

## INFORMATION ABOUT OUR WINNER

**Winning Individual:** Margo Walsh

**Company Name:** USAWorks

**Service:** USAWorks offers temporary labor staffing for men and women facing real barriers to employment to help them move from dependence to independence; from tax burden to tax payer.

**Address:**

USAWorks

14 Pleasant Street

Portland, Maine 04101

**Place of Incorporation:** Wyoming (pending)

**Website:** <http://www.usaworks.us/>

**Phone:** (207) 650-9179

**Email:** [margo@maineworks.us](mailto:margo@maineworks.us)

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOST

**Host Organization:** The Women's Business Center at CEI: Southern Maine

**Address:** 2 Portland Fish Pier, Suite 201, Portland, ME 04101

**Point of Contact:** Sarah Guerette, [sguerette@ceimaine.org](mailto:sguerette@ceimaine.org), 207-535-2914

**# of submissions for our local InnovateHER competition:** 20

## TWO SENTENCE DESCRIPTION OF USAWORKS

USAWorks began with MaineWorks, LLC<sup>1</sup> in 2011, a temporary labor staffing company specializing in the field of industrial construction that seeks to dignify the temporary employment experience for vulnerable workers. By employing men and women recovering from substance abuse, from low socio-economic backgrounds and often with non-violent felony convictions, USAWorks improves the lives of its employees and their families.

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<sup>1</sup> a registered Disadvantaged Business Enterprise with the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT)

## Statement of Support

Financial stability and a sense of social inclusion and purpose are some of the most important factors in a positive and meaningful life for any woman or family. Yet many women and families remain marginalized because something in their past renders them “unemployable”, thus placing the family unit in economic hardship, and severely threatening the self-esteem and self-worth of the adult who is supposed to be the family’s provider.

USAWorks is a temporary staffing labor company that addresses these issues by providing opportunities for workers who are reentering the workforce and face real barriers to employment.

USAWorks is an emerging business that will provide the organizational structure for the successful replication of the existing MaineWorks model. MaineWorks, LLC has been established since 2011<sup>2</sup>. The USAWorks umbrella will allow targeted states to have their own *StateWorks* franchise. Most USAWorks employees will be in recovery from substance abuse: many will come from low socio-economic backgrounds and have previous non-violent felony convictions; a stopping point in most job applications.

In 2015 alone, MaineWorks employed over 150 people<sup>3</sup> who each worked more than 100 hours. Over 10% of these employees have been women: 80% of employees have at least one child. The impact of frequent parental unemployment or underemployment on these children is immeasurable; with the mother often bearing the brunt of the burden. Conversely, meaningful and well-paying employment has a huge positive impact on the whole family.

### **Has a measurable impact on the lives of women and families**

USAWorks seeks to dignify the temporary employment experience for vulnerable workers. These vulnerable workers include men and women recovering from drug or alcohol abuse, and workers with previous non-violent felony convictions.

Along with meaningful job placement, USAWorks employees participate in a comprehensive social needs evaluation through their *WorkWell* program so that they can be directed to appropriate social services within the community. This unique resource betters the lives of USAWorks employees to help them move from dependence to independence; from tax burden to tax payer.

The historical impact of MaineWorks has been significant, and will be multiplied by USAWorks. Of the 150 MaineWorks employees who worked more than 100 hours in 2015, 54 remain continually employed by MaineWorks, 25 were hired directly by MaineWorks clients, and 65 remain un-incarcerated and sober and have moved to other jobs or locations. Only 16 (10.6%) were re-incarcerated or relapsed; by far beating odds suggesting that 80% will again face addiction and 60% will re-offend.

There is a great video about MaineWorks at [www.usaworks.us](http://www.usaworks.us).

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<sup>2</sup> Other programs that currently exist or are in active development include: TennesseeWorks, ColoradoWorks, and ConnecticutWorks.

<sup>3</sup> Additional employees worked less hours. Approximately 600 individuals have passed through/been paid by Maine Works since 2011.

### **Has the potential for commercialization**

USAWorks intends to support the replication of MaineWorks in states that are conducive to the model.

