

# Dirigo Hospitality 2025

A Plan to Rebuild Maine's Hospitality and Tourism Industry



HospitalityMaine Education Foundation  
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HospitalityMaine.com

## SUMMARY OVERVIEW

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The HospitalityMaine Education Foundation (HMEF) is a 501c3 non-profit organization established in 2019 through the merger of the two long standing education foundations of the Maine Innkeepers and Maine Restaurant Associations. It is affiliated with HospitalityMaine (HM), the state's leading trade association of restaurants, lodging establishments, and the businesses and organizations that support them.

Early in 2020, the HMEF board of directors approved a new set of bylaws establishing a comprehensive vision for the future of Maine's hospitality industry. The HMEF seeks to create, for the first time, "a hospitality education and career pathway" seamlessly linking high school, community college and university education systems in a coordinated approach alongside the industry. The pathway incorporates youth and adult job training programs, and offers employment opportunities for immigrants, incarcerated individuals, and other disadvantaged populations.

Hospitality is the industry of first choices and second chances! It can accommodate those seeking a rewarding career or as a steppingstone to another occupation. No other sector of Maine's economy offers the range of flexibility for both full and part-time jobs. Many successful business leaders began by working in hospitality because the skills gained are valuable and transferable to almost any other vocation.

## SUMMARY OVERVIEW

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### The Future of the Industry is at Risk

Maine's historic hospitality and tourism industry dates back to the early 1800s. The state's clean air and water, beautiful scenery, fresh local foods, and genuine customer service are the reasons visitors came then, and are same reasons they still do today. It has evolved over this time to be one of the state's biggest economic sectors and a core part of Maine's brand. With over \$11 billion in annual sales and employing 1 in every 7 residents, the industry produced its 11th straight record year of growth in 2019. In 2020, it declined over 30% which resulted in thousands of job losses and hundreds of business closures.

Today, Maine's hospitality industry is in crisis, and this is not based on a lack of customers and guests. In fact the surge in visitation to Maine in the summer of 2021 serves as a bell weather, underlining the demand for skilled employees that is not being met. There is also significant "margin compression" that is limiting profitability due to the rise in food costs, new equipment and labor. These and other issues are causing restaurants to limit hours and close on certain days due to staffing, and in some cases the inability to source food and supplies. Hotels are similarly impacted, often closing off rooms they cannot maintain. Without addressing these challenges head on, this reality will likely exist long into the future.

### The Solution

Clearly, the industry needs a dramatic change because the post-pandemic hospitality world will be far different than in the past. The future success

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## SUMMARY OVERVIEW

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of Maine's restaurants and hotels, and all the businesses that support or are supported by them, depends on a new, sustainable solution. The state's hospitality potential will not be achieved without a talent pipeline for businesses and a clear education and career pathway for employees.

This strategic plan seeks nothing less than a reinvention of hospitality education and workforce development in Maine. It establishes new vision and mission statements, while identifying the high-level priorities that will be needed to achieve them. The HMEF acknowledges that this is not a project but a long-term commitment requiring a broad partnership led by the hospitality industry, and incorporating public and private education organizations, foundations, and government agencies.

Maine is not likely to reach the employment levels of the past given the state's demographics and the continuing competition for employees with other economic sectors. It will have to do much more with fewer, but more skilled staff. The only way to achieve this is through a true public/private collaboration and a transformative approach to hospitality education and workforce development.

Given all these challenges Maine still has the unique prospect of being a global leader in the establishment of a new hospitality system – one that manages resources, creates economic opportunity, develops skilled workers and achieves economic success. On September 14, 2021 this plan was unanimously approved by the HospitalityMaine Education Foundation board of directors, signaling the start of its implementation.

## VISION

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The HospitalityMaine Education Foundation will establish a sustainable education and workforce development system to ensure the long-term strength of Maine's hospitality industry.



