

ALICE EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

March 2026



ALICE EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

Starter Document – March 2026

WHY THIS TOOLKIT EXISTS

A practical, business-smart resource to help Maine employers strengthen workforce stability through supporting ALICE workers. Employers can use this toolkit to:

- Increase retention, reliability and engagement
- Reduce turnover, vacancies and hiring costs
- Strengthen and stabilize the talent pipeline
- Pilot right-sized solutions that fit your industry, size and budget

Not a one-size-fits-all playbook. This is a flexible menu of options the ALICE Employer Advisory Council will test, adapt and scale over time.

WHO IS ALICE?

ALICE (**A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed) households earn an income above the poverty line but cannot afford basic needs. This population represents 40% of households in Maine. They may face any or all of the following:

- Unpredictable schedules and income
- High housing, child care and transportation costs
- Limited paid leave, savings, or affordable health care
- Barriers to advancement despite strong skills

For employers, these pressures show up as: Turnover. Absenteeism. Burnout. Staffing gaps. Lost productivity. For more information about ALICE, please see [ALICE in Maine report](#).

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE

- ALICE-friendly workplace policies and practices
- Real Maine and regional employer examples
- Implementation pathways (low-cost pilots → long-term strategies)
- Ready-to-use resources and partnership connections

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Hiring, Onboarding & Accessibility	3
Employee Voice, Trust & Belonging	4
Pay, Income & Financial Stability	5+6
Child Care & Caregiving	7
Health, Mental Health & Well-Being	8
Transportation & Commuting	9
Scheduling, Time & Predictability	10
Career Growth, Training & Mobility	11
Where to Start?	12

HIRING, ONBOARDING & ACCESSIBILITY

Reducing barriers to entry and success → expanding the talent pool and decreasing time-to-productivity

FAIR CHANCE HIRING

Fair chance hiring broadens access to opportunity by evaluating candidates based on relevant skills, experience, and job-related competencies, while thoughtfully considering credentials and background factors in context. Incorporating flexible or working interviews allows candidates to demonstrate their abilities in real-world settings, ensuring decisions are grounded in capability and potential.

Policies in Action

Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (Brunswick) uses blind hiring to remove identifying information from resumes during early screening, reducing unconscious bias. Many applicant tracking systems (ATS) support this, letting teams focus on skills and qualifications before personal details are revealed.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Revise interview processes to prioritize skills and job-related competencies, including offering working interviews where candidates demonstrate real tasks. Provide flexible interview options (in-person, phone, or alternative times) to reduce technology, transportation or caregiving barriers.

Option 2: Implement blind hiring practices within your applicant tracking system (ATS) to remove identifying information during early screening and reduce bias. Partner with reentry programs or workforce organizations to build structured fair chance pipelines, including onboarding supports and supervisor training.

CLEAR ONBOARDING & TRAINING

Clear, timely hiring and structured onboarding are critical for low-income and ALICE applicants who often cannot afford long waits or uncertainty. A transparent process, paid training and orientation that explains benefits, schedules, and support resources help new hires transition smoothly and start work with clarity and stability.

Policies in Action

SKILLS, Inc. (St. Albans) – New Direct Support Professionals receive paid training from day one, including hands-on mentorship and orientation. Staff are given clear guidance on benefits, schedules, and team contacts, and are provided fleet vehicles for client visits.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Streamline hiring decisions and communicate promptly to avoid losing applicants. Offer paid onboarding and an orientation that clearly covers benefits, schedules, and support contacts, even for entry-level roles.

Option 2: Provide structured, paid training programs from day one, combining classroom learning, hands-on mentorship, and clear guidance on benefits and resources. Employees earn while learning and receive thorough support for success in their new roles.

RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS

- United Way's [Southern Maine Workforce Initiative](#) offers employers an [online toolkit](#) to learn programs and policies that will support attracting and retaining internationally trained talent.
- MaineHealth provides [training to Maine employers](#) to improve inclusive hiring and retention of people with disabilities.
- Consider using tools like [Maine JobLink](#), available in 70 languages, to post job openings, and the [Maine Apprenticeship Program](#) to yield the skilled workers Maine needs.

EMPLOYEE VOICE, TRUST & BELONGING

Creating a workplace where employees are heard → boosting engagement, trust and performance

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Regular feedback fosters trust, deepens employee engagement, and helps prevent emerging retention or performance issues from going unnoticed. It also ensures employees have a meaningful voice in shaping workplace policies and support systems. By using surveys, focus groups, advisory panels and suggestion channels, organizations can surface challenges, identify unmet needs—such as access to benefits or flexible scheduling—and make informed, employee-centered decisions.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Gather employee input *from all employees* through informal and frequent, one-on-one check-ins, quick pulse surveys, suggestion boxes, and open-door policies that encourage direct feedback.

Option 2: Use structured engagement surveys, focus groups, employee resource groups, digital communication platforms, and town hall meetings to collect and act on employee input at scale.

MANAGER TRAINING

Manager training on ALICE challenges equips supervisors to understand the barriers many low- and moderate-income employees face—such as transportation, child care, financial strain, and healthcare access. Grounded in a learning-first, non-punitive approach with clear expectations, it helps managers balance accountability with empathy, strengthening retention, engagement, and equity.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Provide brief trainings or guides to help managers recognize common ALICE challenges, practice empathetic communication and follow clear, consistent response policies.

Option 2: Implement comprehensive programs with scenario-based learning, coaching, and ongoing refreshers that equip managers to proactively identify barriers, hold supportive check-ins and connect employees to internal and community resources.

Policies in Action

Bangor Savings Bank – Employee feedback is a core tool for supporting well-being and financial stability. The Bank collects input through multiple low-barrier channels, including leadership town halls, user-friendly intranet tools, and regular weekly manager check-ins. Managers are trained to listen with empathy and connect employees to relevant benefits, workplace resources, and support programs, ensuring staff receive meaningful assistance—even when they may be unaware of resources or hesitant to ask for help.

RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS

- [Financial Health Network](#) provides employee financial health surveys, data interpretation support, and tailored recommendations.
- Not sure who in your organization is ALICE? See how the [ALICE Status Tool](#) might help.
- Employee census reports (e.g., ADP workforce data, [ADP National Employment Report](#)) can help understand workforce demographics and trends.
- Targeted questions added to existing surveys can help employers learn more: “What’s important to you beyond wages?” and “Do you have any barriers that make it hard to bring your best self to work?”

PAY, INCOME & FINANCIAL STABILITY (1)

Ensuring work provides a stable foundation → improving productivity, engagement, and retention

LIVING WAGE COMMITMENT

When employees struggle to cover basic expenses, their stress, stability, and overall, well-being directly affect engagement, productivity and retention. Paying wages that meet or exceed the ALICE Survival Threshold for Maine helps ensure workers can reliably afford essentials like housing, food, transportation, healthcare, and child care. Aligning compensation with real cost-of-living data not only reduces financial strain but also strengthens workforce stability—especially for ALICE households, who are most vulnerable to rising expenses..

Policies in Action

MEMIC (Portland) reviewed its pay using living wage data to make sure wages reflect what it actually costs to live in Maine. By taking this step, the organization helped more employees move above the ALICE threshold, strengthening financial stability, improving retention and building a more resilient workforce over time.. *For more information, contact: Michelle Y. Allen, MYAllen@memic.com.*

Options for implementation

Option 1: Use the [ALICE Survival Budget](#) to identify wage gaps, prioritize the lowest-paid roles, phase increases over time and supplement with enhanced benefits to gradually close affordability gaps.

Option 2: Conduct a compensation review aligned to living wage benchmarks, adopt a policy to meet or exceed them annually, and integrate standards into pay bands, hiring, and long-term workforce strategy with transparent communication.