As such, USAWorks will serve as the umbrella organization for the state ‘franchises’, which will provide a fee to USAWorks of 2% of the annual gross State revenue. MaineWorks revenue in 2015 thus far has been \$1.6 M, solely from projects in Maine and New Hampshire. This is a 640% increase from initial year (2011) revenues of \$250,000. Expansion plans are currently underway in Tennessee, Colorado, and Connecticut. Conservative projected contribution from the state programs for 2016 is \$50,000 (based on \$2.5 M in revenue at the state programs).

The MaineWorks model is receiving national recognition<sup>4</sup> for its innovative approach to dignifying the experience of temporary employment for workers from vulnerable backgrounds. It is a revolutionary for-profit (and profitable) answer to a pressing societal issue.

### **Fills a need in the marketplace**

USAWorks simultaneously fulfills two market needs. The first is by providing multi-skilled, quality, insured, reliable, immediate short-term labor to clients within the industrial construction industry. MaineWorks is a registered [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise](#) in both Maine and New Hampshire [DOT], and USAWorks will apply for this same designation in new States. Many contractors struggle to find reliable and willing labor. Due to the high degree of supervision that USAWorks dedicates to each of its employees, and its thorough interview and follow-on process, USAWorks employees will gain a very positive reputation (as has happened at MaineWorks)

Secondly, USAWorks offers an opportunity to those often considered unemployable. A spike in substance abuse related to opiate addiction has resulted in a growing, increasingly visible group of young, able bodied people who are willing to work as part of their recovery. Reduced sentences are creating a glut of formerly incarcerated individuals who need employment. USAWorks offers the opportunity to let a person’s work speak for itself. Many workers, supported USAWorks and its *WorkWell* program, as well as by their peers, find a path back to economic self sufficiency.

### **Conclusion**

USAWorks employees are thankful for the opportunity to work and to make a better life for themselves and for their families. Their employers benefit from a reliable, quality work force. This “win win” scenario presents a tangible benefit for women and families while being scalable, and filling a market need felt by both vulnerable workers and industrial construction companies. At our InnovateHER competition we greatly admired founder Margo Walsh’s grit and determination, and admire the tangible impact and opportunity presented by USAWorks.



Sarah Guerette

Center Director, The Women’s Business Center at CEI: Southern Maine, InnovateHER POC

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.king.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/king-congratulates-maineworks-margo-walsh-on-national-entrepreneurial-award>

## **USAWorks Business Plan**

**Who:** USAWorks is based on the model of MaineWorks, LLC, a temporary employment agency specializing in industrial construction that provides supportive employment services for people in recovery from substance abuse and re-entry from jail and prison. MaineWorks was founded and is owned and operated by Margo Walsh and is a registered Disadvantaged Business Enterprise with the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT).

USAWorks Co-founders Margo Walsh and Elaine Carney are in the process of incorporating USAWorks to provide an organizational structure for the replication of the successful MaineWorks model. In August 2015 Margo Walsh and R. Brad Martin incorporated TennesseeWorks. ColoradoWorks is now in the planning stages, as well as potential programs in Connecticut and New York in 2016.

**What:** In addition to providing meaningful jobs, USAWorks helps employees acclimate to life during re-entry and recovery by referring them to health care options, appropriate housing and family services. Flexible work schedules enable employees to comply with the rigors of probation. Many of USAWorks employees will be hired directly by clients once they have had a chance to establish themselves at work and in the community. Each success represents an individual moving from tax burden to tax payer.

**When/Where:** In 2000, after a fifteen-year career as a recruiter for Goldman Sachs, Hewitt Associates and Lehman Brothers, Margo Walsh relocated to Portland, Maine to care for her aging parents and to raise her two young sons in Maine. Margo volunteered weekly for seven years at the Milestone Foundation, a street drug and alcohol wet shelter in Portland. She also volunteered at the Cumberland County Jail Community Corrections Center to help inmates as they were being let out of prison, the most stressful time of their incarceration. Employment options for felons are often limited to fast food, fish processing and 'under the table' jobs. Most felons lie about their felony status, leading to more shame, guilt and fear of being 'found out'.