## MISSION

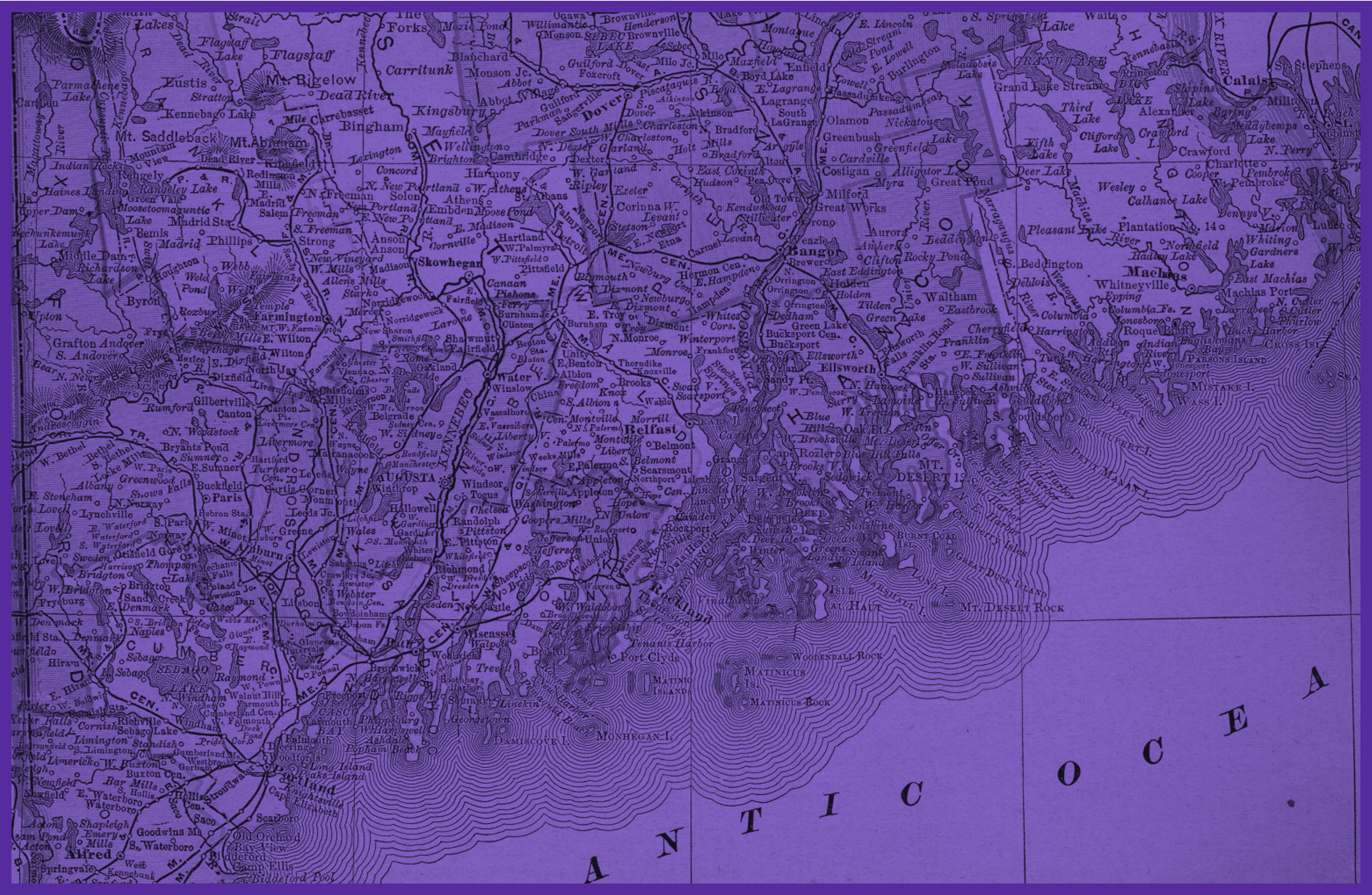
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We will provide the resources and coordination so that Maine's hospitality education and training programs are exceptional, and that they seamlessly develop employees, supervisors, managers and leaders with the right skills for the future.



## Dirigo Hospitality 2025

## PRIORITIES



# PRIORITIES

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## 1. Primary and Secondary Education

To introduce young people and families to the industry's pathways, and to facilitate hospitality courses and seasonal employment that prepare students for successful careers and further education.

## 2. Higher Education

To create advanced culinary and hospitality education programs in full partnership with the industry to achieve exceptional outcomes for students, communities, and businesses.

## 3. Job Training and Workforce Development

To coordinate with organizations outside the public education system and create outstanding opportunities for participants, while producing skilled hospitality employees for the industry.