FINANCIAL COACHING

Financial stress is a leading driver of distraction, absenteeism and turnover. Access to financial education and professional coaching to help your employees manage debt, build savings, navigate benefits and plan for short- and long-term financial stability. Offering trusted, confidential guidance helps employees make informed decisions, reduce financial strain, and improve overall well-being and productivity.

Policies in Action

IDEXX (Westbrook) offers earned wage access and financial coaching. Results show that financial coaching has yielded \$3,800 average reduction in debt and \$214 discretionary income increase for employees.

MEMIC partners with an affordable vendor offering one-on-one financial counseling, a budgeting app, and guidance on insurance choices. This streamlined support helps employees make confident financial decisions and has been highly successful.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Offer access to financial education and short-term coaching through EAPs, retirement plan advisors, or community partners to support employees navigating financial stress at minimal cost.

Option 2: Provide free, ongoing access to certified financial professionals for 1:1 coaching, often integrated with earned wage access or benefits platforms.

RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS

- Review [O*NET OnLine](#), a career site resource with wages, skills needed.
- Leverage the hourly wage estimate in the [ALICE Survival Budget](#) to identify the gap between wages and what it costs to get by in your county.
- Host on-site or refer employees to organizations that offer financial wellness classes, such as [New Ventures Maine](#) offers free, in-person, and online workshops across Maine. [Finance Authority of Maine \(FAME\)](#) offers **Lunch & Learn sessions** designed to help employees and HR professionals better understand financial wellness and resources available in Maine. Contact: Maire Pelletier, mpelletier@FAMEMaine.com.

PAY, INCOME & FINANCIAL STABILITY (2)

Ensuring work provides a stable foundation → improving productivity, engagement, and retention

INCOME ADVANCE PROGRAMS

Access to emergency loans and financial stability programming. Employers can help protect their workers' financial health by providing internal, interest-free loans for employees as an advance on their paycheck.

Policies in Action

Rhino Foods (Burlington) pioneered the **Income Advance** program, developed with a local credit union. It offers no-questions-asked loans up to \$2,000, repaid over 6–12 months via payroll deduction; after repayment, contributions continue into savings (opt-out) to build emergency funds. Eligibility is based on tenure (typically six months in good standing), not credit score, with automatic approval and funds available within 24 hours.

G&E Roofing (Augusta) offers employees up to \$500 in interest-free emergency loans, repayable through payroll deductions, with limited access per employee.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Start small with an internal, employer-funded emergency loan pool (e.g., up to \$500), repaid through payroll deduction. Set simple tenure-based eligibility criteria and clear guardrails to ensure consistency and sustainability.

Option 2: The Rhino Foods Foundation offers **no cost** support for businesses and lenders interested in offering Income Advance to better support their workforce and community.

GRANT-BASED EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDS

Hardship or Emergency Relief Funds provide critical, short-term financial support to employees who are at risk of losing housing or facing unexpected crises that threaten their economic stability. These funds can help cover urgent needs—such as past-due rent or utilities, emergency medical costs, car repairs required to maintain employment or other essential expenses.

Policies in Action

L.L.Bean (Freeport) introduced an Emergency Assistance Program called Bean Cares, which is administered by a third party (E4E Relief) and fully funded by L.L.Bean. The program offers grants up to \$2,500 to cover costs in IRS-approved emergency situations such as unexpected medical costs, storm damage to a home, car accidents, death-related expenses, etc. Strict IRS guidelines led them to work through a third party for the fund.

Options for implementation

Option 1: Offer flexible, lower-cost supports—such as referrals to community-based emergency funds—to help employees navigate short-term financial shocks and stay engaged at work.

Option 2: Implement a formal, third-party-administered employee emergency assistance fund that provides IRS-compliant grants to help workers stabilize housing, health or other critical needs during financial crisis.

RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS

- [Rhino Foods Foundation](https://rhinofoodsfoundation.org) offers a resource library that includes free learning materials. *For more information, contact Chris Hynes* chynes@rhinofoodsfoundation.org
- [E4E Relief](https://www.e4erelief.org) offers an online platform for employees to access Emergency Financial Relief charitable grants to individuals facing hardships or disasters.

CHILD CARE & CAREGIVING

Supporting working parents and caregivers → improving retention, reliability, and focus

ON-SITE OR SUBSIDIZED CARE

Renovate space for onsite care or offer monthly child care subsidies. Keep kids on site to help improve parent at work and productivity.

Policies in Action

An area nonprofit offers direct child care subsidies, supported by community partnerships and public funding, and aligns schedules to meet staff needs. This investment reduced financial strain for working parents and helped cut turnover from 20% to 3% in two and a half years.

Zachau Construction (Freeport) is working with United 4 Child Care (U4CC) and other community partners to provide a specified number of spaces for employees who are looking for child care options.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Offer flexible spending for care.

Option 2: Explore off-site partnerships or on-site options with U4CC.

SICK-CHILD CARE SUPPORT

Provide backup or sick-child care options for ALICE workers through child care centers or in-home providers to help ALICE workers manage unexpected absences.

Policies in Action

Bank of America in Maine offers access to back-up care services provided by Bright Horizons, with up to 50 days of back-up care at significantly reduced rates with both center-based and in-home back-up care.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Offer a Dependent Care Assistance Plan (DCAP) so employees can use pretax dollars for child care, and strengthen impact by contributing employer funds to those accounts.

Option 2: Contract with local child care providers to reserve guaranteed back-up slots and/or establish a reimbursement fund for employees to repay a friend or family member that step in to provide care.

PAID LEAVE & LEAVE SHARING

Offer paid parental and family leave for birth, adoption, fostering, or caregiving, and include a confidential, HR-administered PTO donation bank that allows employees to contribute unused time off to support coworkers who exhaust their leave. Paid leave helps ALICE workers balance work and caregiving without risking income or job security.

Policies in Action

Bernstein Shur offers 16 weeks of paid leave to all new parents regardless of gender. Time may be taken flexibly throughout the child's first year.

Androscoggin Bank has a PTO Bank where employees can donate to help others who need extra time off.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Offer at least partial paid leave, earned paid leave, or use paid-time-off banks.

Option 2: Offer 16 weeks of paid parental leave for all new parents (foster, adoption).

RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS

- Provide new employees with [Child Care Affordability Program paperwork](#) and suggest care options in your community that might meet their needs.
- Reach out to [United 4 Child Care](#) to see what partnerships might come together to create high-quality, affordable, flexible child care for your employees.
- Check out resources for employers: Maine Paid Family Leave [portal](#) and [FAQ for Employers](#), Bright Horizons [Employer's Guide for Backup Care](#), the [Child Care Affordability Program](#), [Child Care Choices ME](#), [A Place for Mom](#) and [Seniors Plus](#).
- Check out the [Child Care Toolkit for Employers](#) a Maine state agency and The Best Place for Working Parents® collaboration.

HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Supporting physical, mental, and emotional health → reducing burnout, absenteeism, and turnover

HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

Provide accessible health care options through salary-based premiums, high-performance networks, professional employer organizations, or a flexible broker. Employers can also offer contributions to Health Savings Accounts (HSA), employer matches, or fixed contributions to lower employee costs.

Policies in Action

J.S. McCarthy Packaging + Print (Augusta) pairs accessible health coverage with a comprehensive wellness program offering cash and PTO incentives for participation in preventive care, financial education, and interest-free emergency loans to reduce stress-related health impacts.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Reduce employee health care costs through salary-based premiums or wellness incentives.

