



For Immediate Release

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**FocusMaine Receives Unique \$5.18 Million Grant
from Harold Alfond™ Foundation to Help Create Jobs**

Goal is to continue to add quality jobs in high-potential economic sectors

AUGUSTA, Maine (October 7, 2020)—FocusMaine, a private sector-led initiative to accelerate the creation of quality jobs in Maine, announced that it has received a multimillion-dollar, multi-year grant from the Harold Alfond™ Foundation to spur job growth across the state in sectors that hold tremendous economic potential: the life sciences, agriculture and aquaculture. The grant, totaling \$5.18M over three years, affirms the meaningful impact FocusMaine has already had since launching its programmatic work three years ago.

This grant is part of a broader \$500 million-dollar commitment to eight organizations across Maine that are positioned to transform the state's economic future. The bulk of the grants were awarded to higher education institutions that will strengthen and enhance the quality of talent produced in the state of Maine. The Harold Alfond Foundation's unique grant to FocusMaine to create jobs in high-potential sectors recognizes the critical importance that good jobs will play in retaining this talent and in attracting businesses and people to Maine, and draws an important link between FocusMaine's job growth efforts in globally competitive sectors and Maine's higher education community as they work together to strengthen Maine's economy.

These funds come at a pivotal time as the state charts its economic growth plan in the context of COVID-19. FocusMaine--in collaboration with high-capacity partners--provides mentoring and business support tools to help entrepreneurs in the food economy, expands markets for Maine food, attracts life science and aquaculture companies to the state, and helps retain talent in the state by strengthening the connections to Maine and to Maine employers for interns.

FocusMaine partners include the Bioscience Association of Maine, Coastal Enterprises, Inc, Educate Maine, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Live and Work in Maine, Maine & Co., Maine Aquaculture Association, and the Maine Center for Entrepreneurs.

Since its inception, FocusMaine and its partners have helped more than 100 companies, including 60 food and beverage companies. Together, they have built a food and beverage scale up effort; launched an attraction plan to bring more companies in the life sciences to Maine; created a set of planning and investor tools, along with an in-depth workforce study, to support Maine's burgeoning aquaculture sector, and connected more than 1,500 interns, working with 40 employers, with opportunities to learn about Maine and the diversity of opportunities in the state.

"This generous grant reaffirms FocusMaine's innovative and strategic approach to growing and sustaining good jobs," said Kimberly Hamilton, President of FocusMaine. Hamilton added, "When we selected these sectors we did not know just how critical they would become to Maine's economic future. This grant will help us strengthen Maine's competitiveness, support Maine employers and build the skills and talent needed to sustain economic and job growth. We deeply appreciate the Harold Alfond Foundation's support and continued confidence in FocusMaine's ability to achieve tangible results."

This is the second major grant the Harold Alfond Foundation has awarded to FocusMaine, the first a \$4.9 million matching grant in 2016 helped the organization transition from its research and planning phases into implementation of its 10-year plan.

According to Greg Powell, executive chairman of the Harold Alfond Foundation, "FocusMaine is a special example of outstanding teamwork and a project we couldn't resist funding. We originally invested in FocusMaine because we were convinced that its approach was strategic, visionary, and novel and that its thought and operational leadership was top-notch. We're delighted to invest in FocusMaine again because its approach to job creation works and is needed now more than ever to help power Maine's economic recovery."

"Thanks to this generous grant from the Harold Alfond Foundation, FocusMaine will continue to deliver on its promise to accelerate job growth in fast growing sectors in global markets where Maine has competitive advantages, and retain and attract a workforce for the future," said FocusMaine Co-Chair Andrea Cianchette Maker, Partner at Pierce Atwood, LLP. "At this time, when Maine needs multiple pandemic recovery efforts, FocusMaine will remain committed to our mission and the entrepreneurs in our sectors, to provide opportunity and prosperity for Maine families."

Michael Dubyak, FocusMaine Co-Chair and former CEO and Chairman of WEX, Inc., noted, "This grant is the perfect example of the kind of collaboration between Maine's private sector and new and existing educational institutions that will create a more resilient and prosperous state. New employment opportunities in the sectors chosen by FocusMaine must be matched with a skilled workforce prepared to step into these careers. We're working together with all the higher education grantees to create powerful synergies that will secure a stronger, brighter future for Maine and for Mainers.

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About FocusMaine:

FocusMaine is a private sector-led, business development initiative to accelerate the creation of quality jobs in Maine by investing in three of Maine's most globally competitive and high-growth fields--agriculture, aquaculture, and biopharmaceuticals—and by strengthening Maine's workforce capacity. FocusMaine partners with a number of Maine organizations to spur business growth within those sectors. Together with its partners, FocusMaine catalyzes sustainable growth and business confidence that energizes Maine's economy. For more information, visit www.focusmaine.org.