## 4. Diversity and Disadvantaged Communities

To provide outreach and support of diversity and equity in the industry and offer training programs for opportunity youth, incarcerated individuals, immigrants, and other populations in need of a new start or a second chance.

## 5. Continuing Education

To offer comprehensive educational programs, seminars and events advancing business operations, strengthening management, managing natural resources, and improving customer services.

## 6. Research and Development

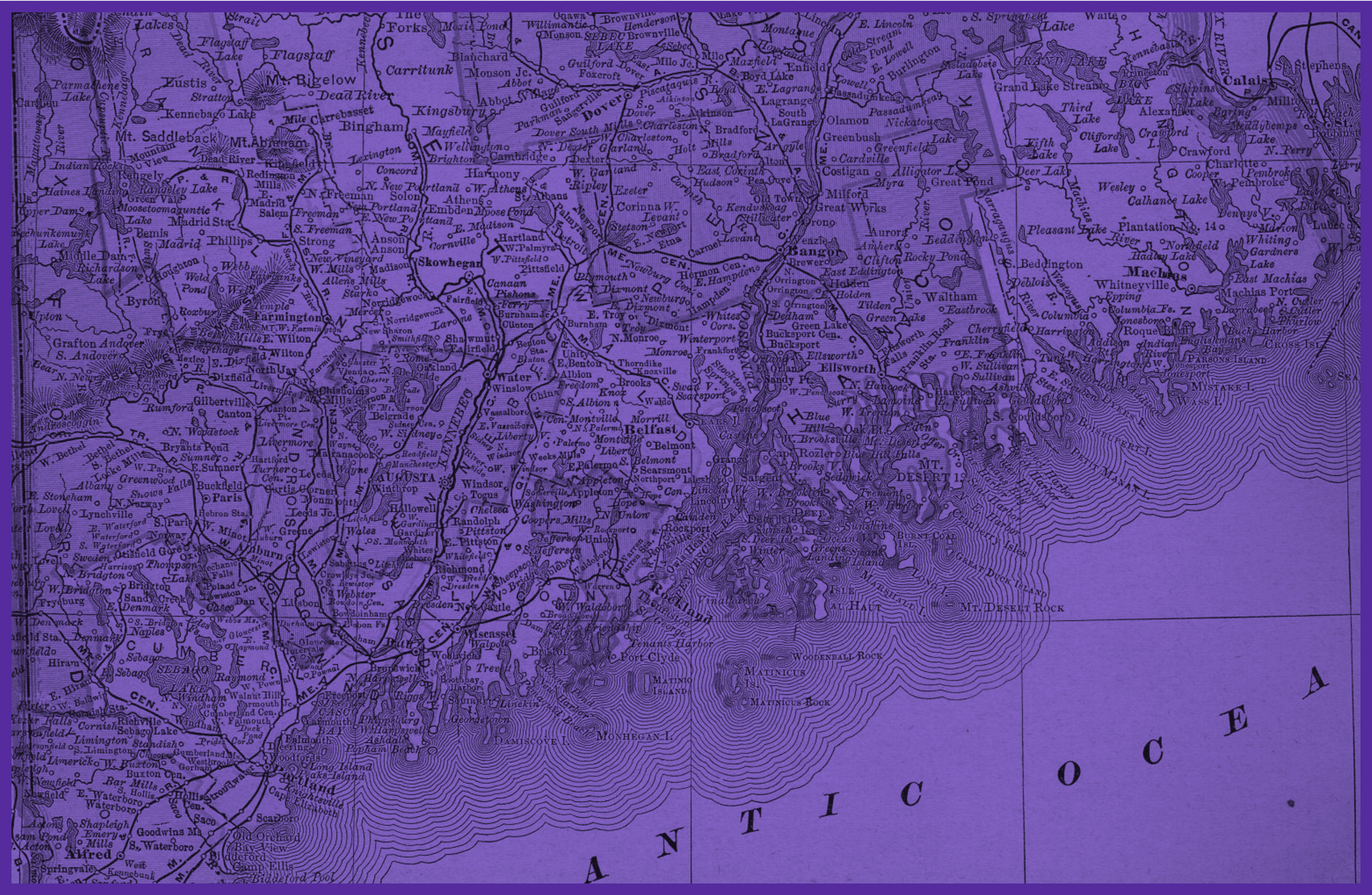
To expand Maine's hospitality knowledge by working with universities, foundations, government, and national organizations to provide meaningful information for the industry and the public.