Option 2: Invest in income-based premium support, lower deductibles, and no-cost supplemental plans.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Support employee well-being by offering Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and promoting mental health awareness, education, and stigma reduction. Use supervision practices that build trust, offer clear feedback, and support growth, especially for staff facing stress or trauma. Focus on coaching, not punishment, and include peer support, and cultural awareness.

Policies in Action

IDEXX (Westbrook) collaborates with [Make It OK](#) to reduce the stigma of mental illness in the workplace. It has also certified employees as Mental Health First Aiders within the organization.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Partner with an external EAP provider to offer counseling, referrals, and wellness resources.

Option 2: Develop an internal EAP team to provide direct support and coordinate mental health initiatives.

RECOVERY-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

Recovery-friendly workplaces foster a safe, non-stigmatizing culture, provide flexible return-to-work plans, and appointment accommodations, and connect employees to community resources—helping retain staff, reduce barriers, and promote a healthier, more inclusive workplace.

Policies in Action

Kennebunk Savings Bank has been named a Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) through the RFW initiative, partnering with community recovery efforts and training to support employees and families affected by substance use. For more info, contact: Liz.Torrance@kennebunksavings.com.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Use free regional recovery toolkits, train staff on stigma reduction, and supportive language, and implement flexible leave and return-to-work policies.

Option 2: Achieve official Recovery Friendly Workplace designation

RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS

- For crisis, call [988 Maine](#); For non-crisis, call [211 Maine](#) a free, confidential information and referral service that connects people of all ages across Maine to local services. [MaineWorks](#) is another available resource to help individuals create meaningful employment opportunities for people in recovery.
- MaineHealth advances disability inclusion both internally and externally through education and training provided by its [Vocational Services](#) team. The organization also supports eligible individuals with disabilities in obtaining and sustaining competitive employment.
- Consider trauma-Informed training programs like University of Maine System's [Trauma-Informed Certification](#), NAMI Maine's [The Way Work Should Be](#), and the Sweetser Training Institute's [Mental Health First Aid Training](#).

TRANSPORTATION & COMMUTING

Helping employees get to and from work → improving attendance, and punctuality

AFFORDABILITY SUPPORTS

Lower employees' out-of-pocket commuting costs through pre-tax commuter benefits, partial or full transit pass subsidies, free or reduced parking, or rideshare reimbursements to ensure reliable access for workers with variable schedules or limited transit options.

Policies in Action

Allagash Brewing reimburses employees for bus passes to commute to and from work, reducing transportation barriers and supporting reliable access for all staff, including those relying on public transit or facing variable schedules.

MaineHealth offers a [universal bus pass](#) for all MH and MMC employees.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Offer pre-tax commuter benefits, partial bus pass reimbursements, or promote existing programs like GO MAINE to connect employees to carpools and emergency ride home services.

Option 2: Subsidize public transit passes or provide employer-funded rideshare credits (e.g., Lyft).

ROUTE AND SCHEDULE ALIGNMENT

Work collectively and with [MBTA](#) to ensure public transportation routes and schedules align with shift times and work locations.

Policies in Action

General Dynamics Bath Iron Works expanded Lewiston-to-Bath service through Maine's Workforce Transportation Pilot, launching the Blue Line Express. It gained funding through the [Workforce Transportation Pilot Program](#).

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Join regional transportation coalitions or partner with local Transportation Management Associations to advocate for route adjustments and coordinated stops near worksites.

Option 2: Co-fund expanded bus routes, sponsor vanpools, or support workforce transportation pilots that connect high-need communities to job sites.

DIRECT SERVICE MODELS

Provide employer-run or employer-funded transportation including shuttles, vanpools, carpools, and connecting employees to free or reduced cost bicycle ownership and maintenance.

Resource Highlights

[GO MAINE](#) provides carpool/vanpool ridematching, emergency ride home benefits and rewards for green commutes.

Employers can also partner with [Gear Hub](#) to improve transportation access through discounted and free bicycles, employer-purchased loaner bikes (average \$350 per bike), and on-site repair clinics.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Coordinate internal carpool matching or designate preferred carpool parking to encourage shared commuting.

