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## **New Report Highlights Hidden Talents of Maine's Immigrants and the Challenges with Professional Licensing – New Mainers Resource Center Releases a Series of Licensing Guides for Skilled Professionals**

The New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC), a Portland Adult Education program, has released a report highlighting the skills and education of Maine's foreign trained professionals and the challenges they face resuming their professions.

The report: *Foreign Trained Professionals: Maine's Hidden Talent Pool, Findings and Recommendations Regarding Certification and Licensure*, is based on an analysis of national and local occupational licensing policies, a review of professional licensing for several key professions in Maine, and NMRC's experience working with hundreds of foreign trained professionals each year and the challenges they face as they seek to re-start their careers in Maine.

"Licensing and credential evaluation are some of the most challenging aspects of a foreign trained professional's entry into the U.S. workforce," said NMRC Program Coordinator Sally Sutton.

"One reason for this is that professional licensing in the United States is a very decentralized system. No one organization is responsible, and each profession may have several different groups at the state and national level that make decisions about who can work in that profession and how they must demonstrate their qualifications," Sutton said.

The report highlights the level of experience and the high level of education that new Mainers bring with them to the state, a majority having a bachelors' degree and higher and experience in a range of economic sectors. The report's Findings and Recommendations cut across the decentralized licensing process with recommendations for a variety of stakeholders, including employers, licensing boards, educational institutions, policy makers, professional associations, workforce advisors and others, so that they can work to address the barriers that are relevant to their work.

In addition to the report, NMRC also is releasing a series of licensing guides covering the following professions: doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, lawyers and CPAs.

NMRC undertook this project to produce these guides as a way to provide information so that a foreign professional, such as a doctor or an engineer, can understand the licensing process to become a doctor or engineer in Maine, and so that they are better informed about their options. These guides should also be valuable tools for workforce and career advisors providing guidance and advice to new Mainers.

"We are fortunate in Maine to have an immigrant population that comes with education and skills and that can be a tremendous resource to us as a state as we try to address our workforce shortages," Sutton said. "Being able to understand and support these skilled professionals through a licensing process or in utilizing as much of their training as possible will benefit us all."

The full *Hidden Talent* report and links to the professional licensing guides can be found at: <https://nmrcmaine.org/>

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