

OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
MAINE

154 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
(202) 224-5344

Web Site: <http://snowe.senate.gov>
DEPUTY WHIP

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1903

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
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OCEANS, ATMOSPHERE, FISHERIES AND
COAST GUARD SUBCOMMITTEE

FINANCE

INTELLIGENCE

RANKING MEMBER, SMALL BUSINESS

April 16, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and
Education, and Related Agencies
160 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6034

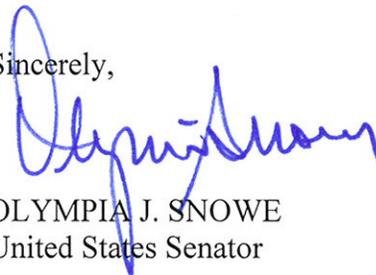
Dear Senator Harkin and Senator Cochran,

I am writing to request your support for funding in the Fiscal Year 2011 (FY2011) Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for programs and projects that are important to Maine. A description of these requests in alphabetical order by organization follows.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has a pecuniary interest in any of the congressionally directed spending item(s) that I have requested for Fiscal Year 2011, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate. I further certify that I have posted a description of the items requested on my official website, along with the accompanying justification.

Once again, thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact my staff with any further questions.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator

AUBURN
TWO GREAT FALLS PLAZA
SUITE 7B
AUBURN, ME 04210
(207) 786-2451

AUGUSTA
40 WESTERN AVENUE, SUITE 408C
AUGUSTA, ME 04330
(207) 622-8292

BANGOR
ONE CUMBERLAND PLACE, SUITE 306
BANGOR, ME 04401
(207) 945-0432

BIDDEFORD
227 MAIN STREET
BIDDEFORD, ME 04005
(207) 282-4144

PORTLAND
3 CANAL PLAZA, SUITE 601
PORTLAND, ME 04101
(207) 874-0883
MAINE RELAY SERVICE
TDD 1-955-3323

PRESQUE ISLE
169 ACADEMY STREET, SUITE 3
PRESQUE ISLE, ME 04769
(207) 764-5124

Central Maine Community College, Job Training for Health Care Providers, Auburn, Maine – \$255,000.

The College will train unemployed workers in medical coding, medical terminology, keyboarding, and computer applications. They will work with Maine's Career Centers and local healthcare companies to secure employment for the graduates. The program will be delivered in an accelerated fashion and will give students the specialized data entry skills and familiarity with medical classification/methods and standards common to the industry. These workers are needed in many healthcare organizations. This project will impact Maine's 2nd District by providing potential healthcare workers with the training needed for employment in careers for which there is a growing need. Starting wages for a skilled medical coder or related job can be around \$25,000. Despite the weak economy, the health care industry in Maine continues to need new employees with the necessary training. The health care industry is the largest employer in the Lewiston-Auburn area, with most jobs at the full-time level with benefits and growth potential.

Central Maine Community College, Early Childhood Learning Lab Collaborative, Auburn, Maine – \$490,000.

The proposed Early Childhood Learning Lab would be an on-site facility that would be a collaboration of Central Maine Community College, Androscoggin Head Start, Child Development Services (part of Maine's Department of Education's Early Intervention Agency serving children from birth – 5 years), and Auburn Public Schools. The lab would consist of at least two classrooms, one for four year old children in a Pre-K environment and the second child classroom for Infants and Toddlers. Pre-K is a national movement to serve children in all states who are not already enrolled in an early childhood education program before attending Kindergarten.

The Learning Lab would serve several purposes, which would positively affect the whole community in that Auburn Public Schools would have an additional Pre-K classroom that would serve diverse, qualifying families in this city. Assistance from CMCC students doing Practicum work would provide additional unpaid staff. Further, CMCC students would have a clear, high quality model of early childhood education where they could practice their professional skills and knowledge for their Early Childhood Education coursework. Lastly, Head Start would have an additional site for serving qualifying children who are often from low-income, highly stressed families. The Pre-K would provide safe, high quality early childhood education for these under-served children.

Central Maine Medical Center, Rural Health Initiative - Regional Training Center, Lewiston, Maine – \$500,000.

This will create a regional training center for rural providers that offers simulation training in acute care medicine. State-of-the art training for approximately 800 trainees per year will result in 30% more healthcare workers remaining in region. Equipment request for wireless, electronically adapted training mannequins, and full slate of accessory modules relevant to multiple healthcare disciplines and practice scenarios. Training capability at this level is not accessible outside of Portland and will be offered to

all direct care providers in western and central Maine particularly those of disadvantaged and underserved, rural populations. Simulation training demands interdisciplinary cooperation among trainees; in this case from trainees representing 21 healthcare disciplines located in six hospitals, four nursing programs, five colleges, one regional behavioral health network, one regional health promotion network, seventy-six physician group practices (with 325 providers), plus regional EMS personnel. Maine has an aging population with changing health care needs and a high degree of chronic illness, which continues to affect the health of rural resident – Maine has the highest median age in the United States, at 41.2 years, 26.5% of the state’s population will be 65 or older by 2030.

Central Maine Medical Center College of Nursing and Health Professions, College of Nursing Expansion, Lewiston, Maine – \$500,000.

The Rural Healthcare Initiative addresses a critical need to develop and retain nurses in areas like western and central Maine. This project would renovate the regional College of Nursing in western Maine to expand teaching and recruitment capacity by 100 percent and expand the number of RNs practicing locally by 100 percent to 90 nurses. It would also create 30-50 jobs in expansion activities (construction) and 5 to 10 FTEs at the expanded College. This initiative narrows the supply and demand gap in this otherwise aging occupation that is critical to Maine’s economy. Funding would be used to build-out 1,000 – 1,500 sq. ft of second floor lab space, an office, IT, and teaching space.

Challenger Learning Center, Strengthening Maine Through STEM, Bangor, Maine – \$949,000.

The Challenger Learning Center (CLC) of Maine will provide students in grades 4 through 8 from Maine with hands-on educational experiences in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). CLC is part of a national network of 47 Challenger Centers for Space Science Education. The modest tuition for a simulated space mission includes a daylong teacher training, pre- and post-mission activities, including assessments aligned with Maine learning standards. CLC has found that when students are given the opportunity to learn STEM in a cooperative atmosphere that emphasizes teamwork, communication, problem solving, and decision-making, they are inspired. The results, as reported by teachers and students, are outstanding and passion for STEM learning is ignited and motivation increases. In this project, the CLC proposes to expand access to its STEM programs to Maine students by greatly increasing outreach and marketing efforts to schools, offering assistance with transportation, increasing CLC staff resources, and implementing a three-year program designed for students in grades 4 through 8 that will have a much greater impact for long-term success through evaluation of a core group of students and teachers.

