innovative+workforce+strategies+in+Maine%E2%80%99s+seafood+economy/1_07clh9g5.

Community Shellfish Leverages Partnerships and Social Media to Educate and Inform

Community Shellfish is an integrated shellfish company dealing in lobster, clams, scallops, and oysters. Owner Boe Marsh takes pride in his business and the benefits it brings to the Bremen, Maine community where it is located. Not only does he employ 30 individuals who are involved with lobster and clam processing and products, and the company's 13-acre oyster farm, he leverages partnerships and uses social media to spread information and educate others.

For example, the company's joint venture with the University of Maine (UMaine) focuses on commercial research about the most economical and responsible ways to grow oysters. The oyster farmer on the project is a joint employee of Community Shellfish and UMaine. Retired lobster pens are repurposed and used by the aquaculture center growing oysters on 5 acres with approximately 900,000 oysters under cultivation. The UMaine relationship happened through a partnership with the Island Institute. The relationship led to grant assistance and other funding opportunities, as well as research contacts.

The social media utilized by Marsh is both educational and informative. The Community Shellfish website features the waterfront and the work that occurs around it.¹¹ There are a variety of articles that explain the seafood industry and videos featured on the website that take a deeper dive into the seafood economy.¹³ Many of the videos are also available via YouTube.

"The Island Institute was a true partner. They helped me not just preserve the waterfront but dynamize it"

Bo Marsh, CEO of Community Shellfish¹²



Marsh sees his business as both a community company and a community resource with a strong tradition. He says the staff are all long-tenured—some involved for generations. Community Shellfish boasts a logistics department, sales, marketing, lobster dock staff, bookkeeping, an oyster manager, and processing workers (who are the bulk of those employed). He says they compensate on a sort of "wall street" model where they provide attractive base salaries and then motivate through production.

¹¹ "Welcome," Community Shellfish. <https://www.communityshellfish.com/>.

¹² "8 Ways Maine organizations are Giving Back." *Downeast.com*. <https://downeast.com/sponsored-content/maine-gives-back-2021/>.

¹³ "Media," *Community Shellfish*. <https://www.communityshellfish.com/blog>.

Mook Sea Farm's Driven Company Culture

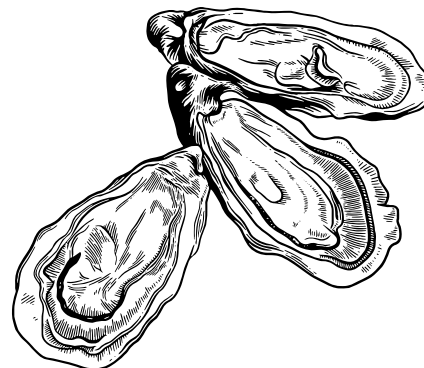


With 58 acres of leases, Mook Sea Farm is the largest oyster aquaculture company in Midcoast Maine. Founded in 1985 and currently employing 30 individuals, the company offers a variety of positions including engineers, biologists, hatchery technicians, harvesters, oyster processors, management, and sales.

Their mission is "to grow wholesome, healthy, high-quality shellfish using science, technology, and the principles of stakeholder capitalism, that will advance the global effort towards sustainable food production."¹⁴ Their vision is "to provide the best microalgae and shellfish available while continually working towards reducing our impact on the environment."¹⁵ Mook Sea Farm recruits and retains employees based on those statements and a set of core values so that staff reflects the shared norms and values of the company.

The mission and vision statements and core values are the driving force behind the company's overall philosophy, from recruitment to environmental advocacy. Mook Sea Farm is involved in and supports organizations that address the environment—Shellfish Growers Climate Association, Maine Ocean & Coastal Acidification (MOCA) Partnership, Northeast Coastal Acidification Network (NECAN), Natural Resources Council of Maine, and Energy Pathway of Maine. Bill Mook was the founding member of the Shellfish Growers Climate Coalition, which started with 7 growers from both the East and West Coasts and now involves 19 states. Working alongside the company's former head of research and development, Dr. Meredith White, Bill Mook co-authored a 2015 paper published in the scientific journal, *Oceanography*. He is the recipient of the Conservation Leadership Award for his significant contributions to protecting the state's environment. The company has also invested in infrastructure to combat climate change.

**"Our world is your oyster."
– Bill Mook**



During an educational event with some of Maine seafood economy's employers, Mook Sea Farm's human resources director stated that it's beneficial to "hire people that agree with your mission and vision."¹⁶ Mook Sea Farm prides itself on a company culture that hallmarks its ethics and principles based on communication, learning, and accountability. They provide insight into business and employee relations via their website by introducing their crew.¹⁷ The website also explains their internship opportunities, an explanation of the hatchery process, wholesale seafood offerings, and other information that a potential employee would find useful.

¹⁴ "Mook Sea Farm Home Page." *Mook Sea Farm*. <https://www.mookseafarm.com/>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Innovative Workforce Strategies in Maine's Seafood Economy." Alliance for Maine's Marine Economy. https://video.maine.edu/media/Dec+9%2C+2021_Innovative+workforce+strategies+in+Maine%E2%80%99s+seafood+economy/1_07clh9g5.

¹⁷ "Meet the Crew," Mook Sea Farm. <https://www.mookseafarm.com/pages/meet-the-crew>.

K-12: Jonesport-Beals High School Aquaculture and Aquaponics

Aquaculture is a growing part of the Maine seafood economy. Despite its growing importance, not many high school students have the opportunity to learn about aquaculture in a hands-on way. Robin Monini intends to change that. A teacher at Jonesport-Beal High School, Monini, is believed to be the only full-time teacher in the state dedicated solely to teaching aquaculture and aquaponics.¹⁸ Every day, she teaches two two-hour blocks, focusing in the morning on aquaculture and in the afternoon on aquaponics. These courses are open to juniors and seniors.

