

Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan
Chamber of Commerce

What We Stand For



Lewiston Auburn
METROPOLITAN
CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE

What We Stand For

Underlying Principle: The LA Metro Chamber of Commerce represents a broad coalition of businesses, organizations, and individuals in the region. The community seeks leadership from the Chamber on issues that have an impact on:

1. Business attraction, retention, and growth,
2. Quality of life and community image, defined by access to quality pre-k programs through post-high school programs resulting in credentials of value; desirable, safe, and affordable housing; healthcare, and recreation, and
3. A trained workforce with diverse skills.

The LA Metro Chamber of Commerce considers positions on local, state, or federal issues, laws, or proposed legislation.

Business Attraction, Retention, and Growth

Businesses seek to locate in states that provide a consistent regulatory environment of which ensures predictability for long-term planning and investments. The Chamber seeks legislation that creates a predictable regulatory environment and implements policy and changes to regulations in a reasonable manner and timeline.

Current Policy Topics

- PFAS regulation (Products Contain Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)
- Changes to eligibility and management of wages, salaries, and benefits,
- Dirigo business attraction program and Opportunity Zones, and
- Rate adjustments for publicly controlled utilities.

Businesses start, grow, and thrive with abundant and equitable infrastructure. The Chamber seeks to expand the availability and affordability of broadband, the predictability of energy expenses, investments that ensure quality service, and the consistent availability of energy. Furthermore, the Chamber wants to see improvement in the quality and availability of transportation infrastructure for people and goods.

Current Policy Topics

- Addition of passenger rail,
- Improvements to roads, rail, and bridges,
- Expansion of broadband,
- Rate regulations for electricity and natural gas, and
- Increases in the availability of renewable energy.

Quality of Life and Community Image

Businesses are attracted to and thrive in communities that offer a high quality of life for their leadership, employees, and customers. The Chamber desires policy that improves the quality of life for those who live, work, and play in Androscoggin County:

- **Increasing access and quality of education** from pre-k programs through post-high school programs resulting in credentials of value.
- **Increasing the inventory, availability, and affordability of all housing** types.
- **Improving the safety of housing**, specifically reducing lead poisoning hazards.
- **Improving the affordability, accessibility, and quality of healthcare**, including expanded access and infrastructure.
- **Promoting a positive, resilient image of the region**, its assets, and quality of life, including improved water quality ratings for the Androscoggin River, enhancement of recreational opportunities, and inclusive and welcoming programs to help potential, new, and existing residents thrive.
- **Ensuring safety for residents and businesses**, which maintains low levels of violent crime and addresses the impact of opioid use on quality of life.
- **Securing financial resources for our Androscoggin County's service centers*** so they can address important quality of life issues. This could include designated resources, as well as adaptations to the State of Maine's Municipal Revenue Sharing.

Current Policy Topics

- Addressing crime,
- Limiting expansion of food, lodging, and local taxes,
- Investments in education infrastructure leading to an educated workforce, and
- Incentives to create housing.

Trained Workforce with Diverse Skills

Businesses and the economy thrive when workforce needs are met and the workforce thrives. Our region and state require the in-migration of new residents to meet current and future workforce needs. We will need to thoughtfully consider the adoption of new technologies to augment workforce gaps, and the training needed to transition our current and future workforce's skills.

- **The Chamber will seek policies that innovate or incentivize increased access to quality and affordability of early childhood education** and childcare services.
- **The Chamber will support policies that invest in and incentivize training and education** that increase the number of credentials of value held by Androscoggin County residents and employees.
- **The Chamber will support the integration of foreign-born individuals** into the workforce, including increased access to English Language Learning programs, changes to the regulation of professional licensing, and improvements to the transfer of credentials.

Emergent Issues

The Chamber will carefully monitor and prioritize policies that are emergent in nature. These policy areas have had limited submitted policies for action by the legislature, and industry research and standards are often still being developed. The Chamber is committed to monitoring these emergent issues, educating ourselves and our members, and proceeding thoughtfully to areas of potential action.

- **Workforce Incentives and Programs** - As the workforce in Maine undergoes a significant shift in demographics and approach to doing business, new solutions, incentives, and regulations will be considered.
- **Regulating Automation, Biometric Data, and Artificial Intelligence** - As new developments in technology occur, discussions will arise regarding the use of biometrics and artificial intelligence in business, and automation's impacts on the workforce.
- **Gun Violence** - As our region recovers from Maine's first mass shooting event, new policies addressing gun violence and safety will be proposed.

* Maine Service Centers, from [Maine.gov](https://www.maine.gov): "The communities where we work, shop, obtain medical care or enjoy a cultural experience are what the Legislature has termed "service centers" or "regional service centers."