



## A Path to Stability and Growth For Maine's Essential Care & Support Workforce

*Maine people depend on a strong, reliable direct care workforce and today, our direct care system is at a critical crossroads. Maine's next governor will need to ensure we don't fall further behind. The Partnership can help.*

**Who are the Essential Care & Support Workers?** Essential care and support is provided by workers and family members in a variety of settings, supporting or caring for people with a wide range of needed assistance with activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL.)

These workers include: Certified nursing assistants (CNAs), direct support professionals (DSPs), personal support specialists (PSSs), independent support specialists (ISSs), behavioral health professionals (BHPs), and home health aides. There are many job titles, certifications, and training requirements associated with the above categories of worker. None of these classifications require a degree from higher education, yet they are highly skilled positions. Their work remains undervalued despite its importance to our economy and our communities.

**Why are they so critical to our health care system and economy?** This workforce forms the foundation upon which Maine's care system stands. They provide essential services - services that allow Maine people to live with dignity and wellbeing. If we don't solve our workforce shortage, people who need assistance with daily living face serious challenges and family members drop out of the economy. A strong essential care & support workforce ensures stability, emphasizing lower-cost prevention over expensive crises.

**Proven solutions exist to grow this workforce.** Maine's Essential Care & Support Workforce Partnership, together with experts in higher education, in Maine State Government, and nationally, know how to solve this crisis. By improving wages, standardizing training, leveraging technology, and planning for future workforce needs, Maine's next leaders can ensure Maine people receive the care they need while supporting a sustainable, well-prepared, direct care workforce.

**For More Information, Contact:**

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### What Do the Data Tell Us?

Undervaluing care work imposes significant public costs on our state, on workers, and Mainers who need care.

#### 1 in 5

Essential support workers estimated to be enrolled in SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, due to low wages.

#### 23,500

At least this many hours per week of home care for older adults went unserved in 2024 due to the workforce shortage.

#### 8,000

The estimated # of Mainers who have dropped out of the labor force due to direct care responsibilities.

#### \$1 Billion

The amount Maine is forfeiting in economic activity because fewer workers are contributing taxes.

## ABOUT MAINE'S ESSENTIAL CARE & SUPPORT WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

This broad coalition of employers, workers, and concerned individuals is dedicated to reshaping how Maine values and supports its care workforce.

This coalition is led by a Steering Committee whose members represent the following organizations:



### What the Partnership Works to Do:

- Increase investments in Maine's care economy, including both workforce and infrastructure.
- Develop innovative solutions to expand and support the workforce.
- Elevate care as a valued profession.