In the aquaculture course launched in partnership with Kingfish Maine, students learn to grow tilapia using a 400-gallon recirculating aquaculture system (RAS).¹⁹ Students learn to raise the tilapia through all stages of the lifecycle, from fry (babies) to adults ready for harvest.



Source: [JBHS Aquaponics](#)

In the aquaponic course, students learn how to grow vegetables, house plants, and flowers without soil. Instead, the plants are fed through a 200-gallon continuous flow nutrient film technique system in which nutrient-rich water flows through the pipes where the plants are grown.^{20, 21} The water flows from a tilapia tank, feeds the plants, and then flows back to the tank.

Through these programs, students are exposed to career possibilities in aquaculture and aquaponics, through their work in the classroom and the partnership with Kingfish Maine. If more schools offer these courses, more students will be able to envision a career in aquaculture. In turn, this would create a robust, experienced talent pipeline for the aquaculture industry and, more broadly, would support the Maine seafood economy.

¹⁸ "Jonesport teacher shows students how to grow without soil." News Center Maine.

<https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/tech/science/jonesport-maine-teacher-robin-larochelle-shows-her-students-how-to-grow-lettuce-potatoes-without-soil-science-technology-mathematics-engineering-stem/97-7b080da5-affe-4503-adad-539654080b6c>.

¹⁹ "Jonesport-Beals High School." Manie School Garden Network. <https://msgn.org/jonesport-beals-high-school/>.

²⁰ "Ibid.

²¹ "NFT System." JBHS Aquaponics. <https://sites.google.com/union103.org/jbhs-aquaponics/our-systems?authuser=0>.

4-H Aquaponics Project Provides Hands-On Learning

4-H is a youth development program run by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. In collaboration with the UMaine Center for Cooperative Aquaculture Research and the UMaine Aquaculture Research Institute, 4-H provides Maine students with the opportunity to learn about aquaponics both at home and in the classroom.

In the at-home version, youth design, build, and operate an aquaponics system at home, as part of a five-month virtual learning program. Program leaders provide mentorship and guidance for the youth completing the project. This is open to all students (ages 9-18) in Maine and no prior aquaponics experience is necessary.



Source: [Hancock County 4-H Newsletter](#)

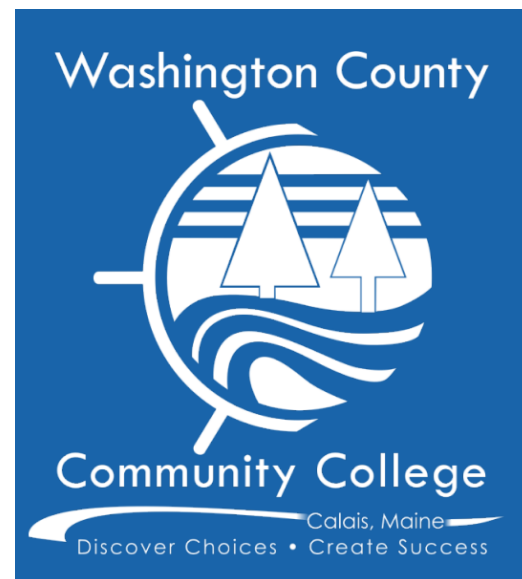
The classroom project is similar to the at-home version, with the exception that it takes place in a classroom, which can be a K-12 classroom, an afterschool program, or at a summer camp. As with the at-home version, the youth and their teacher work through the process of designing and building an aquaponics system. This version is self-paced and can be designed to fit the needs of the educator. Though educators are responsible for obtaining the necessary equipment, 4-H offers a \$200 grant to offset the cost.²²

Through these programs, youth gain hands-on experience in building aquaponics systems. Students gain skills beyond those just applicable to aquaponics; they develop experience in engineering and design, plumbing, electricity, and more. This early exposure to a diverse skillset helps students build technical, employable skills that are valuable for the Maine seafood economy.

²² "4-H Aquaponics Project." University of Maine Cooperative Extension. <https://extension.umaine.edu/hancock/4h/aquaponics/>.

Washington County Community College and Its Work Toward Apprenticeship

Washington County Community College (WCCC) has been doing significant work toward apprenticeship in the state of Maine. According to the Maine Department of Labor, Washington County Community College is a registered apprenticeship program sponsor for Manufacturing and Production Technician 1 and RAS Aquaculture Technician apprenticeships. Washington County Community College works in coordination with partners such as Kingfish Maine and Mano en Mano.²³ The manufacturing technician apprenticeship could broadly apply to production, processing, and distribution needs related to the Maine seafood economy if an apprentice joined a relevant employer.



The RAS Aquaculture Technician is very important in connecting to Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) needs in Maine. Washington County Community College's aquaculture programming is generated with the help of USDA funding and the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center. Introduction to Aquaculture, Exploring Aquaculture Careers, and Water Quality and Chemistry are a few of the course topic areas. One student completer moved onto to become a full-time RAS Aquaculture Technician.²⁴ Washington County Community College is truly championing Maine seafood careers through its course offerings, deliberate partnerships with employers, and use of funding to propel apprenticeships. For example, WCCC's Coastal Fisheries and Marine Technology Certificate or Associate's Degree programs are other learning options besides apprenticeship.²⁵

- ²³ "Maine Apprenticeship Program: Current Sponsors by County." Maine Apprenticeship Program. <https://www.maine.gov/labor/docs/2022/apprenticeship/MaineApprenticeshipProgramCurrentSponsorsbyCounty.pdf>.
- ²⁴ "Discover Careers in Aquaculture." Washington County Community College. <https://www.wccc.me.edu/professional-development/aquaculture/>.
- ²⁵ "Coastal Fisheries and Marine Technology" Washington County Community College. <https://www.wccc.me.edu/academics/programs/programs-study/coastal-fisheries-and-marine-technology/>.