## 7. A Strong Team with Financial Strength

Recruit and develop a well-qualified staff to execute the mission and seek funding to ensure financial viability now and into the future.



# Dirigo Hospitality 2025 GOALS





# GOALS

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## 1. Primary and Secondary Education

- Increase industry awareness with students and families.
- Improve culinary and hospitality courses in all high schools.
- Establish lasting relationships with education leaders and administrators.
- Encourage more young people to engage in seasonal and part-time work.

## 2. Higher Education

- Categorize and evaluate all courses and programs available.
- Link qualified high school courses and relevant work experience to specific college credits.
- Align programs among all Maine's community colleges.
- Support university hospitality and tourism degree programs.

## 3. Job Training and Workforce Development

- Establish relationships with key organizations.
- Standardize curriculum and certification requirements.
- Advance apprenticeships and other hybrid programs.
- Connect graduates with hiring businesses.

## 4. Diversity and Disadvantaged Communities

- Establish relationships with key organizations.
- Target specific programs for advancing women and people of color to their full potential.
- Expand correction system job training.
- Provide curriculum for youth programs.
- Support an “English for Hospitality” initiative.

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# GOALS

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## 5. Continuing Education

- Identify broad industry and staff needs.
- Establish partnerships with qualified educators.
- Target programs for employees, managers, and owners.
- Focus on preserving natural resources and implementing sustainable environment practices.
- Provide statewide accessibility.

## 6. Research and Development

- Become the leading source of industry data and key metrics.
- Identify skills, software, and automation needed for future industry success.
- Commission relevant reports and studies.
- Focus development statewide and all socioeconomic levels.

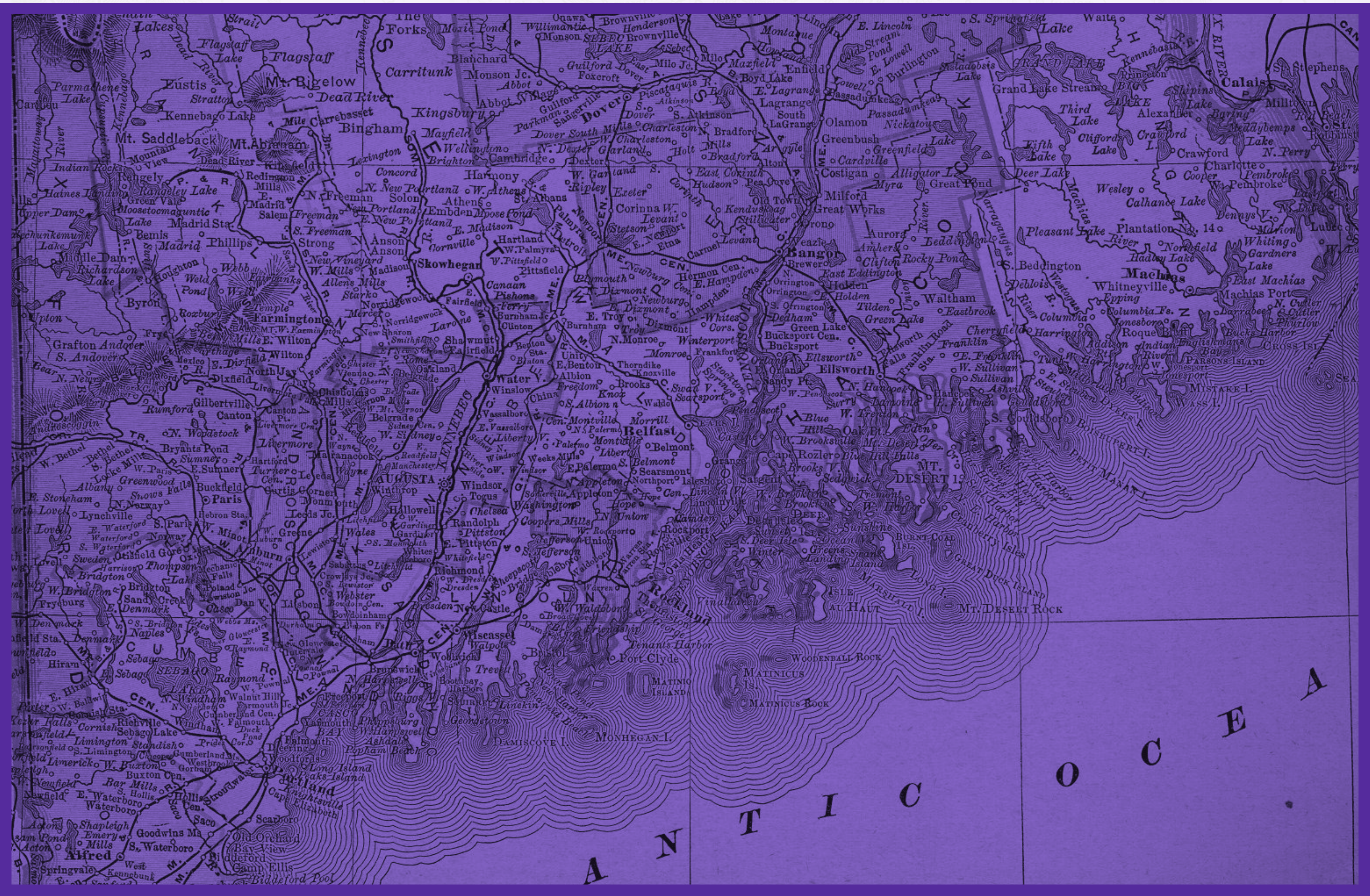
## 7. A Strong Team with Financial Strength

