

Summit Sessions

24 Breakout Sessions for the People Building Maine's Workforce

Practical strategy on hiring, training, and retaining Maine's workforce, led by the employers, educators, and partners doing the work. Each session lists its format and topic areas, and the topic guide on page 4 helps you plan your day.



Tuesday, November 17, 2026 • 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM • Augusta Civic Center, Augusta, Maine

1

Show ME the Funding: Training Dollars for Maine Employers

Panel

Leaders from Maine's top workforce funding programs walk through eligibility, how to apply, and how programs work together, with real employer examples and open Q&A.

BUSINESS FUNDING & RESOURCES

EMPLOYEE UPSKILLING

REMOVING WORKFORCE BARRIERS

2

Hiring the Next Generation: Straight Talk from Maine Students

Panel

High school and CTE students share what sparks their interest in a career, how they research employers, and what makes an organization worth choosing.

CAREER EXPLORATION & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

EXPANDING YOUR TALENT POOL

3

Get In Early: Partnering with Higher Ed to Build Your Talent Pipeline

Panel

Leaders from MCCS, the University of Maine System, and the Roux Institute show how employers can get on students' radar well before graduation day.

HIGHER ED TALENT PIPELINES

RECRUITMENT & TALENT ATTRACTION

4

It Takes a Community: Attracting Talent to Live and Work in Maine

Panel

How regions are growing Maine's reputation from Vacationland into a place to build a life, with lessons from Aroostook County and Cleveland.

RECRUITMENT & TALENT ATTRACTION

REGIONAL ATTRACTION & RETENTION

5

Fast-Track Talent: How Short-Term Training Builds and Strengthens Maine's Workforce

Roundtable

Three community colleges and three Maine employers share how short-term and customized training fills critical roles, boosts retention, and prepares people to advance.

HIGHER ED TALENT PIPELINES

RETENTION & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

EMPLOYEE UPSKILLING

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

INDUSTRY WORKFORCE TRENDS

6

Practical AI: Navigating the Shift, Seizing Advantages, and Staying Ahead

Presentation

A real-time look at today's AI landscape: side-by-side comparisons of leading platforms, live demos of AI agents at work, and practical guardrails for protecting your data.

BUSINESS FUNDING & RESOURCES

7

University of Maine System Pathways to Careers: A Framework for Workforce Innovation

Panel

How Maine's public universities are partnering with employers through UMS TRANSFORMS to build hands-on, career-ready experiences into students' academic journeys.

HIGHER ED TALENT PIPELINES

8

Chambers as Talent Champions: Attracting and Growing Maine's Workforce

Roundtable

Chamber leaders from around the state share how they attract talent, build school partnerships, develop leaders, and support small businesses without HR teams.

REGIONAL ATTRACTION & RETENTION

RECRUITMENT & TALENT ATTRACTION

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

9

Construction Reimagined: Automation, AI, and the Next Generation of Tradespeople

Panel

How robotics-powered microfactories and AI-guided work instructions are making construction safer, onboarding faster, and housing quicker to build.

REMOVING WORKFORCE BARRIERS

10

Pathways, Active Learning, and Tiered Development to Grow Talent at Every Level

Hands-on Workshop

Experience the active learning strategies The Jackson Laboratory uses to build a connected learning ecosystem, where thoughtful design matters more than budget.

EMPLOYEE UPSKILLING

11

Beyond the Job Board: How AI Is Changing the Way Candidates Find You

Presentation

An introduction to SEO, AEO, and GEO, and practical ways to make sure your organization is part of the answer when candidates ask AI about Maine employers.

RECRUITMENT & TALENT ATTRACTION

12

From Intern to Impact: Developing Maine's Emerging Leaders, Building the Talent Pipeline, and Extending Municipal Capacity

Panel

Bangor Economic Development and its interns share a cross-institution cohort model that extends lean teams while developing future leaders.