Eastern Maine Skippers Program Connects Students to Opportunities

Through the Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries, the Eastern Maine Skippers Program is doing tremendous work exposing high school students to the Maine seafood economy. This program emphasizes skills and expertise about coastal fisheries. Participants can complete a group or individual project with actual actors in the Maine seafood economy—fishermen, scientists, and businesses! Participants get to look into opportunities for growth when it comes to fishing.

It also allows for educators and schools to have resources and those partner connections which translates directly into their curriculum. This program has about 60–100 high school participants from a breadth of nine Maine high schools. The program mentions a few important aspects when thinking about gaining participants and having engaging content.

One, they address students who may not be considering future education and have potential to work locally. Second, they make sure that material and topics are varied, such as from aquaculture to fishing gear, to be interesting to participants. This program is allowing for intentional exposure to high school students who may be unsure of their next steps to grow and learn from the coastal areas they live in.²⁶



²⁶ "Eastern Maine Skippers Program." Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries. <https://coastalfisheries.org/collaborative-education/eastern-maine-skippers/>.

Mano en Mano Offers Workers a Wide Breadth of Support

Mano en Mano is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Milbridge, Maine. Founded in 2005 to support migrant blueberry workers in Milbridge, their mission is to “work with farmworkers statewide and immigrants in Downeast Maine to empower them to thrive.”²⁷ They do this through advocacy and programming to provide equitable access to education, housing, and social services for agriculture and aquaculture workers statewide.

Childcare, something that is often cited as a barrier to employment, is a major focus of Mano en Mano. Workers may be unable to access childcare due to the cost or lack of availability. In 2021, Mano en Mano opened their Rayitos de Sol Bilingual Childcare Center for children under four years of age, with a maximum capacity of 12 students. In their first year of operation, they reached their operating capacity, served 15 families, provided 9 families with childcare subsidies, and provided 5,400 meals to children.²⁸

Mano en Mano is contracted by the Maine Department of Education to operate the Maine Migrant Education Program (MEP). The MEP provides supplemental education and support services for “migratory agriculture and fishing workers and their families, to minimize the potential impact of family mobility on school success.”²⁹

As the MEP provider, Mano en Mano supports learners ages 0 through 20, to reduce the academic disruption of moving, to receive better support from their schools, and to achieve their academic goals. They do this through a combination of:

- Tutoring
- College and career readiness counseling and assistance
- Home visits
- Parent education about the school system and their children’s rights within the school system
- Field trips and college visits
- Job training and workplace readiness training

"We envision a stronger, more inclusive Maine where the contributions of diverse communities are welcomed, access to essential services, education and housing are ensured, and social justice and equity are embraced."

– Mano en Mano Vision

In 2021, they served 309 students, equaling 6,640 hours of services, and had 11 students graduate high school or obtain their high school equivalency diploma. Further, they run the Blueberry Harvest School, a summer school for migrant children ages 3–13. In 2021, 78 students were enrolled in the Blueberry Harvest School and 78% of the staff were from immigrant or First Nations families. Their commitment to education encourages student success, leading to a well-prepared future workforce.³⁰

The final aspect of their core programming is housing. Housing availability and affordability for farmworkers in Downeast Maine is an ongoing challenge. To address this, Mano en Mano built the Hand in Hand apartments in 2011, subsidized housing specifically for farm and aquaculture workers.³¹ They also created the Housing Barrier Removal Fund, which provides down payment assistance and home repair grants.³²

The barriers this organization helps workers overcome in Downeast Maine can be found throughout the state. This organization is a prime example of the ways in a community-based organization can support workers and enable them (and their industry) to thrive, leading to a more diverse and robust workforce.

²⁷ “Mission and Vision.” Mano en Mano. <https://www.manomaine.org/mission>.

²⁸ “Annual Report 2021.” *Mano en Mano*.

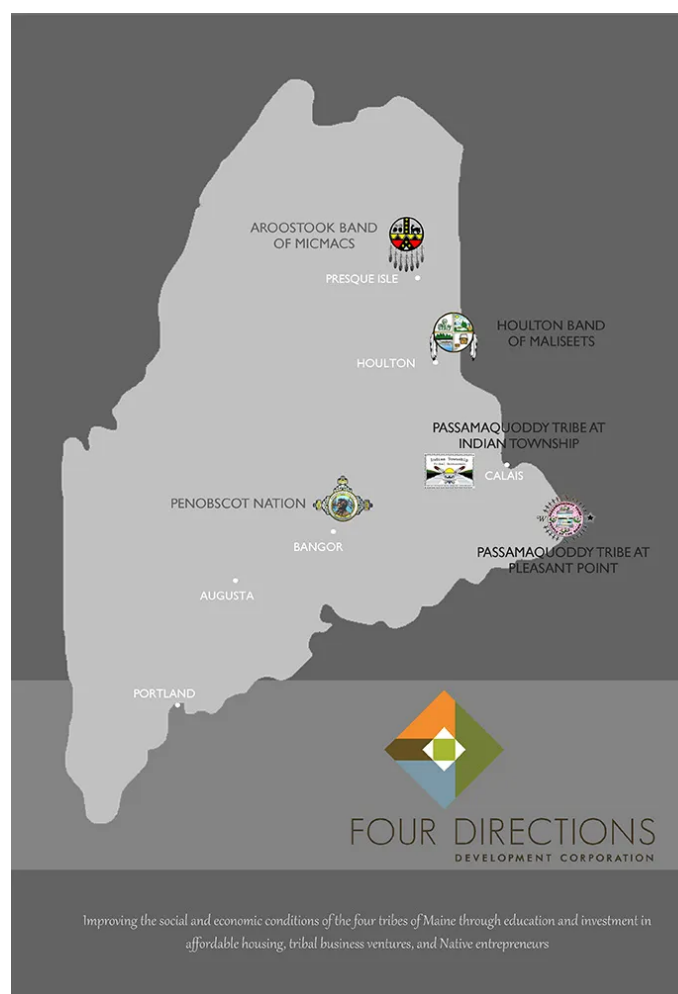
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e2efcc05890db7f015a92ef/t/6335a72e7b42dc14fa99987b/1664460596697/Mano+en+Mano+Annual+Report+2021+%281%29.pdf>.