By working with a consistent group of teachers for three consecutive years and their students who will benefit from flying two Challenger missions during their 4th or 5th and 6th, 7th, or 8th grades, the Challenger Learning Center staff will have the opportunity to evaluate the impact that programs are making on a core body of teachers and students over the course of several years, providing a deeper appreciation and understanding of the

importance of experiential learning opportunities such as those offered at the Challenger Learning Center of Maine. In partnership with the University of Maine System campuses, Eastern Maine Community College, and Maine Maritime Academy, among others, the Challenger Center will work with college students and faculty to collect and evaluate data. This project will serve as a model for other Challenger Learning Centers across the country, and the data collected will serve as a catalyst to strengthen and expand STEM learning programs throughout the State of Maine.

Charles A. Dean Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home, Isolated Rural Acute Care Hospital Prepares for Unprecedented Regional Growth, Greenville, Maine -- \$1,916,000.

The purpose of this request is to replace severely outdated patient safety systems and equipment, upgrade cancer detection and cardiac monitoring equipment, continue the upgrade of IT patient management systems and improve outpatient surgical services. Current income sources do not provide for these improvements to achieve expected Standards of Care. Upgrades in sanitation and sterilization will enable the hospital to reach compliance with Federal CMS Regulations and State of Maine Regulations for SNF, NF and Critical Access Hospitals and the State of Maine Food Code. Patient/staff safety upgrades will provide for compliance with OSHA requirements.

Piscataquis County is documented to have one of the highest chronic disease burdens in Maine. Lack of access to local screening and diagnostic services is one of the reasons individuals wait longer than they should to seek help. With a cancer rate significantly above (30%+) that of the rest of the State of Maine, it is imperative that C. A. Dean provide a path to early diagnosis and treatment options. The equipment request enables the hospital to enhance primary care, screening, and preventative healthcare services so that patients and taxpayers may avoid the higher cost of secondary and tertiary care. These equipment upgrades will enable them to lower the cost of healthcare and ensure broader access for the population.

Community Dental, Oral Health Services Access and Expansion in Rural Maine, Portland, Maine – \$600,000.

Community Dental is a State of Maine non-profit that oversees the operations of five Dental Health Centers. The patient population numbers 17,600, with 86 percent living in households at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. The organization employs Maine licensed dentists, hygienists, and radiology certified dental assistants. Their mission is to provide accessible, affordable, quality, dental health services to children and adults. Dental decay and oral infection are progressive diseases leading to an increased risk for heart disease, stroke, pulmonary disorders, and transmission between family members, including mother to infant. People inflicted with dental disease and disfigurement compromise educational opportunities, experience employment difficulties, and social exclusion. Lack of access contributes to over usage of hospital emergency departments, increased costs, and the absence of definitive treatment for dental pain. Dental disease is curable and virtually preventable with affordable access to

regular preventive care, molar sealants, fluoride varnish for young children, healthy eating, and life style habits, and daily home care. Given the size of the present facility the Dental Center cannot meet community demands for accessible and affordable oral health care. This project will increase the size of the facility to accommodate six dental chairs, employ a minimum of one additional dentist, dental assistant, and hygienist, and will increase capacity to 5,000 patients per year.

Cromwell Center for Disabilities Awareness, Student Disabilities Awareness Program, Portland, Maine -- \$750,000.

Students with disabilities are the largest minority population in schools, including Maine schools where nearly 34,000 or 17-18% of the total student population has a disability. The Student Disabilities Awareness Program promotes lifelong equitable outcomes for all public school students. This program identifies and addresses bias, stereotyping, and harassment that can profoundly undermine education. From an economic point of view, the program identifies and prevents the pigeonholing that can prevent students with disabilities from reaching their potential, continuing with their education, and becoming employed. The program supports taxpayers' investment in schools by addressing discrimination and bias against all kinds of disabilities that contributes to social and learning isolation for students with disabilities. Finally, the program provides employment to Maine educators and support staff who might otherwise be unemployed or underemployed.

Eastern Maine Development Corporation, Youth Project, Bangor, Maine -- \$542,000.

The goal of the project is to sponsor career pathways and educational programming at the 7th grade level, a time when these young men and women are still developing opinions and open to influence. The intent is to reach the youth of Penobscot, Piscataquis, Hancock, and Washington Counties, approximately 1000 students. There are currently many programs out there, but few are targeted to this entire population. The goal is to be all-inclusive for all students at this age, as they are not targeting any particular population such as the economically disadvantaged. The project will create the programming, run the first iteration, and then create tool kits for educators to utilize in future years as a method for sustainability. The project would begin with a series of six weekly workshops held in the schools and will cumulate in an all day interactive sector based event to highlight what they learned, and empower youth to direct their own futures. Workshops would cover such topics as career choices, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) subjects, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and other topics geared specifically toward this age group.

Eastern Maine Development Corporation, Eastern Maine Economic and Workforce Development Integration, Bangor, Maine -- \$441,000.

EMDC is seeking to expand its capacity to structure and deliver business services in the rural labor market areas of the Tri County region. This funding is for two full time

equivalents for a period of 24 months to expand the Business Services Team's capacity into the hardest hit, rural areas of the Tri-County area including Piscataquis and Northern Penobscot Counties. These additional staff would be engaged in a range of outreach and consulting activities with existing businesses and individuals seeking assistance to start new small business operations and to identify their needs for investment, technology, training, and workforce development, and other economic assistance to ensure their future stability and growth. The goal is to complete a number of business visitations with businesses in the target areas and to counsel individuals who are seeking assistance with starting a new small business. The results of this outreach and needs surveys will be shared with: communities, business associations, chambers of commerce, education and training institutions, and public officials in the region, to form the basis of future economic and workforce investment strategies and projects.

Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, Chronic Disease Management and Quality Improvement in Primary Care, Brewer, Maine – \$800,000.

The percent of Maine's population that is insured by Medicaid/Medicare is higher than the national average. Specifically, 19.9% of Maine's insured are covered by Medicaid, compared to 14.1% nationally; and 14% of Maine's insured are covered by Medicare, compared to 12.4% nationally. The target area for this project is the rural portion of Maine, which, given the lower median incomes, higher rates of elderly and chronic disease, represent a higher public cost. Implementation of the Care Management Model in all of the primary care practices of EMHS has the potential to improve patient outcomes for the sickest of the sick, reduce costs among the highest-cost populations, and reduce disparities in the quality of healthcare provided to this large rural region.

