

New England and Florida CNC Machinist and Welding Training Earmarks

The New England M.O.S.T. Program: A Proven Job Creation Initiative" 2005

From at least 2005 through the late 2000s, U.S. Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) jointly championed a recurring federal earmark of approximately \$3 million per cycle directed at CNC (Computer-Numerically Controlled) machinist workforce training, distributed regionally through New England Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) centers. The lead grantee was the **Maine Department of Economic Development**, which partnered with MEP centers across New England to deliver the training. The funding was channeled through the **U.S. Department of Labor** (DOL), typically through the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS) appropriations bill. This earmark evolved over successive fiscal years and by FY2010 appeared under the label "**The New England M.O.S.T. Program: A Proven Job Creation Initiative**" in Congressional earmark databases. The program's explicit goals were to upskill precision manufacturing workers and help small New England manufacturers compete for defense contracts.

The Original Earmark: FY2005/FY2006 (June 2005 Announcement)

On **June 27, 2005**, Senators Snowe and Collins jointly announced that the **Department of Labor had awarded nearly \$3 million** to Maine manufacturers through this mechanism. The press release — still archived at collins.senate.gov — provides the clearest public statement of what this earmark was and how it worked.^[^1]

Recipient and Structure

The primary grantee was the **Maine Department of Economic Development**, which partnered with **Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) centers in New England** to deliver the program. It was explicitly a **regional initiative**, not a Maine-only program — the MEP network structure meant that centers in other New England states (New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island) could participate in the delivery of training.^[^1]

Purpose and Goals

Per the official press release, the earmark had two explicit objectives:^[^1]

1. **Accelerated CNC training** — providing rapid, intensive instruction for Computer-Numerically Controlled (CNC) machine workers, the core skilled trade needed in precision manufacturing and defense subcontracting
2. **Bidding and production simplification** — equipping small companies with the tools to navigate the federal contracting bid process so they could successfully compete for government contracts

Congressional Rationale

Collins and Snowe explained the earmark in a joint statement: *"There are a number of highly skilled small manufacturing companies in Maine that are simply unable to compete with larger companies for contracting bids. This project will give smaller qualified companies the resources to better compete. Further, this project will allow individuals to advance, creating entry-level jobs and advanced training for current employees."*^[^1]

FY2010: The New England M.O.S.T. Program

Legistorm Database Entry

By **FY2010**, the earmark had evolved and was captured in the Legistorm congressional earmark database (Earmark #50161) under the title:[⁷]

"Workforce job opportunities: The New England M.O.S.T Program: A Proven Job Creation Initiative"

The "Proven Job Creation Initiative" language mirrors the multi-year track record that Collins and Snowe had built — by FY2010, the program had five or more years of outcomes data demonstrating job creation across New England. The "M.O.S.T." acronym connects the program to the broader MOST (Machinists / Manufacturing Operators / Skills Training) framework that was active in Maine's defense-industrial workforce ecosystem during this period.[⁸][⁷]

M.O.S.T. Program Organization

The organization **Mobile Outreach Skills Training** — which operates a workforce training program specifically for welders and precision manufacturing workers feeding Maine's defense industrial base — explicitly draws on a history of Congressional support and federal funding to train workers for Bath Iron Works, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, and Pratt & Whitney subcontractors. The organization published a white paper titled *"The Pending Crisis in America's Welding Labor Force"*, positioning itself as the solution to exactly the skills gap that Collins and Snowe had identified and funded in 2005 and repeatedly thereafter.[⁸]

FY2010 LHHS: Documented Collins Workforce Earmarks

In the enacted FY2010 LHHS appropriations (P.L. 111-117), Collins secured the following direct workforce earmarks for Maine in the omnibus conference report:[⁹]

Recipient	Purpose	Amount
Local Area 1 Workforce Investment Board , Caribou, ME (Aroostook & Washington Counties)	Workforce job opportunities	\$500,000
Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership , Augusta, ME	Workforce job opportunities	\$500,000
Jobs for Maine's Graduates, Inc. , Augusta, ME	Career development, at-risk youth	\$200,000
Coastal Enterprises, Inc. , Wiscasset, ME	Green Business Investment & Job Creation Initiative	\$250,000

The **Maine MEP line item at \$500,000** within the FY2010 conference report is a direct, documented successor to the broader ~\$3 million New England program — with Maine MEP itself listed as the direct grantee for workforce job opportunities. The distinction is that the earlier 2005 earmark funneled ~\$3 million through the Maine DECD to the full New England MEP network, while the FY2010 items are smaller, Maine-specific allocations.

