

# DECD - Office of Business Development: Overview and Updates

March 2026



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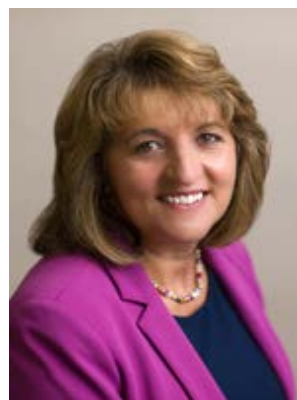


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## Some of Your DECD Team!



**Mike Duguay,**  
DECD  
Commissioner



**Denise Garland,**  
Deputy  
Commissioner



**Jim Nimon,**  
Director  
Office of Business  
Development  
(OBD)



# DECD Road Map for 2026:

- Life Sciences
- Blue Economy
- Forest Products
- Maritime Industries
  
- Rebuild economic development ecosystem
- Focus on closing out remaining goals in the 10-year Economic Development Strategy



# Meet the OBD Team!



**Ben**, Large  
Businesses (over  
50 employees), site  
selection



**Eric**, Business  
Development  
Coordinator  
(domestic  
trade)



**Jake**, Small  
Businesses (under  
50 employees)



**Patti**, Business  
Answers, website,  
social media



**Sarah**, NBRC  
Coordinator



**Shae**, Business  
Incentives (PTDZ,  
Dirigo)



# OBD Responsibilities:

- Business Retention & Expansion
- Business Assistance
- Ombudsman Support
- Business Answers
- Tax Credit Programs and Economic Development Incentives/PTDZ/Dirigo
- Investment Attraction/Site Selection
- Domestic Trade
- Governor's Award for Business Excellence
- Northern Border Regional Commission
- Startup/Entrepreneurship Resource Navigation



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**Business Answers** assists new and existing businesses with start-up and expansion.

Last year, Business Answers answered over **1,800** inquiries. Examples include:

- Identifying State licensing requirements for starting a business
- Steps in registering businesses with the Maine Secretary of State
- Acquiring an EIN with the IRS
- How to expand an existing business
- *And so much more!*

Common inquiries include:

- Starting a food truck, home health care agency, counseling center
- How do I relocate my business to Maine?
- What resources are available to me (grants/loans/where to get business advising)
- Out of state companies with remote workers in Maine
- *If we do not know the answer, we will put you in touch with someone who does!*



# DIRIGO BUSINESS INCENTIVES

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- Pine Tree Development Zone & Employment Tax Increment Financing sunset effective December 31, 2024 (annual report process for 106 companies ongoing)
- On January 1, 2025, Maine began offering sector-targeted business tax credits via Dirigo Business Incentives





# DIRIGO BUSINESS INCENTIVES



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## Benefits:



**10% capital investment credit** – including equipment, machinery, and building construction; limited to 5% in Cumberland, Sagadahoc and York counties.



**\$2,000 per worker** provided an eligible training program annually, including approved private trainings.

## Limits:

- Program is for **future** investments, investments beginning before certification are not eligible
- Credit capped at \$2 million per business per year, can be taken over 5 years.
- Up to \$500,000 of the credit would be **refundable** per year.



# DIRIGO BUSINESS INCENTIVES



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## Eligibility

For-profit businesses in Maine in eligible sectors

## Sectors:

- Agriculture, forestry, & fishing
- Manufacturing
- Long-distance freight transportation
- Software publishing, data processing, & computer design
- Engineering, architecture, and scientific research and development services

## Trainings:

- Training provided by or approved for funding from the Maine Community College System including the Maine Workforce Development Compact
- Apprenticeship program registered under the Maine Apprenticeship Program
- On-the-job training contract through a Local Workforce Board
- Education or training provided by the University of Maine System or other accredited university or college in this State



# DIRIGO BUSINESS INCENTIVES



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## How It Works

Designed for simplicity:

- Straightforward process – apply, make eligible investments, claim credit in annual tax filings
- No time limit – Credits are available every year a business has eligible investment and training, and there is no sunset.