Option 2: Operate or co-sponsor employer shuttles or vanpools serving major employee population centers, especially for large worksites or rural locations.

RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS

- [GearHub](#) offers employees at or below the ALICE threshold 50% off bikes (up to \$200) or free bikes while supplies last. Gear Hub also offers Open Bench Time, community pop-ups, and employer-hosted repair clinics in Portland and Lewiston.
- [York County Community Action Corporation \(YCCAC\)](#) provides essential transportation services to rural and small community transit services in York County that connect workers to jobs and essential destinations.
- [Don't Despair Car Repair](#), a United Way program, provides assistance for car repairs in Franklin County, Livermore, or Livermore Falls, Maine.

SCHEDULING, TIME & PREDICTABILITY

Giving workers control and stability → increasing reliability, coverage, and morale

ADVANCE SCHEDULING

Providing advance, consistent schedules with minimal last-minute changes is especially important for ALICE workers, who often navigate tightly coordinated child care, transportation, medical appointments, and bill payments. Predictability reduces financial volatility and supports overall well-being—while employers see gains in retention, attendance, and productivity.

Policies in Action

Allagash Brewing implemented an advance notice practice for shift and schedule changes for shift changes after recognizing that ALICE workers—who often rely on single-car households or depend on the 10% second-shift wage differential—could not absorb sudden scheduling or income disruptions. By giving employees up to eight weeks if needed to plan for transportation, child care and financial adjustments, the brewery strengthened stability for ALICE workers. Considerations for child care and transportation needs of the team are also factored into scheduling.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Use shared calendars or scheduling boards to post schedules at least two weeks in advance and collaborate with employees on availability and preferences. Build basic cross-training so staff can cover shifts across roles.

Option 2: Deploy scheduling software or automation that incorporates employee availability and predicts stable staffing needs, formalize advance-notice policies, and create structured cross-training programs that deepen workforce flexibility.

REMOTE WORK

When work is flexible and affordable, ALICE employees can better maintain stability and manage the complex demands of daily life. Offering hybrid or fully remote work—where roles allow—reduces commuting costs, transportation challenges, and time pressures that disproportionately affect ALICE households. This flexibility also helps employees balance work, family, and caregiving responsibilities without compromising performance or reliability.

Policies in Action

MEMIC (Portland) offers flexible remote and hybrid work arrangements based on role and business needs. Employees partner with their manager to develop individual schedules and agreements about where and how work will be done. The organization prioritizes purposeful in-person time—such as collaboration, meetings, team building, and training.

Options for Implementation

Option 1: Identify roles suitable for remote work, offer flexible schedules, and allow occasional asynchronous work.

Option 2: Establish formal hybrid or remote work policies, provide technology and home-office support, implement asynchronous collaboration tools, and train managers to lead distributed teams effectively.

RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS

- The Maine Community College System is offering [Remote Work for ME](#) training for businesses, leaders, and individuals in the skills to establish and manage remote and hybrid teams, and how to be an effective, healthy, and productive remote employee. FMI: MCCSremotework@maineccc.edu
- Reference research showing the advantages of predictable scheduling: [Federal Reserve Bank of Boston](#), [Maine Beacon](#), and [Gap Inc.](#), which demonstrated through research that stable scheduling can boost productivity and sales.

CAREER GROWTH, TRAINING & MOBILITY

Helping employees build skills and advance → strengthening talent pipelines and reducing hiring costs

TUITION ADVANCEMENT & REIMBURSEMENT

Support employees' education and career growth by providing financial and logistical assistance for GEDs, vocational training, college courses, or professional certifications. Tuition reimbursement, learning stipends, and flexible scheduling reduce barriers for ALICE workers, boosting skills, retention, and long-term earning potential.

Policies in Action

Hannaford Supermarkets "Groceries to Grads" offers part- and full-time associates up to \$5,250 per year, plus partner tuition discounts at regional institutions.