Four Directions Economic Development Corporation Supports Indigenous Investment

Four Directions is an economic development organization established by the Penobscot Indian Nation in Orono, Maine. Their business and financial literacy courses provide critical knowledge for Native entrepreneurs seeking to open Maine seafood businesses and give them the tools to thrive as business owners. It also serves as an organization that is allowing individuals of diverse backgrounds, specifically indigenous residents, to gain education and decision-making over land. They state their mission “to improve the social and economic conditions of the Native American tribes in Maine — the Maliseet, Mi’kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot — through education and investment in affordable housing, tribal business ventures, and Native entrepreneurship.”³³ It is designated as a non-profit Community Development Corporation and Native Community Development Financial Institution. Their goals are toward more home ownership, bettering the quality of homes, boosting Native-owned businesses, increasing financial literacy, augmenting business skills, and gathering and utilizing capital to Indian Country. Wabanaki tribes operate the economic development corporation and its goals and services are for the Wabanaki tribes. There are about 8,700 Wabanaki tribe members who make up significant portions in Aroostook and Washington counties.

Notable programming includes their First-time Homebuyer Education classes. Four Directions is a Maine hoMEworks Homebuyer Education provider. They offer 8-hour workshops throughout the year about homebuying. There is another option of a discounted homebuyer course from eHome America too. Additionally, they have the Wabanaki CA\$H program for tax preparation. Income tax returns are made easier through virtual or in-person learning. They have also received a \$100,000 Native CDFI Catalyst Award, which has gone to various projects like the Mi’kmaq Farms & Fish Hatchery.

Lastly, they created a 20th-anniversary annual report about the evolution of the corporation.³⁴ Four Directions is a wonderful example of an organization providing agency and development in the hands of Wabanaki tribes who have contributed to Maine’s land and economy for hundreds of years. Its housing, financial, and business expertise is assisting tribal members in creating their own paths and futures in Maine.



²⁹ “Migrant Education.” *Maine Department of Education*. <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/safeschools/migrated>.

³⁰ “Annual Report 2021.” *Mano en Mano*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e2efcc05890db7f015a92ef/t/6335a72e7b42dc14fa99987b/1664460596697/Mano+en+Mano+Annual+Report+2021+%281%29.pdf>.

³¹ “Housing.” *Mano en Mano*. <https://www.manomaine.org/housing>.

³² “Housing Barrier Removal Fund – Community Story and Updates.” *Mano en Mano*. <https://www.manomaine.org/news/lhwqpggu4albxm885lkqwyqz268ube-5bke4>.

Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine Addresses Institutionalized Inequities

PARTNERING TO END HUNGER



Good Shepherd

FOOD BANK OF MAINE

Good Shepherd Food Bank is located in Auburn, Maine, and has been impacting hunger for decades. Their purpose is “to eliminate hunger in Maine by improving access to nutritious food for people in need, building strong community partnerships, and mobilizing the public in the figure to end hunger.”³⁵ Supportive services, like food assistance, are necessary for residents to live and work to the best of their ability. Good Shepherd is also instituting DEI into their organization in terms of strategy, commitment, and resources, which can be replicated by Maine seafood companies and organizations.

Their current campaign is focused on providing nutritious food options for those experiencing hunger by 2025. Programs dedicated to this campaign include those targeted at youth and families, cooking and nutrition classes, building partnerships to decrease hunger, and giving resources to healthcare representatives. In connection with the Maine seafood economy, the Maine Coast Fisherman's Association (MCFA) created the Fishermen Feeding Mainers Program. This program was catalyzed by impacts on the value of Maine groundfish, a need to help those fishermen collecting groundfish, and Maine residents that lack food. Fishermen receive financial help meanwhile Maine families receive nutritious seafood meals. Multiple actors in the Maine seafood economy are involved: fishermen, MCFA, local processors, and organizations helping residents. The Good Shepherd Food Bank is a recipient of the packaged seafood to give to residents, among other partners.³⁶

Diversity, equity, and inclusion is the forefront of their work; its importance to the organization is listed on the front page of their website. They are transparent about the connections of poverty and hunger with institutionalized inequalities. They champion having those particularly affected by hunger to be part of decision-making, understanding the varying experiences of those dealing with hunger, and working toward access of healthy and culturally appropriate food. Their comprehensive Equity Commitment Statement can be found on their website.³⁷ Another way that it expresses equitable work is its acknowledgment of Wabanaki tribal land and its concern for tribal hunger issues. They discuss the history and contribution of tribal members to Maine and provide more resources for information-sharing. Also, they have a page dedicated to ADA Accessibility, which talks through physical space accommodations, safety, gender-neutral restrooms, and allowance of service animals. Employers and other organizations can mimic some of these examples and understanding of barriers that impact residents and workers.