## Applications Certified (2025-2026 projects)

- 150 businesses certified
- \$1.43B in planned capital investments over the 5-year certification
- 4,985 planned enrollments in qualified worker trainings
- Almost 70% of certified businesses are in agriculture, fishing and forestry sectors



# Business Attraction Protocol – 2026

- Domestic Maine prospect – current physical location in Maine (OBD)
- Domestic US prospect – no physical location in Maine (M&C)
- International prospect – no physical location in Maine (MITC)

## Top 10 most searched for Maine communities in past year:

1. Augusta
2. Presque Isle
3. Sanford
4. Freeport
5. Gardiner
6. Bucksport
7. Portland
8. Auburn
9. Bangor
10. Milford

The screenshot displays the SelectMaineSites.com website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: "State of Maine", "PROPERTY SEARCH", "EXPLORE COMMUNITIES", and "COMPARE COMMUNITIES". A search bar is located on the left, and filter options like "All Properties", "Size", "Sale / Lease", and "All Types" are on the right. A "Saved Results" button shows 18 items. The main content area is titled "Property Results" with 1545 total properties. It includes a "Sort By: Featured" dropdown and "Descending" order. Below this, three featured property listings are shown with their addresses, cities, counties, zip codes, and size ranges. To the right, a map of Maine is displayed with various layers and filters, including "Fiber", "Petroleum Product Pipelines", "Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA)", "Counties", "Airports - Commercial Air", and "RAILROADS - ALL". The map also shows "Abandoned", "Ferry", "Main Network", and "Non-Mainline Active Track" layers. A legend and map controls are visible on the right side of the map.

Post a site; search available commercial properties; and research economic development data on [selectmainsites.com](https://selectmainsites.com)

## Statewide Administrators:

- 21 participants with property management privileges to highlight local and regional development opportunities
- A mix of EDOs, municipalities, industrial parks, airports, and redevelopment agencies
- Free accounts managed by DECD
- Easy-to-use, training provided
- Follow-up meetings as needed
- Properties featured on LinkedIn
- Content, including demographic data and property reports, fully shareable and may be embedded on public websites with permission

## Some of our current Partners:



**PISCATAQUIS COUNTY**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



Join the team! Become a partner! Contact Ben Sturtevant at [ben.sturtevant@maine.gov](mailto:ben.sturtevant@maine.gov) | 207-557-2946



# Maine's Domestic Trade Program – supporting Maine businesses in selling goods and services nationwide

## Economic Impact (2024)

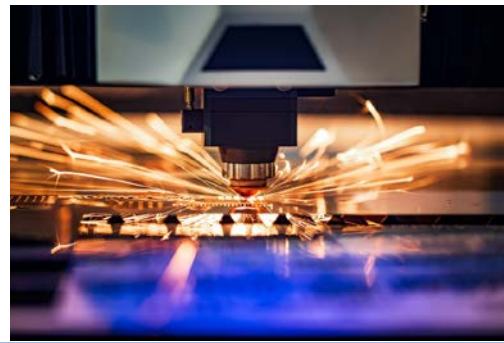
- Total sales: \$197.2 B, with \$108.9 B (55 %) sold out of state
- Demand within Maine: \$198.8 B, 51.3% met by Maine producers

- Opportunities to support Maine businesses expand their market reach are plentiful

Top 5 States Dependent on Imports for Food and Beverage Manufacturing (2022 Demand)

The following states have relatively low production capacity compared to the national average. These states need to import Food Manufacturing products, such as fruit, dairy, and soda products, to support their own economies.