MaineGeneral Health (Augusta) partnered with Augusta Adult & Community Education to provide paid English language training, flexible schedules, and supportive services for employees in entry-level and growth roles. The program has retained nearly all participants and enabled career advancement. *For more information contact: Greg Zimba Greg.Zimba@mainegeneral.org*

Options for Implementation:

Option 1: Partner with local adult education programs or community colleges to provide access and guidance and allow flexible time off for classes or study.

Option 2: Offer tuition assistance or learning stipends to cover courses, certifications, or degrees, paired with mentoring or career coaching for advancement planning. Partner with regional institutions to increase access and consider providing benefits up-front to maximize participation.

CAREER MENTORING

Offer an internal employee mentoring program for skill-building, cross training, and promotion within the company. Partner with schools for job shadowing and internships. Offer pathways for part-time workers to transition to full-time roles.

Policies in Action

MaineHealth peer support program is based on national models designed to help medical staff address career challenges and prevent or reduce medical staff distress and burnout.

SunLife offers a Career Connection Day that supports employees with resume building.

Options for Implementation:

Option 1: Assign an informal peer buddy and conduct simple check-ins to identify training or technology support needs. They share basic information about requesting accommodations and provide limited guidance on internal opportunities without formal programs.

Option 2: Offer formal buddy or mentoring programs, assess digital skills during onboarding, and provide targeted training or coaching. Ongoing mentoring includes support with internal job applications and advancement, paired with a well-documented and communicated ADA accommodation process.

RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS

- Become a Harold Alfond Center [Maine Workforce Development Compact \(MWDC\)](#) member to qualify for 50/50 matching funding, up to \$1200 annually, to put toward training expenses for a variety of approved programming.
- [Tuition.io](#) is another resource, a student loan repayment benefit platform to help employees manage and reduce their education debt.
- Employers can connect employees to free career guidance, financial coaching, on-site college courses, and customized training programs through [New Ventures Maine](#), [SMCC](#), [Maine Quality Centers](#), [O*NET Interest Profiler](#), [CSSP-B](#), and [WIOA-funded](#) Workforce Solutions.

WHERE TO START?

Conduct an ALICE SWOT analysis for your organization to highlight where to start.

Strengths (Internal Advantages)

Examples: strong supervisors, predictable scheduling, affordable health care, emergency assistance funds

Weaknesses (Internal Limitations)

Examples: limited benefits for part-time staff, inconsistent schedules

Opportunities (External Chances)

Examples: community childcare partnerships, transportation programs, grants for upskilling, remote work options

Threats (External Challenges)

Examples: rising cost of living, housing shortages, inflation, labor competition

This toolkit was developed as a partnership between United Way of Southern Maine and the ALICE Employer Advisory Council, with funding from Unum.

ALICE Employer Advisory Council Members

Celine Frueh, Allagash Brewing
Kendra Wheeler, Bangor Savings Bank
Bryony Roux, Dielectric
Mike Johnson, IDEXX
Shawna DellaMonica, Kennebunk Savings Bank
Lucia Stancioff, Ketcha Outdoors
Wendy Estabrook, L.L.Bean
Janice O'Rourke, L.L.Bean
Susan Gatti, MaineHealth
Michelle Allen*, MEMIC Group
Katie Jones, Nimble Group
Chris Hynes*, The Rhino Foundation
Amy Thompson, Sun Life
Brie Arnold, Systems Engineering
Sacre Bahati, United Way of Southern Maine
Katherine Doughty, Zachau Construction

*Council Co-Chair

Do you have **feedback on the Toolkit**, for example any missing policies or practices? Do you have an **example from your organization** that you would like to include? **Please offer your feedback [here](#).**

NOTES

Empty note-taking area on the left side of the page.

Empty note-taking area on the right side of the page.

RESOURCES & CONNECTIONS