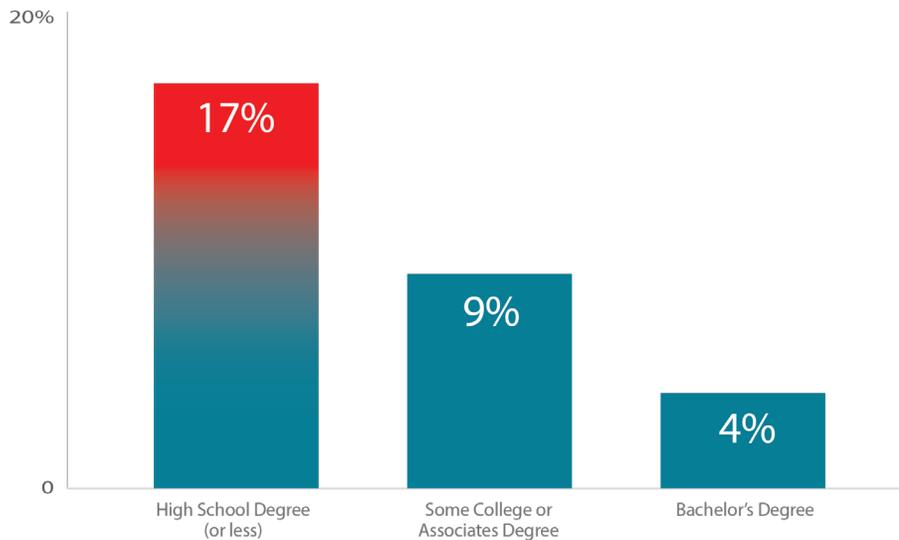


Reduce child poverty in Maine by increasing access to education and training for parents

Leveraging Investments in Families for Tomorrow (LIFT)

Odds of Living in Poverty Decrease Dramatically with Higher Education
Proportion of Maine adults (25 and older) with income below the federal poverty level in 2016.



LD 1774, An Act to Reduce Child Poverty by Leveraging Investments in Families for Tomorrow (LIFT) will create more opportunity and set Maine families and children up for success.

Every Maine child should have the chance to live a healthy and productive life. This not only sets them up for success, it also benefits Maine's workforce and our economy. That is the commitment that **LD 1774** makes to Maine families, our children, and our State.

We all want to provide the best lives possible for our children, but we don't all have the same access to living wages. Too many Maine families work hard but still struggle to afford the basics like housing, heat and food for their families.

This disadvantage can set children on very different paths for the rest of their lives. Experiences like hunger and homelessness disrupt development, educational success, and later earnings, too often leading to a lifetime of hardship.

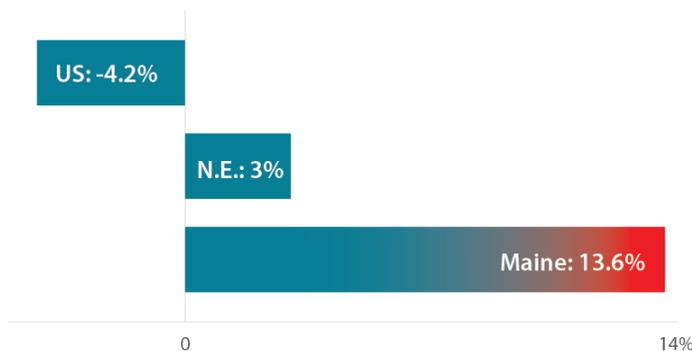
Sadly, Maine is heading in the wrong direction. Since 2011, the rate of children living in deep poverty decreased nationally by 4.2 percent, while it *increased* in Maine by 13.6 percent.

"I'm working too hard to be this poor."

- (Low-wage working parent in Maine, June 2017)

Maine's Heading in the Wrong Direction: Children Face Increasing Risk of Deep Poverty

Proportion of children in households below 50% federal poverty level, percentage change from 2011-2016



Top Chart: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

Bottom Chart: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2016 American Community Survey data analysis using 3-year averages as prepared by Maine Center for Economic Policy, November 2017.

How LIFT will improve the lives of Maine families and meet Maine's workforce needs:

- ✓ LIFT will leverage existing, but underutilized federal SNAP Employment and Training resources for educational institutions and community-based organizations so they can do the following:
 - » Increase access to programs that provide industry-recognized credentials and degrees to adult students receiving SNAP benefits;
 - » Provide wrap-around support services, such as child care and transportation, to help SNAP recipients succeed in education and training programs; and
 - » Provide coaches that will work one-on-one with needy students helping them to overcome obstacles that threaten their educational goals.
- ✓ LIFT will make Maine's successful, but underutilized, Parents as Scholars Program available to working parents with incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty level by doing the following:
 - » Open up access to the Parents as Scholars Program that will help low-wage working parents successfully achieve a post-secondary degree or credential by providing needed supports like child care and transportation; and
 - » Increases access to work study jobs for Parents as Scholars students.
 - » Increase access to campus-based coaches that will work one-on-one with needy students helping them overcome obstacles that threaten their educational goals.

LIFT will provide hard working parents with increased access to education, training and supports like child care and transportation that will increase their wages and their children's chances for a bright future.

LIFT will help re-build Maine's shrinking workforce.

Maine's businesses and economy are at risk because we are facing a workforce crisis. Education and job training professionals agree that to help solve this we must provide pathways to education for low-wage workers, while providing them with the supports like child care and transportation they cannot afford that are needed to succeed. That is exactly the kind of support that LD 1774 guarantees.

As Mainers, we believe in opportunity. We want our neighbors to have a chance for long-term financial stability with a brighter future. Education is a pathway out of poverty. Educational opportunity increases wages. Making that opportunity available to families struggling to make ends meet will benefit all of us.

Median **2016 Earnings** for Maine Workers by Education Level



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

"The lack of skilled workers facing Maine employers has become a crisis."

- legislative task force charged with finding ways to improve the state's labor pool. (Maine Things Considered November 2017).