In 2006, Eastern Maine Medical Center, an affiliate of Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems (EMHS), implemented an initiative to reach stringent quality standards in its six primary care practices located in the greater Bangor area. This model for Chronic Disease Management and Quality Improvement in Primary Care resulted in all six practices achieving accreditation by national and local quality improvement organizations. This project is designed to replicate this successful model for quality improvement in twenty-six (26) primary care practices owned by the five EMHS rural hospitals; to evaluate the impact on patient clinical outcomes, and practice compliance with meaningful use; to develop a blueprint for replication in other primary care practices; and to disseminate results including submittal for publication in a peer reviewed journal.

Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, Nursing Faculty Loan Repayment Collaborative for Northern and Eastern Maine, Brewer, Maine – \$500,000.

The purpose of this proposal is to increase the number of qualified Registered Nurses (RN) that are willing to become Nurse Faculty members. Salaries for RNs in clinical practice are higher than RNs in education, resulting in little incentive to teach. There is a "bottleneck" in that the number of qualified applicants to enter nursing exceeds the number that can be admitted to nursing programs. In light of projected workforce needs, funding is requested for a Nursing Faculty Loan Repayment program, which will

incentivize RNs to become educators. As in the rest of the country, Maine's schools of nursing consistently turn away or wait-list eligible candidates. Last year Maine turned away a full third of the 3,500 students who applied across all Maine nursing programs. This trend is not expected to diminish; by 2015 the demand for nursing professionals in Maine is expected to exceed supply by 22 percent. The Nursing Faculty Loan Repayment Program for Northern and Eastern Maine would create a program specifically for master's or doctoral prepared nurses. The fund would pay the advanced educational loan costs for nursing faculty who meet a commitment to teach for a minimum of 5 years in a nursing educational program located in the EMHS service region, which extends from Waterville, Maine, to the Canadian Border.

Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, Regional Centers of Excellence: Hospice & Palliative Care in Rural Care, Brewer, Maine – \$465,000.

Eastern Maine Medical Center (EMMC) and Eastern Maine HomeCare (EMHC), both subsidiaries of Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, have developed a highly effective collaborative Palliative Care and Hospice integrated program. With Federal funding, EMMC will work with rural hospitals, home care and hospice agencies, nursing homes, and primary care providers to extend best practice Palliative Care to outpatient clinics in the region. In addition to palliative care expertise, EMHC and EMMC will expand hospice utilization in Washington and Aroostook counties, recently identified as areas with underutilization of hospice care. The Palliative Care & Hospice collaborative will be benchmarked using best practice models from across the country. Extending these services to rural Maine is expected to improve quality in end-of-life care for patients, providers, and families and to reduce the cost of more acute services for these patients.

Funds will provide resources for EMMC & EMHC experts to develop outpatient clinics at four locations (one in Bangor, one in Brewer at the EMMC Cancer Center, and one each in rural Aroostook and Washington Counties) over a one-year period. The Visiting Nurses of Aroostook hospice program will expand hospice clinical services to include a hospice nurse practitioner that will see patients both in the clinic setting and provide in home hospice visits for the Aroostook County site. Likewise, Community Health and Counseling (CHCS) will support the program in Washington County in a similar way. Using on-site and telemedicine visits, palliative care, and hospice, teams will provide training based upon a curriculum developed to best suit rural care settings, with a goal of improving knowledge and care for patients who would benefit from palliative care and hospice care. Clinic care development and the palliative care/hospice care curriculum will be replicable in other rural areas of the country. A Palliative Care Fellowship being developed at EMMC will be extended to rural based primary care providers to learn and implement palliative and end-of-life care.

Four Directions Development Corporation, Developing and Creating Jobs and Promoting Sustainable Businesses in Native American Communities, Orono, Maine – \$410,000.

This project will train Native and non-Native students in the hospitality industry, as well as business management. It is important to note that there are virtually no small businesses within the Maine Native Communities. This project will result in the creation of sustainable small businesses in Maine Indian Country. Four Directions is developing a world class Wabanaki Innovation Center, state-of-the-art green facility that will offer lodging, a native restaurant, shops, and training labs. It will include high quality accommodations, cultural and eco-tourism packages, and education courses/retreats. The training labs will offer courses in hospitality, management, culinary arts, and business development. The Center will also utilize students from the lab as interns in the shops, restaurant, and lodging facility. These internships will prepare the students for permanent work in related industries. This training would allow Native people to start sustainable and successful businesses within their own communities.

Four Directions Development Corporation, Native Business Innovation Center, Orono, Maine – \$480,000.

The Native Business Innovation Center was developed to address the economic obstacles faced by the members of the four Native American tribes in the State of Maine. FDDC intends to establish a successful, sustainable economic and job creation tool, and provide viable business development opportunities for Native entrepreneurs. This State of the Art incubator model builds beyond traditional incubation. Designed as a Native business and workforce development center, the incubator model will provide an intensive system of on-site experienced professionals in core aspects of business management and provide a fully equipped and manned commercial grade manufacturing facility. The Center is uniquely positioned to take a leadership role in developing viable and sustainable businesses within the agriculture industry in Maine.

The Center will develop Native business owners with capacity to be successful and provide business owners with working capital. It will further provide businesses with established national and international markets for incubator products including capitalizing on national market opportunities unique to Native entrepreneurs, such as the National Native-to-Native Network. This network will enable native businesses to buy native products first by establishing Native preference. For example, Native resorts will know of and buy Native products from Native suppliers – such as potential incubator products – spa-quality beauty products for hotel rooms. The Center will also provide workforce development for Native management level positions and create established enterprise size businesses in distressed communities. Lastly, this will provide desperately needed employment opportunities and a significantly improved rate of successful economic development in difficult areas.

Goodall Hospital, Digital Echocardiography Equipment, Sanford, Maine – \$398,000.

Funding will be used to acquire a new Digital Echocardiography, which will greatly improve cardiac care at the hospital. Digital Echocardiography is capable of producing excellent images of the heart, and is critical in aiding in diagnosis and in treatment of heart conditions. Echocardiography is the use of ultrasound to capture images of the heart. Digital echo is important because it improves the clarity of this important diagnostic tool, thereby more providing more accurate diagnoses. It helps with all aspects of cardiac care, providing the safest, least invasive, and most accurate and most gender-specific means to monitor cardiac health.

Institute for Financial Literacy, Council on Financial Education Accreditation (CFEA), Portland, Maine – \$500,000.