Moreover, resource guides in various languages are helpful to residents of different backgrounds and country origins. Guides are available for Androscoggin County, Cumberland County, and Kennebec County. Examples of languages are Somali, Swahili, Arabic, French, and Spanish. While not related directly to DEI, the Food Bank has green initiatives that show its care for the climate and environment, which relates to the natural and coastal environments necessary for the Maine seafood economy.³⁸ A thriving Maine workforce is made up of residents who have the healthy and accessible food options needed to complete their work. Good Shepherd Food Bank is contributing to this and weaving inclusivity into its commitment and footprint.

³³ “About Us.” Four Directions Economic Development Corporation. <https://fourdirectionsmaine.org/about-four-directions/>.

³⁴ “Four Directions Maine Mission.” *Four Directions Economic Development Corporation*. <https://fourdirectionsmaine.org/>.

³⁵ “About us.” Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine. <https://www.gsfb.org/about-us/>.

³⁶ “Fisherman Feeding Mainers.” *Maine Coast Fishermen's Association*. <https://www.maineoastfishermen.org/fishermen-feeding-mainers>.

Island Workforce Housing Provides Steppingstone to Workers

There are currently a handful of organizations addressing housing needs in Maine. One is Island Workforce Housing. It is a non-profit organization in Deer Isle, Maine focused on affordable housing, specially dedicated to the Deer Isle and Stonington areas. The organization understands the need for the local workforce to have feasible housing options. Island Workforce Housing is volunteer-led and is backed by the generous support of donors.³⁹



During interviews conducted with employers in 2023, they said that housing was a major concern for recruitment and retention efforts. The limited housing stock available makes it extremely challenging for people to live in the communities where they work. Shuttles are used to transport people between housing, the grocery store, work, etc. This challenge has a negative effect on retention. Workers cannot afford the housing that is available and that means people must travel long distances to get to their job site. Recruiting workers that live out of state is difficult, and housing negatively impacts that effort.

After due diligence of a survey, analysis, and needs assessment, a strategic plan was developed and Island Workforce Housing broke ground in 2020 for its first phase to address housing. That plan has come to fruition with the first housing complex called Oliver's Ridge -Sunset Cross Road, located in Deer Isle. It has 10 units consisting of 5 duplexes with 2-bedrooms each. Island Workforce Housing helps connect individuals to rental homes in which rent is income-based. They provide rental homes that are a steppingstone for workers who aspire to settle in the area permanently.⁴⁰



Source: Island Workforce Housing website

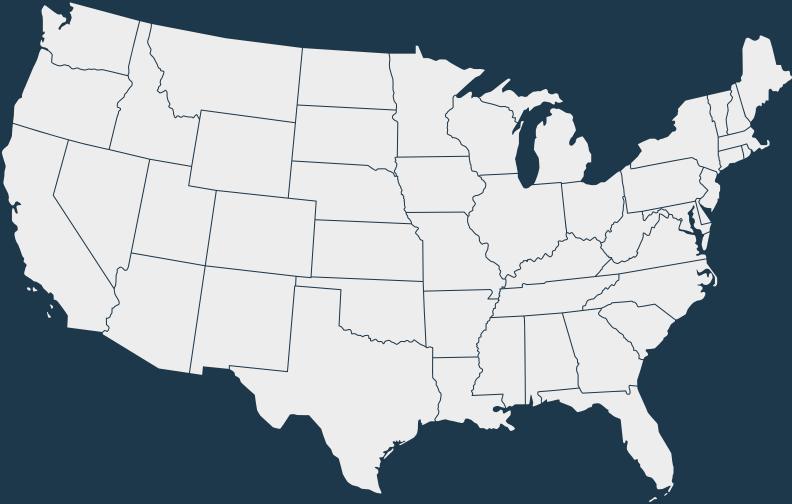
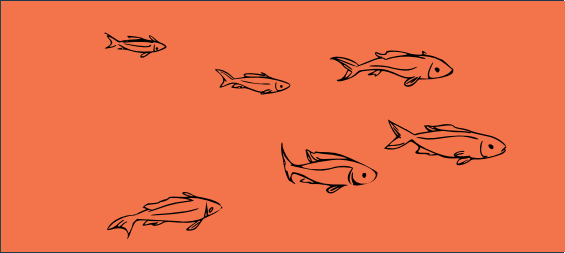
³⁷ The Equity Commitment Statement can be found at <https://www.gsfb.org/about-us/>.

³⁸ "Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine." Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine. <https://www.gsfb.org/>.

³⁹ "Island Workforce Housing Home Page." Island Workforce Housing. <https://www.islandworkforcehousing.org/>.

⁴⁰ "Application," Island Workforce Housing. <https://www.islandworkforcehousing.org/applications>.

National Best Practices



Collaboration by North Carolina Careers Partners Leads to Clearinghouse



North Carolina Careers provides a one-stop-shop for career planning and preparation for students, parents, educators, career counselors, and job seekers. This is a collaborative effort between the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the North Carolina public education system, the North Carolina college systems, and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. This work is partially funded by a grant from the US Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration.⁴¹

Within the “Find My Interests” section, job seekers are provided with multiple assessments that can help them understand the occupations that best fit these interests. Armed with potential occupations, they can then learn more about those in “Explore Occupations.” They can then search for education and training opportunities on the site, to match those potential occupations. Lastly, users can use the “Plan My Career” and “Job Search” sections to either look for current employment or plan for future employment. These sections also provide resources to help job seekers connect with career advisors, school counselors, and others.⁴²

Having all this information aggregated in one place makes it easier for job seekers to plan for a career and become aware of opportunities available to them. While Maine has multiple career and training sites, none of them match the quantity of information and ease of use. Creating a career planning clearinghouse can help lower the barrier to joining the workforce and empower job seekers.