- Seek visionary staff and board leadership.
- Create job roles in line with the mission.
- Tighten board governance and clarify responsibilities.
- Scale staff and program growth to funding support.





# Dirigo Hospitality 2025 STRATEGIES



# STRATEGIES

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## 1. Primary and Secondary Education

- a. Schedule school visits and field trips for middle schoolers.
- b. Attend and exhibit at parent and student events.
- c. Create a comprehensive list of hospitality jobs and pay scales.
- d. Conduct workshops for high school guidance counselors.
- e. Provide materials, resources, and instructor training to support high school courses.
- f. Presentations to education leaders and administrators.
- g. Recruit and hire more summer and seasonal workers, and offer college credits for completing their term of employment.

## 2. Higher Education

- a. List and evaluate all college level courses and programs available statewide.
- b. Connect certified high school programs to advance placement.
- c. Recognize work experience in earning specific college credits.
- d. Apply the best community college hospitality programs and practices across the entire system.
- e. Develop “hybrid” degrees that combine classroom education with on-the-job competency training.
- f. Offer guidance and support to university hospitality and tourism degree programs.
- g. Align hiring businesses with career placement administrators.

## 3. Job Training and Workforce Development

- a. Establish relationships with JMG, Goodwill, Job Corps and other job and workforce development organizations.
- b. Standardize hospitality and culinary job training curriculum.
- c. Provide resources, instructor training and industry certification.
- d. Advance apprenticeship and paid internships.
- e. Guarantee graduates a job in the industry.
- f. Focus specific programs for women and people of color.

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# STRATEGIES

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## 4. Diversity and Disadvantaged Communities

- a. Identify the organizations to partner with on diversity and equity issues in the industry.
- b. Produce a list of organizations like YouthBuild, Long Creek, Portland Immigrant Welcome Center and others to engage and support.
- c. Provide a skills curriculum and ‘tool kit’ to recruit students.
- d. Standardize training within all organizations.
- e. Create an “English for Hospitality” initiative with Portland Adult Ed or SMCC.
- f. Advance programs with Maine’s youth and adult correction systems.

## 5. Continuing Education

- a. Survey the industry to establish education and skills priorities.
- b. Hire the best qualified instructors.
- c. Utilize online distribution as much as possible.
- d. Establish badging and stacked training leading to college credits.
- e. Outreach to independent operators, especially in rural regions.

## 6. Research and Development

- a. Be the leading source for hospitality industry data in Maine.
- b. Consistently report on a standard set of data and metrics.
- c. Continually seek ways to develop skills and technologies to advance Maine’s hospitality industry.
- d. Commission special reports and studies focused on the top topics and most relevant needs.
- e. Focus attention on lifting people at all socioeconomic levels.