The Council on Financial Accreditation (CFEA) was created to promote effective financial literacy education through the establishment of business and financial education standards and the accreditation of Organizations under those standards. CFEA is administered by the Institute for Financial Literacy, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Currently, there are over 800 Financial Literacy and Financial Education curricula being disseminated by charitable, faith based, governmental and commercial organizations in the United States. None of these organizations have been evaluated for efficacy. Although some content standards have been established, there has been no cohesive oversight of the application of content standards, educator training or the efficacy of programs. Millions of dollars are spent annually delivering education of questionable value to underserved consumers, students, and the public with little regard for the outcomes of these efforts.

CFEA will enact Accreditation Standards to provide organizations with a consistent framework to conduct meaningful self evaluations, gather constructive feedback from constituents, and apply this in ways that continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of their financial literacy efforts. The Standards will incorporate independent peer review of the materials and practices of the financial literacy education community and independent validation or correction of Organization's self-evaluation process and outcomes. The Standards will also provide a recognizable mark that consumers and other constituents may use to identify financial literacy education organizations that adhere to nationally recognized standards and best practices and will create a community-wide interest in improving financial literacy education.

The Jackson Laboratory, Human Response to Infectious Disease, Bar Harbor, Maine – \$487,000.

Recent technical breakthroughs offer powerful new approaches for investigating normal biology and disease in mouse models. Investigators are developing strains of mice that can be grafted with human cells and tissues. These "humanized" strains can be used to study cancer, immune disorders, and infectious disease. In these models, viral agents can be used to introduce genes into target cells or influence gene activity, allowing

investigators to study human disease in the context of a living mammal. Combined, these approaches allow investigators to manipulate gene function in human cells and observe the biological outcomes in mouse models.

Researchers at The Jackson Laboratory are among the national leaders in the development of mouse research models that faithfully replicate human diseases and are valuable for translational studies and pre-clinical testing. Though pioneers in their development, Jackson scientists are limited in making full use of these powerful tools by lack of appropriately configured and equipped space. Use of primary human tissues that could potentially carry human pathogens, and of viral vectors for genetic manipulation, require “biosafety” (BSL-2) space.

The Lab proposes to develop a centrally managed BSL-2 facility in a building now under construction on Jackson’s Bar Harbor campus. The aims of this project are (1) to create and equip two BSL-2 vivaria; 2) create and equip two BSL-2 procedure rooms for surgical procedures, tissue collection, and imaging; and 3) create and equip two BSL-2 laboratories for cell and tissue culture, viral vector preparation, and cell analysis.

The Jackson Laboratory, Managing the Data Explosion, Bar Harbor, Maine – \$695,000.

Though computational power is constantly evolving, the speed at which we acquire instruments that produce amounts of data unimaginable just a few years ago demands rapid deployment of ever more powerful computational tools. New methods are needed to analyze and interpret scientific data and to understand its implications for human health. The explosion of data in biomedical research is making it increasingly difficult for scientists to put new discoveries to practical use. Computational systems must be rapidly expanded to support data discovery and analysis tools. The application of these technologies to biomedical research is well underway and will radically transform how biological data are presented and analyzed. The ability to display large data sets, allow sophisticated viewer interaction, and make transparent the changes in biological systems over time will support novel insights into the thousands of genes and gene networks that are critical to normal biology and to the onset and progression of disease. Technology enables the comparison of patterns of gene expression during normal tissue development to that in a variety of human cancers and other diseases. It can permit visualization and modeling of gene networks that are specifically associated with key changes in tissue development and disease progression.

Kennebec Valley Community College, Kennebec Valley Community College-Alfond Youth Center Partnership for Job Development, Fairfield, Maine – \$500,000.

This partnership seeks to build a program that will create or retain construction jobs in the region during a privately funded, 4,000-square-foot building renovation that will house the KVCC-AYC Technology Center at the Alfond Youth Center. The Technology Center would be an off-campus location of KVCC and would create two permanent jobs: a full time college faculty member and a program coordinator. Here, military and non-

military members will have the opportunity to enroll in a KVCC-accredited program in Computer Technology and receive job placement assistance. The residents of Public Housing Projects would also be a target population. Participants will have had the opportunity to earn and learn as they improve themselves and their workplace by getting a college education. The program's Disabled Veterans and handicapped participants will receive assistance from the AYC's Athletics and Aquatics Departments and KVCC students of Physical Therapy Assistant and Nursing students. Programs will be conducted in the AYC's heated therapy pool and gymnasium.

KVCC will instruct the Computer Technology portion of the program and help develop a Pathway to College Program for the youth and teen members. Business leaders are interested in providing college scholarships for the Club members who complete the pre-college program and enter KVCC. Middle School youth would be engaged through hands on technology experiments, including alternate energy, computer technology, and robotics during the After School Program. High School Students, both new to the program and those moving up from the Middle School Program, become engaged through the opportunity to earn dual High School and College Credits for free, participate in an interesting, hands-on curriculum in AECT, and receive extra academic help in English, Mathematics, and the Sciences in an out of school environment and direct admission to an affordable community college education.

Maine Centers for Women, Work, & Community/University of Maine at Augusta/University of Maine System, Women in the New Economy, Augusta, Maine – \$800,000.

Women in the New Economy aims to ensure that Maine women, particularly rural, low-income, and immigrant women of all ages have equal opportunity to gain the skills, education and support to participate in the new, 'green' economy. This will provide career training, mentoring and hands-on learning to help 600 women prepare for and succeed in 'green' jobs and start and sustain creative enterprises in such fields as energy, food and agriculture, technology and the environment, and culture and tourism. The project will feature four day-long symposia (two in each district, one focusing on creative enterprise and one on green jobs) building on WWC's expertise in organizing experiential career exploration programs, their work with creative entrepreneurs, farmers and food producers, and women in trades and technology. Each symposium will highlight unique regional opportunities, markets, resources, and local role models.

Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership, New England Mobile Outreach Skills Training Program (M.O.S.T.), Augusta, Maine – \$5,000,000.

M.O.S.T. is a three-phase rapid training and job placement initiative in which nearly 100 percent of trainees who successfully complete the 2-week Phase I receive job offers from participating employers. M.O.S.T. graduates work as operators for machines such as Computer Numerically Controlled, Programmable Logic Control Robotics; Press Brake and Extrusion; Assemblers; Quality Inspectors; and Manufacturing Technicians. The

program provides skills that lead to jobs and medical coverage, a capability that does not exist in current training programs.

