



THE

OPPORTUNITY

AGENDA

A BUDGET THAT
STRENGTHENS OUR STATE

A MESSAGE FOR MAINE TAXPAYERS

Mainers deserve a budget that reflects the best things about our state and its people: We are resilient, and know how to come together to solve problems. We know what it takes to rebuild an economy that is fair for everybody and creates more good-paying jobs that allow young people to stay in Maine.

The problems we need to solve are bigger than this budget, bigger than the next two years, and bigger than the current administration.

Maine Democrats believe that Maine has a bright future. A Maine where families have security and freedom to grow and prosper. A Maine where family-supporting jobs are home-grown in every community across our state. A Maine where those working hard can get ahead and stay ahead.

Maine is strongest when families are thriving. We must capitalize on our natural advantages, deliver quality services, and invest in Maine's future. We have heard from Mainers across the state and we commit to being the voice of the people in this budget debate.

The fact is, the current budget proposal cuts taxes for the wealthiest, while leaving working Mainers behind. Trickle down economics has failed everywhere it's been tried. Maine deserves better.

The Opportunity Agenda is a transformational plan for Maine's economy that pulls people together, instead of choosing winners and losers. It puts Maine families first, giving them the tools they need to build the future they deserve. We do it by lowering property taxes, making education attainable, promoting job growth and small business development.

We can achieve this while rejecting unnecessary cuts and without raising additional taxes.

REVENUES

Note: all figures are for the biennium.

OPPORTUNITY AGENDA POLICY OVERVIEW

Our budget covers current services, and makes new investments in our state and its people. New initiatives outlined here are funded by the following revenue streams over the biennium:

Economic Growth Above Current Services	\$181,523,148
Recreational Marijuana Tax Revenues	\$13,230,000
Previously Uncollected Online Revenues	\$70,000,000
Total	\$264,753,148

Source: Office of Fiscal and Program Review and the Maine Center for Economic Policy.

EXPENDITURES

Note: all figures are for the biennium.

The Opportunity To Pass the Largest Property Tax Cut in Maine's History

Increase Homestead Exemption | \$50 million

This program reduces property tax bills by exempting a portion of the home's value from tax assessment. Our plan increases the share of exempted value by 50 percent - going from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

Expand Property Tax Fairness Credit | \$33 million

This program gives refundable tax credits to low- and middle-income homeowners and renters to offset property tax bills.

Increase Revenue Sharing to 3% | \$64 million

The Municipal Revenue Sharing program diverts a percentage of the state's total sales and income tax revenue back to communities to cover the cost of essential services such as law enforcement, road and bridge maintenance, and fire protection.

Fully Fund Public Schools | Estimated \$370 million*

Fully funding education will reduce pressure on communities to raise property taxes in order to cover a lack of funding for our kids and our teachers.

**Funded by the 3 percent surcharge on the top 2% of Maine earners, as approved by voters in 2016.*

The Opportunity to Support the Economy, Jobs and Innovation

Targeted Community College Workforce Development | \$10 million

This funding supports existing programs that work with Maine businesses, healthcare facilities, and nonprofit agencies across the state to help them build the workforce they need to grow and prosper.

Maine Venture Fund and Maine Technology Institute Funding | \$1 million

Increasing funding to boost ongoing incubator programs to attract, scale and develop small businesses.

Expand Broadband Access | Bond

Students, workers, businesses, healthcare providers and entrepreneurs all need reliable, high-speed Internet. A broadband bond would give Maine the resources necessary to ensure all communities have access to this critical infrastructure.

Invest in Infrastructure | Bond

Keeping our critical physical infrastructure sound will create good-paying jobs in our state and enable a thriving local economy. Our plan will repair the crumbling transportation infrastructure, creating jobs in the short and long term and increasing efficiency in our economy.

Support Research and Development | Bond

Research and Development plays a critical role in building our economy. It's an investment in innovation, technology and future capabilities - its harnessing what's best about our state and getting us to the next level.

The Opportunity to Educate our Students

The Maine Promise | \$24 million

Democrats are committed to creating a pathway that guarantees more people can start, stay and complete a degree in our community colleges. By investing in our existing community college infrastructure, and by launching a "last dollar" scholarship program, our initiative will make higher education accessible to more Mainers, while ensuring that those in the program graduate and are able to transition into the workforce.

Expand Pre-Kindergarten and Head Start | \$4 million

Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement service for low-income children and their families. Additional funding for Pre-K and Head Start would give more young Mainers an opportunity to thrive as children, and later as productive adults.

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Direct Student Debt Relief | Bond

Funding from this bond would support a new program that would forgive a portion of an eligible Mainer's student debt load while refinancing the remainder at a significantly lower rate. The combination of forgiveness and refinancing will allow graduates to more fully participate in Maine's economy.

The Opportunity to Value Maine Families

Direct Care Worker Reimbursement | \$55 Million

Maine can attract and retain quality workers by increasing reimbursement rates and paying a fair wage to those who care for the health and wellbeing of our families, including professionals who work in nursing homes, direct care, home care, and assisted living facilities.

Leveraging Investments in Families Today (LIFT) | Existing Federal Funds

This initiative leverages existing federal funds to reduce poverty by ensuring families can afford basics such as housing and heat, create economic opportunities for families to get ahead, and break down barriers to employment.

Veterans' Access to Mental Health Care | \$2.5 million

This funding builds state and local capacity for mental health care and strengthens local veterans service organizations. In addition, it expands the veteran treatment court in Kennebec County, invests in the only shelter in Maine for female veterans and their children, and supports efforts to give service members credit for their military experience with accelerated training programs.

Opioid Epidemic Funding | \$5 million

This funding will support the strategies endorsed by the Task Force to Address the Opiate Crisis in our State.