Florida MEP FY2010 Earmark: Purpose: to deploy the proven Mobile Outreach Skills Training (M.O.S.T.) Program in Florida

The FY2010 earmark was sponsored by three Florida House members: **Rep. Ander Crenshaw (R-FL-4)**, **Rep. Ron Klein (D-FL-22)**, and **Rep. Suzanne Kosmas (D-FL-24)**, and its final enacted amount was **\$100,000** in the consolidated FY2010 omnibus. A larger version totaling approximately **\$2.4 million** for the **Florida Mfg Extension Partnership** appears in the FY2009 OpenSecrets earmark recipient database, indicating the program spanned multiple fiscal years.

FY2010 Earmark — Confirmed

On **December 9, 2009**, Rep. Ander Crenshaw entered an **Earmark Declaration** in the *Congressional Record* (Extensions of Remarks, p. E2933) formally disclosing the Florida MEP / M.O.S.T. appropriation. The declaration confirmed:[¹¹][¹²]

- **Recipient:** Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Celebration, FL
- **Purpose:** To deploy the proven **Mobile Outreach Skills Training (M.O.S.T.) program** in Florida
- **Program description:** A **three-phase** fast-track training initiative for manufacturing workers[¹²]

The Legistorm earmark database entry for this item (Earmark ID #50992) records:

- **Full title:** *"Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Celebration, FL, for the Florida mobile outreach skills training program"*
- **Sponsors:**
 - **Rep. Ander Crenshaw** (R-FL, 4th District — Jacksonville area)
 - **Rep. Ron Klein** (D-FL, 22nd District — Broward/Palm Beach)
 - **Rep. Suzanne Kosmas** (D-FL, 24th District — Brevard/Orange/Volusia)[²]

Crenshaw was a member of the **House Appropriations Committee** during the 111th Congress, serving alongside fellow Floridians **C.W. Bill Young (R-FL)** and **Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)**, which gave him leverage to secure Commerce-side earmarks. His House profile notes service on the Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade.[¹³][¹⁴]

FY2009 Earmark \$2,400,000

The **OpenSecrets 111th Congress earmark recipient database** lists "**Florida Mfg Extension Partnership**" as receiving **\$2,400,000** in earmarked federal funds for FY2009. This is the larger (~\$3 million) figure referenced in prior research. The full sponsor disclosure for FY2009 is available in the **FY2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act (H.R. 1105, P.L. 111-8)**, Division B — Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, signed into law on **March 11, 2009**. That omnibus was a pre-negotiated, pre-drafted measure introduced by Chairman David Obey (D-WI) on February 23, 2009.[¹⁴][³]

The CJS earmark tables for FY2009 identify individual project amounts and requesters, but the full disclosure of House member sponsors for each project is most completely captured in the **Taxpayers for Common Sense FY2009 House Earmark Database**, which lists totals by requesting member but requires line-item lookup for individual projects.[¹⁵]

Program Continuity Across Years

The M.O.S.T. earmark was not a one-time appropriation. Congressional Record evidence shows Crenshaw's declaration specifically calls the program "proven" — language consistent with it having already been deployed in prior fiscal years. Given that M.O.S.T. originated in 2006 and appears in the FY2009 OpenSecrets data as a \$2.4M line item, the program's Florida federal funding history likely spans at minimum **FY2007 through FY2010** under the CJS/NIST MEP appropriations account.[¹²][³][⁹]

Florida H1B DOL \$4,941,552 Award 2011

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded an [H-1B Technical Skills Training Grant](#) to Florida MEP (Manufacturing Extension Partnership). This initiative used funds generated by H-1B visa fees to provide specialized, advanced manufacturing training and job placements for unemployed or underemployed American workers and veterans.

The funds were specifically allocated for the Skilled American Workers Program, which provided targeted advanced manufacturing training. The grant focused on helping unemployed individuals and returning veterans secure sustainable employment in high-skill, high-demand manufacturing occupations.

The DOL's H-1B Technical Skills Training (TST) grants were designed to close the skills gap in high-growth industries that rely heavily on H-1B visas.

Key components of the 2011 Florida MEP program included:

- **Targeted Curriculum:** Florida MEP worked directly with local employer partners to customize the training curriculum to meet their exact hiring needs.
- **Guaranteed Placement:** Program participants who completed the training were given the opportunity to interview with industry partners prior to finishing the course to ensure a swift job placement.