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# Domestic Trade Resources

Support Maine businesses with:

New market analysis

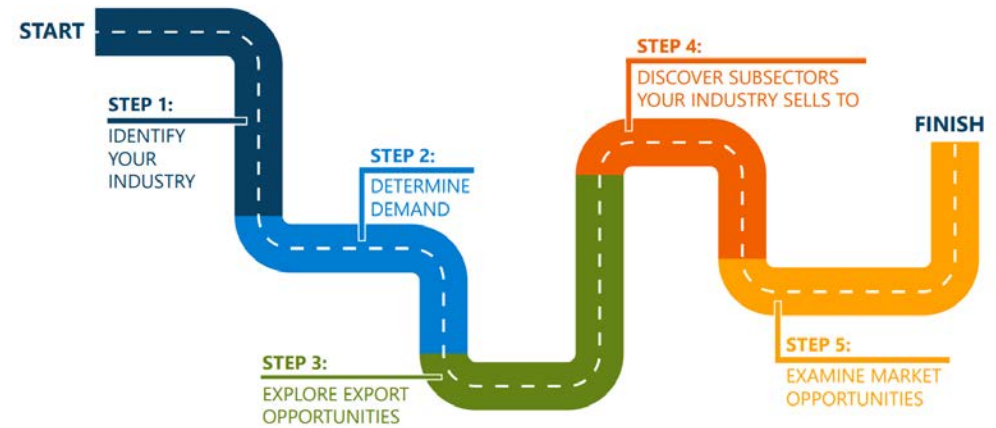
Trade show planning

Supply chain support

E-commerce/branding

Targeted marketing strategies

Industry profiles and custom market data reports



**KEY FINDINGS**

## Industrial Real Estate Needs of Maine's Production Economy

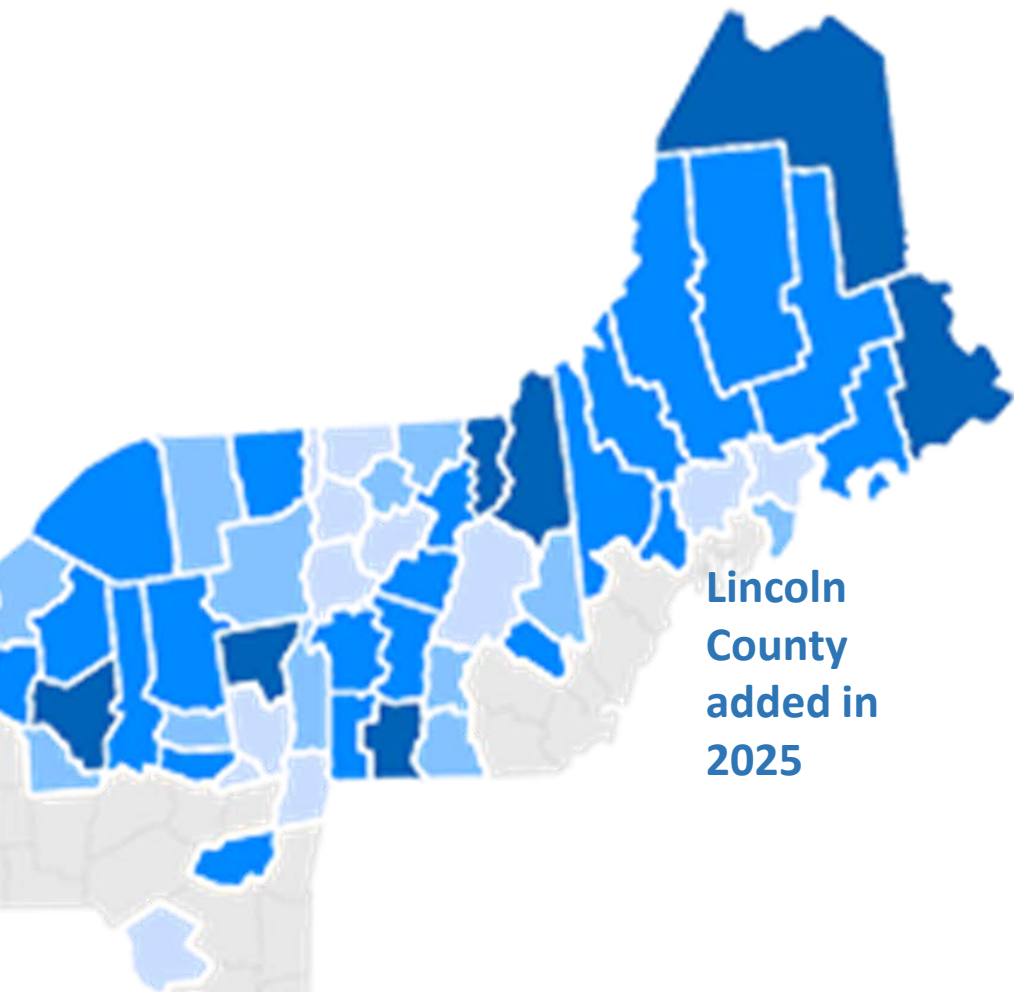
The *Industrial Real Estate Needs of Maine's Production Economy* report examines how Maine's industrial real estate market supports (or limits) the state's production economy. By assessing supply, demand, and facility roadiness across six regions, it identifies where targeted investment can strengthen manufacturing, processing, and logistics capacity.