The M.O.S.T. Program, one of the most successful job training and creation programs funded by the US DOL, was piloted in New England to address the skills shortage in the manufacturing sector. Working with One-Stop partners, the current M.O.S.T. Program has achieved:

- nearly 100% trainees who completed the initial 2-weeks of training received at least one job offer;
- an average annual salary of \$31,200 with employer sponsored health benefits;
- 80% of the trainees received health benefits for the first time;
- 85% retention rate 270 days after placement; and
- nearly 100% of the new hires received a pay raise and a promotion after 90 days.

M.O.S.T. has several advantages over traditional training programs including employers agree prior to the training to hire and provide On-the-Job-Training for those who successfully complete Phase I of the training program; the training program can be customized to suit the needs of participating employers; training is delivered in a state-of-the-art Mobile Training Unit that can be located at the employer's facility or at a location convenient for trainees. This flexibility is important in attracting low-income trainees who lack transportation to local educational institutions and in rural regions where training facilities are not located near participating employers.

Maine Medical Center, Medical School Scholarships for Maine Students, Portland, Maine – \$2,500,000.

The physician shortage in Maine is heightened by the fact that we do not have an in-state allopathic medical school. Maine is one of only a handful of states in the country that does not have a state medical school, and the consequences of this are dramatic throughout the state. The most telling: Maine is currently ranked 49th in the nation in the number of students applying to medical schools and currently has over 200 physician vacancies throughout the state. Financial barriers have forced many to leave the state to study and Maine students are subjected to extremely high out-of-state tuitions and substantial debt upon graduation. In fact, it is quite common for a medical student from Maine to graduate with roughly a quarter of a million dollars in debt. This staggering financial burden is turning many of our best and brightest students away from a career in medicine, and forcing those who do choose this career path into higher paying specialties instead of primary care, where the need is greatest.

Comparing Maine's experience against a similar state with an in-state medical school illuminates the role financial barriers play. Like Maine, Vermont is a predominately rural state in northern New England with about half the population of Maine. However, Vermont has a medical school at the University of Vermont. For a Vermont resident to attend UVM Medical School, the tuition expense is roughly \$25,000 – half of the average tuition cost for a Maine student to attend medical school. The result of offering an affordable option for medical education is that Vermont has significantly more medical

school applications per capita, on an annual basis, than does Maine. Eliminating this barrier and leveling the playing field for Maine students will help address the shrinking number of medical school applicants from Maine, as well as the growing physician shortage that is posing a significant healthcare threat to the entire state.

Federally allocated funds will support the MMC-Tufts University School of Medicine “Maine Track” program, with the dollars providing half scholarship support to students from both the first and second congressional districts. If approved, the dollars will be allocated to Maine Medical Center, but the impact of the dollars will be felt from Kittery to Presque Isle at all Maine hospitals. Twenty Maine students, and thousands of patients and families, will benefit annually from the unique statewide approach of the Maine Track program.

Maine Parent Federation, Family-to-Family Health Information Center (F2F HIC), Augusta, Maine – \$100,000.

Family-to-Family Health Information Centers (F2F HICs) are non-profit organizations that help families of children and youth with special health care needs and the professionals who serve them. Because their needs are chronic and complex, parents and caregivers often struggle to obtain and finance the care their children need. F2F HICs are in a unique position to help families because they are typically staffed/run by parents of children/youth with special health care needs themselves, who have traveled through the maze of services and programs designed to help their children. Staff at F2F HICs understand the issues that families face, provide advice, offer a multitude of resources, and tap into a network of other families and professionals for support and information.

Central to success is the nationally acclaimed parent-to-parent support model. Under the model, a volunteer cadre of specially trained parents (who also have children with special health care needs) having the gifts of empathy and common experience help other parents walk through the multiple challenges of accessing care and supports. Centers also provide information, education, referral, training, advocacy, and a range of family supports. In Maine, over 6000 parents, children, and professionals annually receive information and assistance. As Maine faces budget shortfalls and increasing cuts to services, the support provided becomes even more vital to families who struggle with the complexities of raising a child with significant health care issues or disabilities.

Martin’s Point Health Care, Integrated Primary Care System, Portland, Maine – \$1,257,000.

Funds will support implementation of a team-based integrated primary care system to better coordinate care and demonstrate improved health outcomes, care satisfaction, and lower long-term costs. It requires initial investments in training primary care providers, primary care nurses, and mental health providers, and infrastructure to support the model, including information systems for data capture and outcomes measurement, and modification of facilities. The most prominent priority for this project is to demonstrate the return on investment an integrated primary care system can provide in terms of

patient health outcomes and care experience as well as reductions in long-term per capita costs of care. This project will directly improve the health and experience of care as well as lower the long-term costs of care for 60,000 patients in Maine.

Milestone Foundation, Homeless Outreach and Mobile Emergency (HOME) Team - Citywide Model, Portland, Maine – \$208,000.

The Homeless Outreach and Mobile Emergency (HOME) Team program is a collaboration of city and social service agencies designed to address the needs of chronically homeless and substance-abusing individuals in Portland. Some of the key challenges facing Portland include homelessness, chronically homeless individuals who battle substance abuse, and associated public safety issues. The HOME Team will offer Portland's chronically homeless individuals lifesaving alternatives to living on the street. The HOME Team program was designed to address issues in a distinct area of Portland – in and around the Congress Street business district – where the challenges of the chronically homeless are most acute. The HOME Team program will help create an atmosphere in which those in need feel cared for, and those who visit, live, work, and conduct business in Portland will feel safer and more welcome on the streets.

Staff of the mobile outreach van will respond to situations in progress by providing problem-solving and de-escalation to resolve situations involving inappropriate or intimidating behaviors. The interventional street team will be present on the streets overnight as well, targeting hard to reach and 'service resistant' homeless individuals with the goal of connecting them with needed services. Staff will conduct assessments, and determine the most appropriate interventions and referrals for individuals. Staff may then transport the client to the appropriate destination. Team members will also work to identify high users of public services and attempt to build the trust and rapport necessary to effect a commitment to change.

Northern Maine Community College, Wind Power Technology Program Equipment, Presque Isle, Maine – \$1,000,000.