ACTIVITIES

REALITY CHECK >	INTEREST FINDER >
CAREER CLUSTER MATCH >	SMALL BUSINESS/ENTREPRENEUR READINESS SURVEY >
WORK VALUES SORTER >	SKILLS MATCHER >

⁴¹ “About Us.” NCcareers.org. <https://nccareers.org/about-us>.

⁴² “NCcareers Home Page.” NCcareers.org. <https://nccareers.org/>.

Seafood Career Streams Provides Career Exploration into Seafood Occupations and Pathways

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Division of Employment and Training Services provides a user-friendly webpage dedicated to Seafood Career Streams with information for job seekers interested in learning about occupations and career pathways related to seafood.⁴³ Seafood Career Streams takes the jobseeker from an overview of the industry (including a seafood orientation video) through four career streams and all the positions involved in those career streams.



The page offers more than a dozen links to detailed information, including:



- Seafood Employer Recruiting
- Seafood Processing Careers and Training
- Seafood Employment Application
- Seafood Processing – Job Information
- Deckhand/Fishing Vessel – Job Information
- 4 different Career Streams
- Seafood related job descriptions

The webpage is easy to navigate and there is contact information to the Anchorage Seafood Office for easy access to the Job Center for follow up interest.⁴⁴

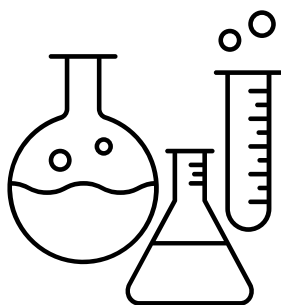
It should be noted that although the slide decks are somewhat dated, they share a comprehensive look at the careers available in the seafood economy and could be easily adapted and customized as templates by the Maine Department of Labor's Career Center to address the Maine seafood economy and its career opportunities.

⁴³ "Division of Employment and Training Services," Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. <https://jobs.alaska.gov/seafood/careerstreams.html>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Aquaculture Program Provides K-12 Science and Project-Learning Opportunities

Aquaculture in Action (AinA) is a program that combines science with project-based learning so that teachers and students better understand aquaculture.⁴⁵ Maryland developed AinA in 1996 via a partnership between Maryland Sea Grant and University of Maryland Extension. The partnership brought this K-12 science program to teachers two years later. Now, there are more than 30 schools in Maryland that participate in the AinA program.⁴⁶

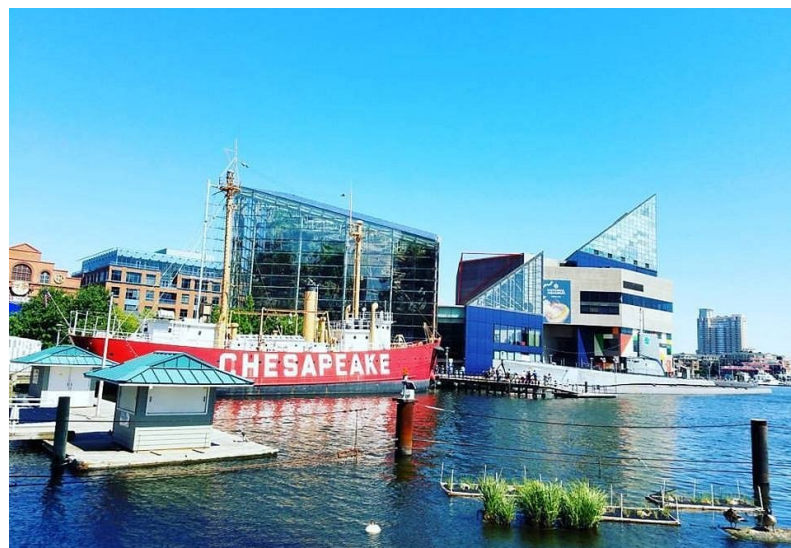


The aquaculture educational program links physics, chemistry, and biology to bring research project skills related to water flow dynamics, water quality monitoring, and fish and plant culture to the classroom. AinA's fundamental elements include professional development for teachers, connecting schools and partners for student success, a portal for project data related to research, and articles and resources for program participants.

Once a school commits to the program, they send teachers to a summer Aquaculture in Action Workshop where the instructors get hands-on experience with aquaculture activities to bring back to classroom labs. Maryland Sea Grant has a number of informative Youtube videos online, including one where teachers explain their experience with the summer workshop.⁴⁷

Partners in Maryland who work collaboratively to support the AinA program include:

- Chesapeake Bay Trust
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology
- John Hopkins Center for a Livable Future Food System Lab
- National Aquarium
- Maryland Sea Grant



Source: Tripadvisor website, National Aquarium

The AinA program has expanded across the nation and is currently used by schools in 12 states and Puerto Rico.

⁴⁵ "Aquaculture Education," *Sea Grant Maryland*. <https://www.mdsg.umd.edu/topics/k-12-aquaculture-education>.

⁴⁶ "Aquaculture in Action Participating Schools," *Sea Grant Maryland*. <https://www.mdsg.umd.edu/topics/k-12-aquaculture-education/aquaculture-action-participating-schools>.

⁴⁷ "Aquaculture in Action Workshop - the Teacher Experience," *Sea Grant Maryland*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slPrTJe9bmM..>

Construction Combine Event Brings Hundreds into Skills Training



In 2017, the leaders of the Building Contractors Association of Southeast Idaho met with Scott Stephens, the business consultant at Idaho State University Workforce Training, to discuss the skilled worker shortage. To address this problem, Idaho State University Continuing Education and Workforce Training joined forces with the local Home Depot, and the Construction Combine was born.