**11** Maine has a strong foundation of industrial space with opportunities to modernize and strategically expand for today's production economy.

Strong Foundation	Opportunity to Modernize
72 million SF of industrial space available	88% was built 25+ years ago
67% of space is <30,000 SF (opportunity for small, emerging firms)	47% of available space is Class C
Greater options south of Bangor	Lack of space with ceiling heights of 24+ feet



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Lincoln  
County  
added in  
2025

## NBRC Structure & Mission

Formed by Congress in 2008 to help fund promising economic and community development projects in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York.

NBRC funding strategies prioritize investment applications that...

**Catalyze regional, collaborative, and transformative community economic development approaches that alleviate economic distress and position the region for economic growth.**



## NBRC Structure & Mission

### **Commission is comprised of five voting members:**

Federal Co-Chair – Chris Saunders

Governors of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York (rotate State Co-Chair)

State Co-Chair Maine Governor Janet Mills; Alternate: DECD Commissioner Mike

Quigley

### **Roles & Responsibilities:**

NBRC: set fed priorities, funding opportunities, guidance, score apps, ensure compliance

Maine: set state priorities, promote program for competitive apps, score apps, vote on approvals, ensure alignment with NBRC priorities and Maine strategic plan



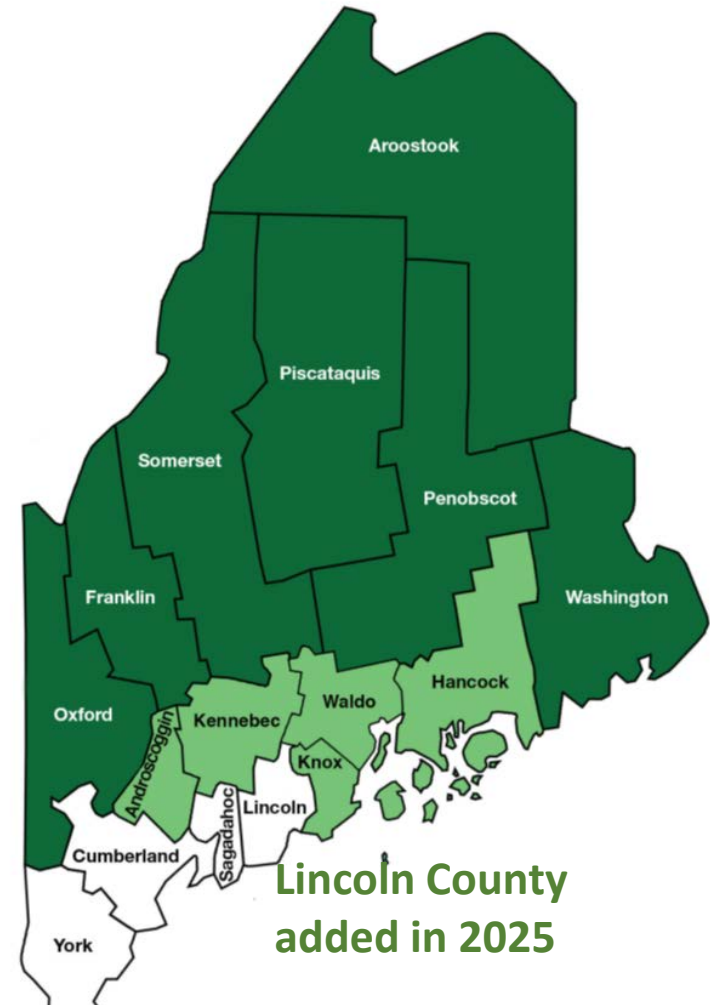
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# Investing in Maine's Distressed and Transitional Communities

