



## **Harold Alfond Foundation Invests \$500 Million in Maine and its People**

*Partners with Eight Institutions Transforming the State's Future*

**PORTAND, ME, October 6, 2020** – The Harold Alfond Foundation today announced more than \$500 million dollars of new grant investments in Maine people and institutions to help grow the state's workforce and economy and support quality health care. These new investments build on the Foundation's long-standing commitment to provide opportunity for the people of Maine to thrive from birth through career.

“Our state faces unprecedented challenges,” said Greg Powell, Chairman of the Harold Alfond Foundation. “In the face of these challenges, we still see a bright, prosperous future for the people of Maine. Today's grants are to vital, high-performing Maine institutions who will help build that future.”

Governor Janet Mills praised the investment. “I am grateful to the Harold Alfond Foundation for their partnership in making our long term goal of welcoming all innovators home to Maine a reality. By bringing together higher education institutions, research institutions, community organizations and business leaders, this initiative will fuel new opportunities for Maine people and diversify and expand our economy at a critical moment in our state's history.”

Receiving commitments ranging between \$5 million and \$240 million each, the grant recipients are innovators in education, skill-building, research and job creation. Supporting the goals of Maine's 10-year Economic Development Strategy, the selected institutions will help enhance the skills of the state workforce, promote innovation and entrepreneurial solutions, and strengthen the state's infrastructure.

The grant recipients are the University of Maine System, The Roux Institute at Northeastern University, the University of New England, Thomas College, FocusMaine, Colby College, Waterville Creates!, and The Jackson Laboratory:

- **The University of Maine System (UMS):** to support transformative change at Maine's public universities by launching a cutting edge, multi-university ‘College of Engineering, Computing, and Information Science;’ creating new programs supporting student retention and success; further developing the Maine Graduate and Professional Center, integrating law, business, and public and health policy; and enhancing athletic facilities at UMaine, home to the state's only Division I athletic program. In aggregate, the UMS grant represents a strategic, long-term effort to strengthen the capacity of Maine's public universities to meet the state's most pressing higher education, workforce and economic needs.

- **The Roux Institute at Northeastern University:** to support scholarships, graduate education programming, and research capabilities for Maine residents in the fields of AI, computer and data science, digital engineering, and the advanced life sciences and medicine. The grant is designed to spur innovation, build talent, and drive economic growth in Portland and the State of Maine.
- **The University of New England (UNE):** to support the establishment of the Institute for Interprofessional Education and Practice and construction of a new facility for the relocation of the UNE College of Osteopathic Medicine from Biddeford to Portland. UNE is Maine's largest health care educator and home to Maine's only medical school and Northern New England's only dental college. It is a national leader in team-based health care education with expertise in digital health and treating rural and aging populations. This project will unify medical students with students studying to be nurses, dentists, physician assistants, pharmacists, and other health care professionals on its Portland Campus. It will also enable the acceleration of high-growth undergraduate programs on the University's Biddeford campus. In so doing, the grant will help grow and strengthen Maine's workforce.
- **Thomas College:** to support the College's sustained excellence and growth through the launch of new academic programs in leading-edge fields, enhanced student retention programs, expanded affordability initiatives, and a deepening of academic and employer community partnerships through the Harold Alfond Institute for Business Innovation.
- **FocusMaine:** to expand statewide programmatic efforts to accelerate high-quality job growth in three of Maine's most globally competitive and high-growth fields—the life sciences, aquaculture, and agriculture—with a focus on skills and talent development.
- **Colby College:** to support the economic revitalization of Waterville through the coordinated redevelopment of multiple Main Street buildings and the construction of a state-of-the-art athletic and recreation center. The Foundation's support of Colby furthers a long-standing funding relationship: Harold Alfond made his first ever major gift in 1955 to Colby, to build the Alfond Ice Arena on the College's campus.
- **Waterville Creates!:** to support the organization's partnerships with Colby College in the construction of the Paul J. Schupf Center for the Arts on Main Street, as well as the operations of Waterville Creates!, the leader of arts and cultural programming in the city. This effort, along with those of Colby in Waterville more generally, is designed to help attract students and families to a vibrant Central Maine.
- **The Jackson Laboratory (JAX):** to further the scope of the Maine Cancer Genomics Initiative, increasing patient access to genomic therapies and clinical trials, and creating new digital tools to enable quick dissemination of learnings and genetic services in rural settings. The JAX grant, along with the Foundation's ongoing support of the MaineHealth Cancer Care Network, a program of MaineHealth and MaineGeneral Health, in partnership with JAX, puts Maine on the cutting edge of leading cancer research and patient care.

“The Harold Alfond Foundation strategically selected these programs, each of which expands access to higher education and builds a pipeline of talent in key areas well-poised for economic growth in Maine, such as biotech, engineering, healthcare and IT,” said Dana Connors, President of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. “Each of these institutions play a critical role in strengthening Maine’s future. The value of these investments and their impact on the success of Maine’s economy and people cannot be overstated.”