The Construction Combine is a two-day event inspired by the NFL draft, which brings together trainees, contractors, and sponsors. During the first day, trainees are given the opportunity to learn essential skills for the construction industry, including framing, electrical, plumbing, roofing, and more, from local contractors. On day two, trainees put their new skills to use by building sheds with local contractors (which are donated to local disabled veterans). After building the sheds, trainees and contractors are given time to discuss potential employment opportunities.

The introductory event had 16 contractors, businesses, and organizations, and over 50 trainees. In 2019, the event expanded to six locations, with over 400 trainee participants.⁴⁸ In 2023, the program is expected to continue growing, with events being held nationwide. Through this short, hands-on training program, trainees are able to experience the occupation firsthand and employers are able to observe potential employees on the job.

Fishing cooperatives, SEAMaine, the Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine's Workforce, employers, and others could come together to adapt this for the Maine seafood economy. In doing so, job seekers would be equipped with basic training and employers would have an available talent pool, helping to support the Maine seafood economy.



Source: Construction Combine website

⁴⁸ "About" Construction Combine. <https://constructioncombine.org/about/>.

Companies RISE to Improve Seafood Industry Conditions

RISE, the Roadmap for Improving Seafood Ethics, created by FishWise, is a free resource to assist companies in navigating and improving working conditions within the seafood industry.⁴⁹ As a tool built specifically for the seafood industry, RISE provides guidance and resources for seafood retailers, suppliers, processors, and producers.

The roadmap provides companies with eight actionable steps, for use in building a social responsibility program.⁵⁰ Within their roadmap, RISE focuses on three pillars of social responsibility: responsible recruitment, worker engagement, and decent work at sea.⁵¹ Companies upholding the pillar of responsible recruitment follow fair recruitment and employment practices, including a transparent hiring process. Worker engagement includes a range of opportunities for workers to communicate their opinions and experiences about workplace culture and working conditions, among others. These opportunities could be grievance mechanisms, worker meetings, committees, and trade unions. The final pillar, decent work at sea, is about the treatment of workers – “dignity, equality, fair income, and safe working conditions.”⁵²

In addition to the roadmap, RISE provides many free resources, including best practices and case studies, eLearning modules, a social responsibility self-assessment tool, and more to equip companies with the information and tools to protect and improve worker conditions. RISE also maintains a network of practitioners, such as non-governmental organizations and consultants, that companies can utilize to meet their social responsibility goals.⁵³ This one-stop shop provides valuable resources that can be used to improve the working conditions for those in the Maine seafood economy supply chain.



Photo by Jack Sullivan, Island Institute

⁴⁹ FishWise is a sustainable seafood consulting firm specializing in responsible seafood supply chains.

⁵⁰ “Roadmap.” RISE. <https://riseseafood.org/roadmap/>.

⁵¹ “Foundations.” RISE. <https://riseseafood.org/foundations/>.

⁵² “Decent Work at Sea.” RISE. <https://riseseafood.org/foundations/decent-work-at-sea/>.

Jobs for the Future (JFF):

National Organization Places Focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Jobs for the Future (JFF) is a national non-profit entity whose strategic focus is to drive equitable impact via education, empowerment, and awareness. Their website is filled with information addressing leadership, apprenticeship and work-based learning, the green economy, reentry hiring, tech training, policymaker networks, and much more. There are a variety of ways the JFF resources can be used to supplement the *SEAMaine Recruitment, Talent Attraction, and Retention Toolbox* as well as the *Education and Training Toolbox*.

With ApprenticeshipUSA grant funding from the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA), JFF's Center for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning offers no-cost webinars, reports and research, case studies, and tools that are diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) focused.⁵⁴ Opportunities to attend in-person events are also offered throughout the year. National summits with thought leaders, technology showcases, National Apprenticeship Week events, and live virtual events focus on DEIA.



CENTER FOR APPRENTICESHIP & WORK-BASED LEARNING

The many facets of JFF offerings provide initiatives that can be replicated and expanded for a variety of occupations. For example, best practices resources include a toolkit on “Adding a Gender Lens to Nontraditional Jobs Training programs,” an impact story – “Building Equitable Pathways,” and a report titled, “Freedom to Achieve: Pathways and Practices for Economic Advancement After Incarceration.”⁵⁵

Support services can provide individuals with barriers a better opportunity to succeed when those barriers make employment difficult to attain. There are several assets available on the JFF website focused on solutions such as braided funding for education and career coaching for training completion success. One collaborative that uses this holistic approach to assist individuals with barriers is the Achieving the Dream–JFF partnership. The partnership works with the Student Success Center Network, which collaborates with community colleges, and uses proven practices to help millions of community college students earn credentials.⁵⁶

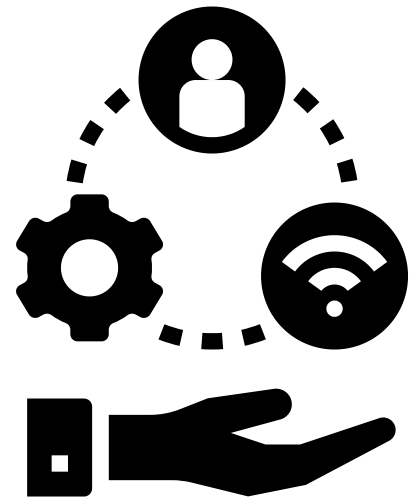
⁵³ “Get Connected.” RISE. <https://riseseafood.org/community/>.

⁵⁴ “Tools and Insights for Innovative, People-Centered Practices,” *JFF Center for Apprenticeship & Work Based Learning*. <https://info.jff.org/apprenticeshipdeia-resource-library>.

⁵⁵ “Best Practices search,” *JFF*. <https://www.jff.org/search/page/1/?q=best%20practices>.