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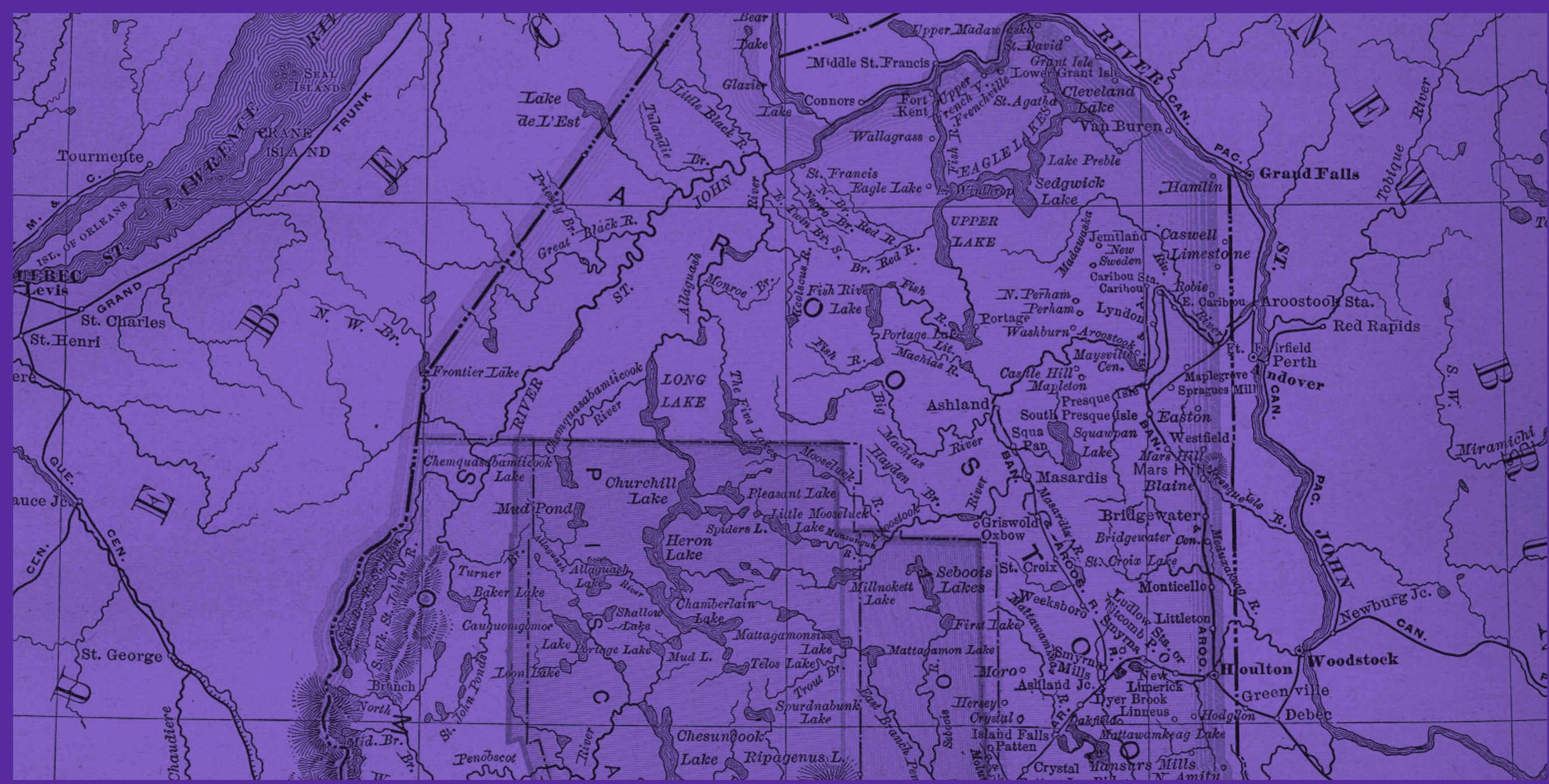
# STRATEGIES

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## A Strong Team with Financial Strength

- a. Fully develop the organization: its bylaws, governance and the relationship to HospitalityMaine and all its members.
- b. Hire the best and brightest staff possible.
- c. Recruit board members who have the expertise and drive to solve large industry challenges.
- d. Build job descriptions and positions to execute the strategies.
- e. Adopt a 5-year plan that scales up operations in line with successful grants and funding sources.





# HM HOSPITALITY MAINE

Education Foundation