### **Investing in the Future Through Teamwork**

The key to Maine’s future is a high-quality education system. Much of the funding announced today is focused on higher education, and with institutions creating and delivering innovative academic programs to meet the state’s pressing workforce needs and opportunities.

“Our goal is to make long-lasting, positive change, not only by direct investment in institutions leading the way, but also by attracting continued and sustained support from government and business leaders in the state, the northeast corridor and across the country,” Powell commented. “That is absolutely critical to help Mainers continue to cope with the effects of the pandemic today and build their economy and communities for the future.”

“In true Harold Alfond fashion, these grants require teamwork and partnership between and among the grantee institutions and the people of Maine,” added Powell. “We are challenging our partners and state government to join us in this effort, to have ‘skin in the game’.” In this spirit, all eight grantees have committed to contributing their own funds or raising new funds from the community. “We know Maine will rise to the challenge,” said Powell.

### **Responding to the Challenge**

These investments help tackle the long-term challenges to economic prosperity that Maine faces, including a shrinking workforce that needs the skills required for today’s modern STEM-based economy. The coronavirus pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges and underscored the need for collaboration across the state.

The pandemic has given new significance to the work of all Foundation grantee institutions, each working to help Maine and its residents rebuild today and thrive in the future. In response to the crisis, the Harold Alfond Foundation joined other Maine funders in supporting short-term, emergency needs of the state’s charitable institutions on the frontlines, such as the Good Shephard Food Bank and Full Plates, Full Potential, among others. The Foundation also modified existing grant agreements to help grantees, like Jobs for Maine’s Graduates and the Alfond Youth and Community Center, deal with pandemic-related stress. Modifications included accelerating payments or reallocating grant funding to pressing needs.

### **Building on a Legacy**

Since its founding in 1950, the Harold Alfond Foundation has furthered the philanthropic legacy of Harold Alfond, the founder of Dexter Shoe Company and a longtime supporter of Maine’s communities and people. That legacy includes an emphasis on three broad giving areas still the focus today: education, healthcare, and youth and community development.

The Foundation's focus remains grounded in the values of its founder, said Powell. "Harold always promoted innovation and entrepreneurial thinking, often in the face of great risk," he added. "He started his first shoe company in the midst of World War II, always willing to venture out and start something new, even in unsettled and unpredictable times."

Throughout its 70 years of giving, the Foundation has sustained its founder's values and commitment to the people of Maine through several signature grant programs. These include the **Harold Alfond College Challenge** (now also known to Maine families as MyAlfondGrant), which awards a \$500 grant to every Maine resident baby to catalyze savings for post-secondary education; the **Alfond Leaders Student Debt Reduction Program**, which incentivizes high-quality STEM workers to live and work in Maine through the promise of student debt repayment (of 50% of an individual's student debt, up to \$60,000 per person); and the Waterville, Maine-based **Alfond Youth and Community Center**, the nation's only combined Boys and Girls Club and YMCA.

Major grants have also been awarded to the **Maine Community College System**, including, most recently, support of its initiative to design and deliver new short-term, non-credit programs to underemployed and unemployed adult learners; and **MaineGeneral Health**, including funding to construct the Alfond Center for Health and Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care in Augusta, Maine and the Thayer Center for Health in Waterville, Maine.

Historically, education grants have often supported athletic causes, in recognition of Harold Alfond's love of sports and appreciation for the positive values athletics instill in young people. Colby College and the University of Maine have been major recipients of these athletic grants and, consistent with this history, their athletic programs and facilities continue to be of significant interest to the Foundation today.

To learn more about the Harold Alfond Foundation, visit: <https://www.haroldalfondfoundation.org/>.

### **Related Upcoming Announcements from the Grant Recipients**

In the coming weeks, each grant recipient will be making detailed announcements regarding their Harold Alfond Foundation funded programs, including funding amounts, goals and more:

On October 7:

- FocusMaine, contact: Angie Helton, [angie@nemediassociates.com](mailto:angie@nemediassociates.com)
- University of Maine, contact: Dan Demeritt, [dan.demeritt@maine.edu](mailto:dan.demeritt@maine.edu)

On October 8:

- Jackson Labs, contact: Maggie Moore, [Maggie.moore@jax.org](mailto:Maggie.moore@jax.org)
- The Roux Institute, contact: Renata Nyul, [r.nyul@northeastern.org](mailto:r.nyul@northeastern.org)

The week of October 12<sup>th</sup>:

- University of New England on October 13, contact: Sarah Delage, [sdelage@une.edu](mailto:sdelage@une.edu)
- Thomas College on October 14, contact: [Mackenzie.rileyyoung@thomas.edu](mailto:Mackenzie.rileyyoung@thomas.edu)
- Colby College on October 15, contact: Ruth Jackson, [rjackson@colby.edu](mailto:rjackson@colby.edu)