

The University of Maine System Workforce Development Infrastructure Bond (LD 836*) Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Of a \$75 million University of Maine System Workforce Development Infrastructure bond, how much would be invested in workforce development infrastructure at my local campus? Allocations are as follows and based on need as determined by a data-driven System-wide assessment of all facilities and the priorities and Master Plans of each campus.

University of Maine System Campus	Portion Assuming \$75M Bond (Need-Based)
University of Maine/University of Maine at Machias	\$17.8M
University of Maine at Augusta (Augusta & Bangor)	\$4.2M
University of Maine at Farmington	\$10.5M
University of Maine at Fort Kent	\$3.7M
University of Maine at Presque Isle	\$5.6M
University of Southern Maine (Portland, Gorham & L-A)	\$33.2M

How do these investments compare with others recently made in public education infrastructure? This \$75 million request would be the largest ever pursued by the University of Maine System, which has not gone to voters for bond support since 2013. However, it is significantly less than the largest general obligation bond voters have supported (transportation in November of 2017) and the voter-approved investment in Sanford High School & CTE (\$103 million), a K-12 facility with less than 1,000 students. Other recent voter-approved public investments in K-12 facilities include RSU 19 (Newport area) districtwide renovation and replacement (\$69 million) and Mt. Blue (Farmington) High School (\$64.2 million).

Why is investment in public higher education good for Maine? Maine's economic success is dependent on a strong public university system. Whether it is training the nurse who provides homecare for your elderly parents, the teacher who educates your children, the cybersecurity expert who keeps your banking information safe, or the farmer whose potatoes your family will eat tonight for dinner, Maine's public universities provide positive benefits for all Mainers. With 56,324 degrees conferred in just the last decade, the System plays a critical role in preparing the state's workforce and attracting more business and industry here. The System has an economic impact on every Maine community, including \$52 million in purchasing annually for local goods and services; plus, more than 130,000 alumni live and work across the state. Like roads and rail, our campuses are critical public infrastructure essential to Maine's economic success. Classrooms and labs must be modernized if they are to attract and prepare the skilled workforce Maine needs. Public investment in infrastructure will ensure the System can continue to keep tuition affordable for Maine families, including by attracting more out-of-state students who stay here to work after graduation, and focus the most dollars on supporting student success.

Can I see a project list? Projects, largely through cost-effective renovations to existing facilities, will:

- Add capacity for STEM education, including computer science and cybersecurity;
- Expand nursing simulators and allied health training labs;
- Improve non-academic spaces that support student success, recruitment and retention, career development and job placement;
- Bring jobs and new investments to our local communities.

A complete planned project list is available upon request but campus-specific investments include:

University of Southern Maine (USM) – USM is experiencing record enrollment growth, including double-digit increases in out-of-state students. As a major pipeline of skilled workers to Maine's employers, USM will make investments to expand classroom capacity at its campuses in Portland, Gorham and Lewiston-Auburn to produce hundreds more nurses, engineers, computer scientists, cybersecurity experts and other STEM professionals each year. A new Career & Student Success Center will meet the needs of Maine businesses and industry for interns,

*LD 836, *An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Build Maine's Workforce Development Capacity by Modernizing and Improving the Facilities and Infrastructure of Maine's Public Universities* would authorize a \$75 million University of Maine System workforce development infrastructure general obligation bond question go to voters, likely in November of 2018. The last System bond was authorized in 2013.

graduates and research, and connect students to advising, career prep and placement, as well as Veterans services, financial aid and tutoring assistance.

University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) – UMF’s Olsen Student Center is the most utilized community space in western Maine. It also is home to the dining hall and student activity spaces so important to creating a campus community. As it positions itself as an affordable New England public liberal arts experience in a residential setting, investments in improving this space will help UMF attract more students to rural Maine and retain them through completion, while ensuring local organizations from the Rotary Club to the region’s senior college have affordable, accessible meeting facilities.

University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI) – Wieden Hall is where many of rural Maine’s health professionals are educated and the cultural cornerstone of central Aroostook County. Investments in renovating the nearly 60-year-old facility will create new workforce education capacity including modern labs to allow UMPI to finally bring four-year nursing education to central Aroostook County and expand its high-demand Athletic Training program and two-year Physical Therapy Assistant program, where there is a 100 percent job placement rate. Improvements to the auditorium will allow the campus to continue providing the community – especially local youth and seniors – enriching arts and cultural performance participation and attendance opportunities.

University of Maine (UM) – Every student enrolled in a STEM discipline at UM including future nurses take required math courses in Bennett Hall, built nearly 70 years ago. Investment at the flagship campus would provide critical structural and technological renovations to convert three classrooms into “smart” spaces that support active learning and expand capacity, and allow for the addition of a new math lab.

University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) – Along with traditional first generation students, UMA serves a significant number of nontraditional students and veterans who are coming to college after years away from the classroom. Students who graduate from UMA report that it is transformative to their lives and that of their families, often leading into more stable, independent, and fulfilling futures. It is also critical for Maine’s economy, which is demanding a more educated workforce. Investments at UMA would allow for the creation of Enrollment Welcome Centers at both the Augusta and Bangor campuses to provide prospective and current students seamless support, leading to increased recruitment and retention. By moving these services into new space at the Augusta campus, the current Student Center will be returned to its original and important purpose – providing students at this commuter campus a place to study, collaborate, and engage with each other as part of a learner centered community.

University of Maine at Machias (UMM) – As Maine’s coastal campus, this regional campus of UMaine strengthens Maine’s marine economy. Investments in the Science Building, including modernization of labs, will attract more students to study and pursue careers in fields like marine biology and fisheries, advancing sustainable, profitable uses of Maine’s marine resources through applied research and workforce development. Upgrades to residence halls will attract and keep students living on campus, shown to increase the likelihood they’ll stay in school and graduate on-time so they can enter the workforce prepared, more quickly and with less debt.

University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK) – Investments in UMFK will allow for the demolition of several buildings that are outdated and costly to maintain and/or renovate in order to create an attractive new Welcome Center for student and public-facing functions like admissions, community education, the Office of the President and event space. As the gateway to both the campus and Fort Kent, the new facility would advance recruitment and development efforts for this model rural university, increase student success and strengthen its connection to the community.

Why can’t the System fund these projects with existing resources? The System has been unable to make the \$80 million in capital improvements required annually simply to maintain our facilities, especially during a recent period of constrained resources as we sustained a historic six-year tuition freeze while achieving \$82 million in annual savings and being on track to close a structural gap estimated at one time to be \$90 million. We currently are able to invest an average of \$20-25 million each year. The last UMS bond was authorized in 2013. With one exception, this is the longest the System has gone without going to voters for infrastructure investment.

In addition to pursuing public investment in our facilities through LD 836, the UMS Board of Trustees has directed campuses to increase investments in facilities as part of their annual operating budgets and recently approved an aggressive demolition plan that would further reduce our square footage by removing facilities that are in especially poor shape and expensive to maintain. Over the last five years, the System has decreased its footprint by nearly 250,000 square feet – including by closing its central office – and the plan calls for an additional 300,000 square foot reduction, which will also save millions of dollars in annual operating costs.