This funding would provide necessary equipment for New England's only Wind Power Technology Program, resulting in a much needed and well-trained workforce for Maine and the region's emerging wind power industry. The program capitalizes on existing courses in the electrical/electronics cluster to provide a multi-disciplinary program of study. This program provides opportunities for northern Maine residents (traditional students as well as dislocated workers, those seeking a second career, and those currently in the energy industry) to train in this emerging industry. High demand in the program has required the College to expand the number of students accepted in the first year. Demand for the second year is just as great; however, the College is unable to sustain the large numbers given the current realities with the state budget. While the primary employer of wind power technicians is large corporate wind farms, multiple communities in Maine are exploring community wind projects, and those projects, as well as residential structures, will also require technicians. The equipment will be an essential component to training students to serve these projects.

As a rural, agricultural region, Aroostook County has been designated a federal USDA Empowerment Zone, one of only two to receive that designation specifically for out-migration. The serious long-range effects of significant out-migration of the younger workforce to pursue educational opportunities and (subsequently) employment outside the region can only be reversed through the creation of highly technical, well-paying jobs in the County. Development of the wind industry would lead to just such jobs. Further, the opportunities for advancement in the industry are significant. Graduates may choose to go back to school for further credentialing in business, energy disciplines or engineering, or may advance to management responsibilities within the operations and maintenance areas of the wind energy industry.

Pen Bay Healthcare, Mental Health Initiative: Improving Access to Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment in Mid-coast Maine, Rockport, Maine – \$830,000.

Pen Bay Healthcare recognizes that citizens of mid-coast Maine often suffer from undiagnosed or untreated mental health or substance abuse illnesses and that access to care is unreliable. Studies estimate that 19 percent of the U.S. adult population is faced with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders and that only one fifth of those affected have sought treatment. In PBH's region, 10 percent of adult respondents to a health survey reported receiving outpatient mental health treatment in the previous year – and another 10 percent reported needing services but not being able to get them. In Maine, funding for mental health has been drastically cut and more cuts are under consideration for this already under served population. Reimbursement rates for outpatient psychotherapy have fallen by 40 percent over the last decade. Elders and children are particularly at risk. The American Academy of Pediatrics, Maine Chapter, and the Maine Medical Association have listed provision of children's mental health services as an area of major concern for Maine.

Pen Bay Healthcare is seeking federal funding to collaborate with Mid-coast Mental Health Center in expanding and strengthening mental health services delivered through primary care practices, schools, and other community organizations such as the YMCA. Because many patients in primary care have physical ailments that are made worse by stress or psychological disorders, it is clinically effective and cost effective to make mental health providers part of primary medical care. To assure that patients follow through with recommended mental health screenings and treatment, the project will pilot a Care Management program in physician practices, Penobscot Bay Medical Center, and PBH long-term care facilities.

Penobscot Community Health Care, Solving Dental Shortages in Rural Areas, Bangor, Maine – \$500,000.

This request funds a national model program which will address dental shortages in an underserved rural area by attracting dental students through externships and expanding pediatric and adult dental care for low-income families. This funding will be used to add eight dental operatories to accommodate dental students from the developing University of New England Dental School and to provide space for additional pediatric dental

services. These are extremely difficult for lower income families to access in the northern half of Maine, a designated underserved area. This project is designed to attract dental students to public health service and to practicing in rural areas. In total, the funding will support: 1) Eight additional dental operatories, 2) Externship placement for 3rd and 4th year dental students, 3) Over 4,000 additional low-income children and adults will be served each year, and 4) Twenty new full time jobs.

Penobscot Valley Hospital, Community Health Improvement Initiative, Lincoln, Maine – \$1,500,000.

The CT services currently offered at PVH are extremely limited and the equipment is outdated. The hospital is on the verge of having to give up doing CT services, due to the increasing number of physicians who say they will not be responsible for reading a single-slice image, which is what is currently offered at PVH. It remains one of the only hospitals in the state with a single-slice CT machine. The details that can be missed due to the out-of-date technology places clinicians at a severe disadvantage and could potentially lead to mistakes in the readings. PVH is looking to purchase a 64-slice CT. The unprecedented coverage speed of this system allows physicians to capture a high-resolution image of the heart in 5 beats, or go head to toe in less than 10 seconds. PVH's role as a community hospital means helping to optimize their patients' health status by providing a comprehensive range of essential health care services. Patients in this rural service area are driving 50-100 miles to access 64-slice CT services elsewhere.

Sacopee Valley Health Center, Rural Dental Care to Save Lives and Create Jobs, Porter, Maine – \$1,596,000.

This project includes the acquisition, renovation, and expansion of a local dental practice, which will create jobs and promote the employability and health of rural, poor Mainers through the provision of preventive and restorative dental care. Sacopee Valley Health Center proposes to purchase a local dental practice and property of a dentist who is planning to retire so that dental services can be provided to the low-income and underserved population in our area. The need for dental services for residents in the state of Maine is critical. The number one diagnosis for non-emergency visits to emergency departments in Maine for MaineCare recipients is dental pain. This project will save lives, reduce dental disease burden, provide preventive dental services, and promote employability of citizens (not having good dental health may preclude residents from being hired), as well as create construction jobs and dental jobs. This project will also provide a rural practice site for dental students and dental hygiene students.

Southern Maine Community College, The Maine Transportation and Heavy Equipment Program at NAS Brunswick, South Portland, Maine – \$624,000.

In partnership with Maine construction companies, Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) is requesting funds to establish the Maine Transportation and Heavy Equipment Program as part of the SMCC Midcoast Campus and as an important component of the redevelopment efforts at the Naval Air Station in Brunswick, which was on the BRAC

list. This program is designed to ease a critical shortage of heavy equipment workers and will train Maine workers to fill high-pay and high-demand jobs in heavy equipment maintenance and operation. The program will create a new and much needed Associate Degree program in Heavy Equipment Maintenance and an Associate Degree program in Heavy Equipment Operation, which will include training for crane operation.

The lack of trained heavy equipment workers poses a unique and pressing challenge for Maine employers. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the need for heavy equipment operators and maintenance technicians is expected to grow 8-12 percent annually. In Maine, an aging and rapidly retiring workforce compounds this growth in demand. As a result, seven of the state's largest construction companies are partnering with SMCC to establish the program, including: Cianbro Corporation, BIW, Chadwick-BaRoss, Grondin, Southworth-Milton, Inc., Nortrax Construction and Forestry Equipment, and Anderson Equipment Co. Inc. These companies will contribute \$262,000 in equipment, scholarships, and technician training to the program, as well as provide internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training.

The requested funds would complete the Maine Transportation and Heavy Equipment Program, funding equipment purchases and operations, and enable the program to open its doors to students. This one-time investment of funds will enable the College to start the program, build enrollment, and raise the tuition revenue that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the program.