**Why:** In the spring of 2010 Margo attended a Cumberland County Chamber of Commerce function where the attorney F. Lee Bailey was presenting about the challenges of felon employment. Frustrated that the hiring outlook was dismal for this population, she started a business that would employ felons. Margo started MaineWorks in 2011 with enough money (borrowed from her sisters) to cover workers' compensation and a few weeks payroll. She developed a client base by knocking on construction site trailer doors and hired workers directly out of the county jail. Every morning Margo would drive the inmates to the worksites and then back to jail at the end of the day. At the same time she started working with sober houses and probation officers to find more potential employees, the employee base and clients grew through word of mouth.

**How:** USAWorks helps employees navigate health care, financial literacy, housing, counseling services and refers them to appropriate family resources.

To give a sense of historical success:

as of November 2015, an evaluation of the MaineWorks employee base showed that out of 150 recently incarcerated and/or in recovery workers (working at least 80 hours/2 weeks), 54 were continually employed by MaineWorks, 25 converted to full-time employment with clients, 65 remain un-incarcerated or have found other employment and six have been rearrested, which is the inverse of the re-incarceration rate for men without jobs.

MaineWorks revenue numbers have doubled each year since 2011, with \$1.6 million expected gross revenue in 2015. Approximately 600 individuals have passed through/been paid by MaineWorks since 2011. The conservative profit margin is \$1.25 per hour worked.

In order to remain focused on excellent client service MaineWorks maintains relationships with business owners and affiliate with the organizations within the state of Maine that support the construction industry, including Associated General Contractors, Department of Transportation, Maine Better Roads and Bridges. Margo was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the National Association of Women in Construction. Margo routinely holds information sessions with organizations related to criminal justice including Maine Pretrial Services, Maine State and Federal Probation and the Department of Corrections. She meets with sober house managers and provides information to the residences and she works with Prison Career Centers and Prison Education services to educate people about work related issues. MaineWorks partners with related non-profit organizations including Catholic Charities of Maine, Women Unlimited, The United Way of Greater Portland, Goodwill Services, Preble Street Resource Center and The Portland Recovery Community Center.

USAWorks intends to support the replication of MaineWorks in states that are conducive to the model. USAWorks is a growing startup business facing typical challenges related to infrastructure development and related capital requirements. Every aspect of the business is growing and in order to assimilate that growth USAWorks seeks investment and strategic partners to support these critical areas:

1. Develop a corporate structure to replicate the MaineWorks business model
2. Convene a USAWorks Board of Directors, with Margo Walsh as Board President
3. Research and develop programs in additional states
4. Access startup funding. Initial investment of \$3.5 M then \$200,000 per year for five years
5. Build a staff to manage USAWorks
  - a. CEO - Elaine Carney
  - b. COO - TBD
  - c. Communications Director - TBD
1. Identify influential champions willing to support the development of and promote a program in their respective state and or geographic region.

- a. These individuals should have access to client prospects in the state (heavy construction, road and bridge projects).
  - b. These individuals should also have or help build access to mission relevant leaders who work with/in:
    - i. Recovery Community
    - ii. Re-entry Community
    - iii. Department of Corrections
    - iv. Department of Labor
    - v. Justice Reform
    - vi. Social Service organizations
    - vii. Crisis Intervention Support organizations
6. Gain political support at the highest level of State Government, Public-Private Partnerships, etc.
  7. Establish office space, determine best corporate location
  8. Invest in strategic marketing and branding

In order to replicate the MaineWorks model without burdening the individual state budgets, USAWorks will serve as the umbrella organization for the state ‘franchises’. State programs will provide a ‘franchise’ fee to USAWorks of 2% of the annual gross State revenue. Conservative projected contribution for 2016 is \$50,000 from the state programs. MaineWorks is anticipated to have \$2 M in revenue in 2016.

In addition to supporting job creation, re-entry and recovery, USAWorks is committed to advocacy and public policy for felon related issues, such as access to housing, health care and reclassifying felonies.