⁵⁶ “The Network,” *JFF*. <https://www.jff.org/what-we-do/impact-stories/student-success-center-network/>.

Resource Page



Please see the website links below for more information about the best practices in this toolbox.



Employer & Job Seekers

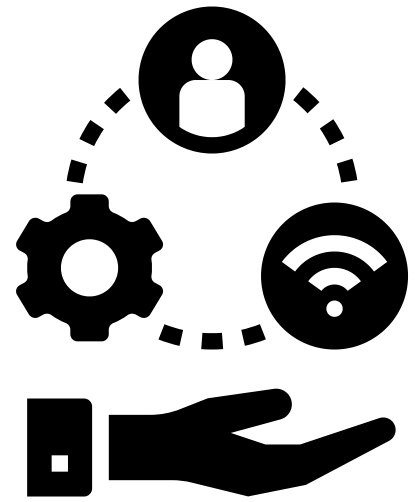
- **Ready Seafood:** <https://www.readyseafood.com/>
- **Cooke Aquaculture:** <https://aquaculturegrowsns.ca/>
- **Community Shellfish:** <https://www.communityshellfish.com/>
- **Mook Sea Farm:** <https://www.mookseafarm.com/>
- **North Carolina Careers:** <https://nccareers.org/>
- **Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development:** <https://jobs.alaska.gov/seafood/careerstreams.html>



Education & Training

- **Jonesport-Beals High School: Maine School Garden Network:** <https://msgn.org/jonesport-beals-high-school/>
- **University of Maine Cooperative Extension:** <https://extension.umaine.edu/hancock/4h/aquaponics/>
- **Washington County Community College:** <https://www.wccc.me.edu/professional-development/aquaculture/>
- **Eastern Maine Skippers Program:** <https://coastalfisheries.org/collaborative-education/eastern-maine-skippers/>
- **Aquaculture in Action Maryland:** <https://www.mdsg.umd.edu/topics/k-12-aquaculture-education/aquaculture-action-participating-schools>
- **Construction Combine:** <https://constructioncombine.org/>

Resource Page



Please see the website links below for more information about the best practices in this toolbox.



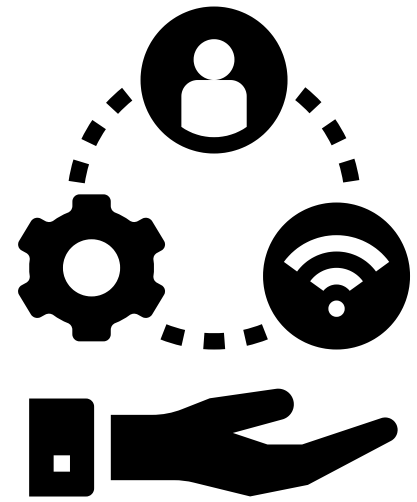
HR, Social Service, and DEI Best Practices

- **Mano en Mano:** <https://www.manomaine.org/>
- **Four Directions Economic Development Corporation:** <https://fourdirectionsmaine.org/>
- **Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine:** https://www.gsfb.org/?gad=1&gclid=EAlaQobChMIzfPDrL3o_gIVpiuzAB2UTAhtEAAYASAAEgLb3_D_BwE
- **Island Workforce Housing:** <https://www.islandworkforcehousing.org/>
- **The Roadmap for Improving Seafood Ethics (RISE):** <https://riseseafood.org/>
- **Jobs for the Future (JFF):** <https://www.jff.org/>

Where can I find more information about workforce, diversity, and accessibility?

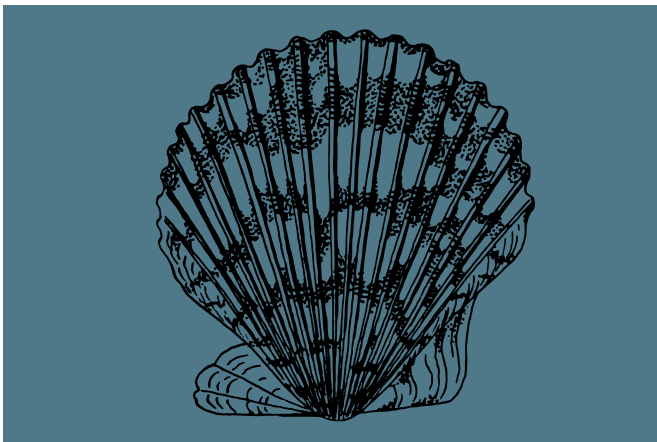
- **CTE on the Frontier: Connecting Rural Learners with the World of Work**
 - Summary: <https://strategies.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/04/10/00/49/CTE-on-the-Frontier-Connecting-Rural-Learners-with-the-World-of-Work>
 - Report: https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/files/resources/CTE_Frontier_World_Work_2017FINAL.pdf
- **Minorities in Aquaculture:** <https://www.mianpo.org/>
- **International Organizations for Women in the Seafood Industry:** <https://womeninseafood.org/>
- "Reckoning: Family Businesses Confront Race, Racism and inclusion," *Family Business Magazine*. <https://reckoning.familybusinessmagazine.com/>.

Resource Page



Where can I find more information about workforce, diversity, and accessibility?

- “Minorities in Aquaculture: Working to Increase Diversity and Accessibility.” NOAA Fisheries. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/minorities-aquaculture-working-increase-diversity-and-accessibility>.
- Future Face of Fish Blog: <https://futurefaceoffish.com/blog>.
- “What’s the future of seafood’s workforce?.” *IntraFish Media*. <https://soundcloud.com/intrafish/whats-the-future-of-seafoods-workforce>.



Photos by Jack Sullivan, Island Institute



Photo by Jack Sullivan, Island Institute

SEAMaine
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