Southern Maine Community College, The Maine Advanced Technology and Engineering Center at NAS Brunswick, South Portland, Maine – \$1,359,000.

The proposed funding will establish the Maine Advanced Technology and Engineering Center (MATEC) as a joint higher education venture between Southern Maine Community College and the University of Maine. MATEC will be the centerpiece of a new community college campus that is a critical component of the redevelopment efforts at the Naval Air Station in Brunswick, which was on the BRAC list. The Center will serve as a higher education and R&D magnet focused on education, training, and economic development in composites, engineering, precision manufacturing, and advanced energy technology.

MATEC will create Maine's most innovative and fully integrated higher education partnership, providing students with a comprehensive and seamless education pathway leading from associate to bachelors to masters in engineering degrees. The Center will develop and offer new degree programs including Maine's first associate degrees in pre-engineering and composites. The Center will also provide extensive distance learning opportunities and offer associate degrees in precision manufacturing and applied engineering, in addition to bachelors and masters degree programs in engineering.

MATEC will greatly increase the number of engineering graduates in Maine, which currently ranks 49th in the country for undergraduate engineers and 51st in the country for graduate engineers. The project will expand capacity at SMCC, the fastest growing

community college in New England, which was forced to turn away 3,000 degree seeking students in 2009. The Midcoast Maine region served by the Center is currently the only major population center in the state without access to a public institution of higher education, leaving the region ill prepared to retrain and reemploy displaced workers and spur new economic growth in the wake of the Base closing.

MATEC will offer a college education to over 500 students and workforce training to another 500 workers in its first year. Within five years, MATEC will serve well over 2,000 college students from across the state. The Center will be housed in an existing building valued at \$4.1 million that has been publically conveyed to the College by the Navy with a requirement that the education programs be operational within three years. SMCC will bring over \$1 million in new equipment to the Center and the Maine Legislature has approved a bond request to supply \$4.7 million in funds to renovate the campus, including \$1.9 million dedicated to the MATEC building.

Spurwink Services, Improving Access to Learning for Students with Autism, Portland, Maine – \$500,000.

This funding would allow Spurwink to adopt a new teaching model and specialized curriculum for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at its seven schools, located throughout southern and central Maine. These schools serve more than 200 youth with emotional, behavioral, and developmental disabilities each year. Maine has the second highest percentage of residents with ASD in the United States, and Spurwink has seen significant growth in its population of students with ASD over the last ten years. In response to this growth, the agency intends to make changes that will give these students the best chances of success within and beyond the Spurwink classrooms. Specifically, Spurwink will (1) integrate the research-based SCERTS model into its programs, (2) redesign its curriculum with a focus on evidence-based, experiential learning, and (3) employ a Transition Specialist to help students make a successful shift to independent living, employment and/or higher education.

Through its Traveling Autism Consultation Team, Spurwink will also assist some Maine public school districts with implementing similar changes. This one-year project will have a long-term impact on Spurwink's ability to serve students with ASD. More than 200 children will benefit in the first year, and thousands will benefit in subsequent years.

University of Maine, Excellence In STEM Education Through Technology-Enhanced Research And Professional Development, Orono, Maine – \$650,000.

The University of Maine's Center for Science and Mathematics Education Research, in collaboration with the Division of Lifelong Learning and the New Media Department, proposes that four laboratories and problem solving classrooms on the University of Maine campus be equipped with a high resolution camera and microphones at each work group's table, with each table linked to a computer capable of processing and storing all of the data, thus filming, with full audio, each group's discussion as they move through the learning process. These digital videos will permit analysis of students' pre-

conceptions and their steps toward understanding. They will also provide the basis for videos to be used in preparing K-16+ Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) educators, including graduate teaching assistants, and technical employees in Maine businesses. In addition, these technology-equipped rooms will provide the real-time capability for students and/or teachers from other locations to connect and actively participate in group discussions, view laboratory equipment as it is assembled, and data is collected.

With this capacity, UMaine will become an advanced facility for the delivery and investigation of student-centered distance education in STEM. Undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral research associates, and faculty in the Center, in collaboration with those at other colleges and universities, will conduct the research into student learning that this facility makes possible. New Media students and Division of Lifelong Learning staff will assist with the preparation and editing of video materials. An advisory board comprised of STEM educators and business leaders will guide the project. Research findings will be disseminated through annual conferences, and summer institutes will be held to prepare graduate teaching assistants and STEM educators, locally and nationally, using the pedagogical content knowledge and materials generated by this project.

University of New England, UNE College of Dental Medicine, Portland, Maine – \$2,000,000.

The University of New England is seeking federal funding support in its effort to open a College of Dental Medicine in Portland, Maine. There is currently no college of dentistry anywhere in Northern New England to support a network of dental professionals, or to encourage students from the region to aspire to a career in dental medicine. Lacking qualified professionals, community based clinics struggle to provide care to poor and underserved areas in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Oral health is recognized as an important aspect of overall health, but access to quality oral health care is a nationwide problem, especially for underserved and rural populations. The crisis of access is particularly acute in Maine and the rest of Northern New England.

UNE has adopted an emerging model for dental education that has a community health focus. Students would be taught in Portland using high-tech simulation equipment that has been proven to increase proficiency, then trained in a community health clinic in Portland before being placed for their entire fourth year at community health clinics throughout the state and region. Having been recruited from Maine and the region to attend the College of Dental Medicine in Maine, they would not only be providing much needed care in rural and underserved regions throughout the state, but also be living in communities and serving their neighbors, thus being more likely to remain. Irrespective of their ultimate residence, the college's network of clinical placements would provide tens of thousands of hours of additional care to those most in need.

This distributive model results in decreased start-up costs. UNE estimates \$20 million is needed to launch the new College of Dental Medicine, including \$1.6 million in dental

operatories and equipment plus \$2.2 million for the simulation equipment. About \$5.5 million has been secured to date, with prospects for additional contributions for start-up and capital expenses. Up to \$2 million in equipment and IT infrastructure is also needed to establish teledentistry connectivity between the college and the clinical sites, dynamically improving the efficiency and quality of the educational experience for students, as well as improved care for patients.

University of Southern Maine, School for Professional and Continuing Studies, Portland, Maine – \$740,000.

With the decline in traditional age students projected to continue for many years to come, creating attractive program options for the growing adult market is a strategic imperative. Both USM and the University of Maine System have recently completed strategic plans establishing goals that the mission of a proposed School of Professional and Continuing Studies (SPCS) will directly address.

