

# Economic Development Services Report

2016 Annual Report



Sunrise County Economic Council

*Prepared for the Washington County Government  
Submitted by Sunrise County Economic Council (SCEC)  
February 24, 2017*

**The Maine Department of Labor's Center for Workforce Research and Information reports Washington County's average unemployment rate for 2016 at 5.2%, compared to 5.9% for 2015. On average, there were 13,988 people in Washington County who were employed, self-employed, working in a family business, and/or looking for work each month in 2016. That number, our civilian labor force, held steady in the past year, which represents a significant improvement over the sizable declines in 2014 and 2015.**

SCEC's mission is to create jobs and prosperity in Washington County. County government provides essential support to SCEC through a general contract for economic development work throughout the county, a specialized contract for business development work in the unorganized territories, and through its past contribution to SCEC's endowment. In 2016, SCEC used the county's support to leverage over \$1,000,000 in private funds to support business expansion and economic growth in Washington County. The following is a summary of our major projects:

- On behalf of County Government, SCEC originated \$204,909 in loans and awarded \$95,000 in grants to three small businesses and one nature-based tourism organization as part of the Washington County Unorganized Territories Tax Increment Financing District. SCEC also assisted County Government to put together a matching grant package to assist with topographic mapping in the unorganized territories as well as a matching grant package to assist with workforce development/adult education in the unorganized territories.
- Using its internal loan funds, SCEC originated over \$226,632 in loans to 9 small businesses who created 2 FTE and 9 PT jobs, and retained 18 FTE and 15 PT jobs.
- SCEC provided technical assistance and staff support to the Washington County Development Authority regarding the redevelopment of the commercial side of the former Cutler Navy Base.
- SCEC adopted Family Futures Downeast, a White House Rural Impact project (two-generational approach to education) as of July, 2016. Two cohorts of ten adult students (one at UMM, one at WCCC) are working toward a *Certificate in Family Studies* while their children are receiving quality education at the campus centers. Funding for the program's first year came from Machias Savings Bank, the John T. Gorman Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Maine Community Foundation. Our partners include the University of Maine at Machias, Washington County Community College, Washington County CareerCenters, Axiom Education & Training Center, Child & Family Opportunities, and the Community Caring Collaborative.

- With support from the Slow Money Maine donor network, SCEC granted \$21,000 to Washington County farms to help them develop poultry processing capacity. The Sunrise Food Infrastructure Initiative has provided 50 farmers and food businesses with technical assistance regarding issues such as planning and strategizing for changing markets, developing value-added capacity and accessing community programs.
- With support from the Next Generation Foundation, SCEC awarded scholarships totaling \$28,149 to 73 working age adults during 2016 to help pay for the training they need to help make them employable or advance in their careers.
- In partnership with the Women’s Business Center and AETC, and support from the Boston Foundation and the Maine Woods Tourism Training Initiative, SCEC provided 409 hours of training to 98 business owners and employees. Training opportunities included starting your own business, basic recordkeeping, pricing your product or service, “Walking the Line: Are They Your Employee or an Independent Contractor”, ServSafe™ Food Safety Manager Certification, an assortment of social media offerings, PTAC training government contracting, and a “Becoming Bankable” workshop with local bankers, non-profit loan program staff, and technical assistance providers.
- SCEC continued its active involvement with regional organizations and initiatives such as the Axiom Education and Training Center, the Northeastern Workforce Development Board, Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC), Coastal Enterprises Inc. (CEI), the Maine Woods Consortium, the Maine Woods Tourism Training Initiative, Child and Family Opportunities, the Community Caring Collaborative, Down East RC&D, the Downeast Fisheries Partnership, Mano en Mano, the Community Caring Collaborative, Poverty Busters, St. Croix Community Connections, Downeast Acadia Regional Tourism, Washington County Educational Attainment Initiative, Washington County Council of Governments, Calais and Machias CareerCenters, Healthcare Workforce Response Team, University of Maine at Machias, Washington County Community College, Maine Sea Grant, Maine Community Foundation, and the Maine Development Foundation.
- SCEC’s Business Resource Center continued to provide free and confidential business resources from our partners including CEI’s Women’s Business Center, the Maine Small Business Development Center, Maine Small Business Administration, Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, NMDC’s Procurement Technical Assistance Center, and the Maine International Trade Center.

The above activities are a broad representation of economic development services provided by SCEC on the County’s behalf over the past year. It is not representative of all on-going projects, programs and initiatives previously reported on. This report does not include confidential and/or proprietary information related to work with specific businesses or development projects. SCEC is available to discuss specifics in Executive Session at the discretion of the County Commissioners.

Respectfully Submitted by:



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