HIGHER ED TALENT PIPELINES

13

Just Try It: Turning Frontline Ideas into Frontline Action

Presentation

A practical, ready-to-use model for a simple visual Idea System that proves to employees their ideas are heard and acted on.

RETENTION & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

14

Supporting Your Future Workforce: Career & Technical Education Secondary School Engagement

Panel

Early evaluation findings on nearly \$20 million in CTE investments, followed by a panel of CTE directors and an employer who saw the impact firsthand.

CAREER EXPLORATION & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

15

Building Career Visibility Across Maine's Workforce Pipeline

Case Study

MaineHealth shares how it helps people see what's possible, from first career exposure for students to internal mobility for experienced nurses.

RETENTION & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

16

Stop Doing, Start Leading: Building the Next Generation of Leaders from Within

Hands-on Workshop

A hands-on introduction to the mindset shift and core skills new supervisors need, grounded in Dale Carnegie's century of leadership practice.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

17

Where the Right People Stay: Culture by Design, Not by Default

Hands-on Workshop

Turn core values from words on the wall into a culture your team lives, with a simple, objective way to assess fit.

RETENTION & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

18

A Blank Page: What Would Great Youth-to-Workforce Partnerships Look Like if We Built Them from Scratch?

Hands-on Workshop

Help MOXIE Public Schools pressure-test a draft blueprint for lasting employer partnerships that start in sixth grade.

CAREER EXPLORATION & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

19

A Model for Building Leaders from Within: Where Colleges and Employers Work Together

Presentation

How Thomas College and Central Maine Motors built a leadership series for 128 participants, plus a framework for choosing the right training partner.

HIGHER ED TALENT PIPELINES

20

A Fair Chance to Advance Maine's Workforce

Panel

How aligning education, workforce, corrections, and reentry systems can connect employers with skilled workers who have experienced incarceration.

EXPANDING YOUR TALENT POOL

21

Recipe for Success: Help Employers Recruit and Keep Talent Through Apprenticeship

Employer Roundtable

Employers share how pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship changed their hiring and retention, and when an intermediary sponsor makes sense.

RECRUITMENT & TALENT ATTRACTION

22

Developing Supportive Workplace Cultures for Youth Employees

Hands-on Workshop

Using Maine Youth Action Network's Gateway to Opportunity model, explore how to build workplaces where young people can contribute and thrive.

CAREER EXPLORATION & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

23

When the Wage Isn't Enough: Financial Stress in the Maine Workplace

Case Study

Work through a real scenario on employee financial stress, then see how a Maine employer and credit union are responding with the Income Advance Program.

RETENTION & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

24

Let Them Explore: College Students Share the Workforce Development Efforts that Work for Them

Panel

Students from Maine's universities and community colleges share how they explore industries and which experiences shaped their career goals.

HIGHER ED TALENT PIPELINES

Find Your Topic

IF YOU'RE FOCUSED ON...

DON'T MISS

Higher Ed Talent Pipelines	3, 5, 7, 12, 19, 24
Recruitment & Talent Attraction	3, 4, 8, 11, 21
Retention & Employee Engagement	5, 13, 15, 17, 23
Career Exploration & Youth Engagement	2, 14, 18, 22
Employee Upskilling	1, 5, 10
Leadership Development	5, 8, 16

IF YOU'RE FOCUSED ON...

DON'T MISS

Business Funding & Resources	1, 6
Removing Workforce Barriers	1, 9
Expanding Your Talent Pool	2, 20
Regional Attraction & Retention	4, 8
Industry Workforce Trends	5

Maine's Employers Are Solving This Together. Join Them.

One day, one room: 500 employers, HR and talent leaders, educators, and workforce partners sharing practical strategy on hiring, training, and retaining Maine's workforce.

Reserve Your Seat

Individual registration is \$150 per person and includes full access to all sessions, breakfast, lunch, and the exhibitor marketplace. Register at alfondcenter.mccs.me.edu/2026-talent-summit.

Questions? Contact Heather Douglass, Director of Workforce Marketing & Communications, hdouglass@maineccc.edu.