By providing online degree completion programs and graduate professional programs for working adults who cannot access traditional campus-based programs, SPCS will fill a gap within the University of Maine System. Students who are currently time- or place-bound due to work or family commitments will be able to complete their baccalaureate degrees or advance their career through SPCS' graduate and certificate programs.

The School of Professional and Continuing Studies will be the third phase in the development of online programming at USM. In 2006, USM established the Center for Technology-Enhanced Learning (CTEL) to provide online classes. Within two years, the number of online enrollments increased from 325 to over 1,900. In 2008, USM developed six blended (combination of online and on-campus) undergraduate programs with financial support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

In this third phase, SPCS will develop programs that are fully accessible online. A degree completion program will serve students who have earned undergraduate credits from a community college, USM, or another 4-year institution. SPCS will also develop online graduate degree and graduate certificate programs. These programs will prepare students for professional careers that are in demand and correspond to the needs of the workplace.

VNA Home Health and Hospice, Increasing Adult Immunization Rates in Southern Maine, South Portland, Maine – \$997,000.

In collaboration with the Cumberland District Health Council and Portland Public Health, VNA is now turning its attention to the challenge of increasing the rate of immunization among adults and elderly in Cumberland and York Counties. These are Maine's most populous counties, and represent the combined service areas of VNA and its collaborators. The target immunizations include vaccines for seasonal flu, H1N1, pneumococcal, and Zostavax (the vaccine for the prevention of shingles). Employing 'lessons learned' from the 2009-2010 schoolchildren immunization program, VNA will

bring the Adult Immunization program to the target population in the most efficient fashion. In the schoolchildren program, VNA worked with school administrative districts and administrators to bring the program directly to the schools. The program will coordinate with non-typical groups to educate people about and bring the program directly to those places where the target population is located.

VNA will work with employers to bring education and workplace immunization opportunities to workers; with area public and elderly housing divisions and managers to bring education and on-site immunization opportunities to adult and elderly residents; with sports groups to capture adult participants and audiences; and with other non-traditional groups identified as the Adult Program progresses. As a refugee resettlement area, the refugee population receives its first immunizations through contact with area Civil Surgeons, but the Program will also work with cultural brokers/leaders that represent the various refugee groups, to increase knowledge about the importance of receiving vaccinations. They will also advocate with employers and insurers about the importance of vaccination and coverage for immunization.

YMCA Alliance of Maine c/o Waterville YMCA, Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, Waterville, Maine – \$1,600,000.

Today, 24 million U.S. adults have diabetes, and at least 1 in 3 Americans born today will develop diabetes in their lifetime. A three-year study estimated 211,280 Mainers had diabetes in 2003, or about 8% of the population. In fact, 18% of the population over age 65 and 9% of the population over 45 are afflicted. Diabetes imposes an enormous and growing health and economic burden on the country. With current growth trends, the costs of diabetes are expected to reach \$241 billion during 2010. Maine's cost in proportion is an estimated \$2.5 billion.

In a 1995-2001 National Institutes of Health program involving 3,234 pre-diabetics, one group of participants who successfully changed their lifestyles showed a 58% reduction in the onset of diabetes compared with a control group. Another group, which relied solely on the popular diabetes medication metformin, showed a 31% reduced risk of diabetes. A follow-up study of the participants in the lifestyle group showed a 34% risk reduction after 10 years compared with the control group. This was at an average yearly cost of \$1,500 per person. This program has actually reversed pre-diabetes diagnosis.

The YMCA of the USA has a Diabetes Prevention and Control Program [DPCP] developed at the University of Indiana which achieves equal or greater results at a cost of only about \$300 per year. The YMCA Alliance of Maine has a statewide reach with 16 YMCA sites in 12 of 16 Counties [80% of the population] with an aggregate membership of about 19,200. The Alliance seeks to engage 2,000 people over the age of 50 into the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program and add full membership into the YMCA. A focus will be placed on returning war veterans and other military personnel. The full membership will increase the opportunity for these seniors to exercise more often and increase the positive results of the DPCP. The Alliance also seeks to create 16 new, full time program coordinator/presenter jobs, one per YMCA site.

National Programs

Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education – \$330 million

Congress enacted the CHGME program in 1999 to correct an unintended inequity in a GME financing system that had come to depend on Medicare, which effectively left children's hospitals out. The hospitals, mostly major teaching hospitals, were at a serious financial disadvantage in a very price competitive health care marketplace. CHGME has been an outstanding success and now provides the children's hospitals with 80 percent of the federal GME support other teaching hospitals receive from Medicare on average. In 2006, Congress reauthorized CHGME with overwhelming bipartisan support for \$330 million annually for five years. The program is currently funded at \$310 million for FY2010.

Nursing Workforce Development programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act) – \$267.3 million

The Title VIII programs have been a proven solution to past nursing shortages when provided with adequate funding. These programs support the education of registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, nurse faculty, and nurse researchers. Additionally, they focus on recruitment and retention, two other distinct areas impacting the shortage. In FY2008, the Health Resources and Services Administration was forced to turn away 92% of the applicants for the Nurse Education Loan Repayment Program. This important program directs new nursing graduates into health facilities deemed to have a critical shortage – such as departments of public health, community health centers, and disproportionate share hospitals.

Head Start, Early Head Start, and Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) – additional \$1 billion for Head Start and Early Head Start, and additional \$1 billion for CCDBG.

Since 1965, the Head Start program has prepared more than 25 million preschool-aged children for success in school and later life by providing these children and their families with comprehensive early education, health, nutrition, and social services. In 1995, Congress established the Early Head Start program in response to scientific evidence that a child's earliest years can be the most important to healthy development. Through the Early Head Start program, HHS provides pregnant women, infants, and toddlers with childcare, nutrition, health, and early education services through home visits, parent-child activities, and child development centers. Congress established the Child Care and Development Block Grant program in 1990. Since then, CCDBG has enabled millions of children to receive childcare and has provided states with essential resources to improve the quality of that care.

Reading Is Fundamental

Reading is Fundamental dollars are used to provide an annual award to Reading is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF) to provide aid to local nonprofit groups and volunteer

organizations that serve low-income children through book distribution and reading motivation activities. RIF prepares and motivates children to read by delivering free books and literacy resources to those children and families who need them most. RIF is the oldest and largest children's and family nonprofit literacy organization in the United States. RIF's highest priority is reaching underserved children from birth to age 8. Through community volunteers in every state and U.S. territory, RIF provides 4.5 million children with 16 million new, free books and literacy resources each year. I support the amount asked for in the Dear Colleague requesting \$25 million for this program.