NBRC Federal-State partnership is aided by regional organizations called Local Development Districts (LDDs). LDDs assist NBRC and the State with their outreach activities and provide grant admin assistance to applicants which is paid by NBRC. In Maine, these are COGs and EDDs.

LDDs voluntarily opt-in annually. LDDs currently opting-in:

- |      |       |            |
|------|-------|------------|
| EMDC | HCPC  | KVCOG      |
| NMDC | PCEDC | SCEC SMPDC |





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## C Funding Programs

Forest Economy Program (FEP)

Transportation for Transit (T4T)

Analyst

More Appropriations

IL

SDA

DA

## Investment Priorities

- Supports the forest-based economy, new technologies, viable business models, workforce development
- Advances domestic forest products in transportation infrastructure
- Supports a broad range of economic development initiatives including infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects



<https://www.maine.gov/decd/strategic-plan>

**A: Grow Local Talent - Expand educational and career opportunities to build a skilled local workforce.**

**B: Attract New Talent - Promote Maine's lifestyle and career benefits to attract new workers and**

**C: Promote Innovation - Foster research, development & entrepreneurship to drive innovation and economic growth.**

**D: Build Connections - Expand broadband infrastructure to ensure all residents have access to high-speed internet and digital tools.**

**E: Provide Supporting Infrastructure - Invest in childcare, transportation, and housing to support and strengthen communities.**

**F: Maintain a Stable Business Environment - Simplify business regulations and grow renewable energy to create a more competitive and sustainable business climate.**

**G: Promote Hubs of Excellence - Support local economic hubs to strengthen communities and drive**



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# What to expect in 2026

## **Spring Funding Round (closed)**

July: Spring funding round begins

August 27: Pre-applications due

September: Spring applications due

October: ME scores & ranks

Applications for Governor approval

**November: NBRC notifies applicants of**

## **2026 Fall Funding Round**

July: Fall funding round begins

August 28: Pre-applications due

October 16: Fall Applications due

October – November: ME scores & ranks

Applications for Governor approval

**December: NBRC notifies applicants of awards**



# Opportunity Zones 2.0 – 2026 Nominations



Although we are currently awaiting the official federal designation of eligible zones, the following link is provided to alert Maine communities to census tracts that are likely to remain eligible for nomination:

Opportunity Zones 2025: <https://lnkd.in/eYGqBQkc>

**If your community has an eligible census tract that you would like considered for inclusion** in the program, please contact Michael Duguay at the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development as soon as possible at [michael.duguay@maine.gov](mailto:michael.duguay@maine.gov).

**The Department is seeking additional information from communities regarding properties** with development or development potential within eligible census tracts.

This information will help assess each site's suitability for residential, commercial, or industrial development.

## Preliminary Timeline for OZ 2.0

- Fall 2025-Spring 2026: Developer and community recommendations made to DECD
- May 2026: DECD census tract nominations to the Governor
- June 2026: Governor census tract selections to the federal government
- January 2027: Opportunity Zone investments can begin

**THANK YOU!**



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[maine.gov/decd/  
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[linkedin.com/company/  
mainedecd/](https://linkedin.com/company/mainedecd/)