USAWorks will focus on metropolitan areas where there are abundant heavy construction, bridge and road work sites, like in Denver, Colorado. MaineWorks’ client partners are dedicated companies that have benefitted from the high quality laborers via MaineWorks. Additional analysis of the temporary labor market will need to be conducted in order to expand the geographic scope and further replicate the MaineWorks model.

## Founder Resume

### Margo C. Walsh

12 Birch Drive - Falmouth, ME 04105 - (207) 650-9179 - margowalsh@maineworks.us

### Professional History

**TennesseeWorks, LLC**, Memphis, TN (September, 2015 – present)

#### **51% Owner, Founder**

[www.tenneseeworks.us](http://www.tenneseeworks.us)

Memphis based company specializing in employment for people facing obstacles to employment related to Reentry from prison and Recovery from substance abuse. Client focus in the industrial construction industry.

Member Company Tennessee Associated General Contractors

**MaineWorks, LLC**, Portland, ME (2011 – present)

[www.maineworks.us](http://www.maineworks.us)

**Owner/ Founder** a temporary employment agency specializing in felon reentry through work. Responsible for all aspects of business including: financial, payroll, recruiting, hiring, employee relations. Provide assistance to recently released individuals facing myriad complex life issues related to probation, sobriety, living arrangements, health concerns, (especially mental health issues related to substance abuse). Manage all business development, client relationships, conduct daily dispatch of several employees at multiple job sites, transport workers to job sites.

- Clients include: industrial construction and excavation companies, road and bridge construction, landscaping, warehouses and boatyards.
- Collaborate with Probation, Cumberland County Jail, Maine Correctional Center, Serenity House, Federal Probation and other support agencies in order to recruit with discretion.
- Original company, Maine Day Labor, was a 50/50 partnership S-Corp, in March of 2011 partnership was dissolved, MaineWorks LLC, was established, wholly owned and operated by Margo Walsh.

#### **Our near term objectives include:**

To expand the client and employee base, establish synergistic relations between DOC and DOT in order to provide more immediate work opportunities (from tax burden to tax payer) for individuals seeking meaningful work as part of their reentry plan.

To create a company of felons run by people with felon status, and to advocate for reclassification of felon status so that employers cannot unilaterally discriminate against all felons.

**Foreside Fitness and Tennis** Falmouth, Maine (2008- 2011)

Assistant General Manager, responsibilities for opening this full service health club included all Human Resources Functions. Personal trainer and Group Exercise Instructor with emphasis in youth and senior fitness.

**Health Coaches** Portland, Maine (2007- 2008)

Corporate Wellness Director, worked to develop relationships with local employers to coordinate all of their internal functions related to wellness programming including exercise, nutrition and stress management and smoking cessation.

**Avalon Consulting Group** (1998-2005)

Independent consultant specializing in sourcing and developing senior level candidates in the areas of corporate finance, investment banking and management consulting. Consult on myriad issues related to talent management and development, plan and deliver specific retention strategies for all employees with special emphasis on valuing employee strengths and deploying individuals in areas that maximize their capabilities.

**Clients have included:**

- **McKinsey and Company, New York NY**  
Sourced senior candidates for the development of a new Financial Services group.
- **Pitney Bowes, Stamford, CT**  
Reported directly to CFO developing a complete MBA recruitment program for the Financial Management Development Team with emphasis on assimilating these new hires to the work force.
- **Lehman Brothers, New York NY**  
Managed division wide recruitment cost containment initiative for the Investment Banking Division, worked with senior partners to network within the investment banking arena.

**Hewitt Associates**, Norwalk, CT (1990 - 1998)

Senior Human Resources Consultant

Initial assignment was to establish a vast college recruiting initiative to fuel explosive growth expectations from 40 to 500 professionals within eight years in the Eastern Region. Developed protocol for assimilating and managing all new hires including training and orientation, developed business acumen training program called Business Basics. Planned and participated in all 360 performance evaluations, spearheaded firm wide diversity recruitment and diversity sensitivity training.

**Goldman Sachs & CO**, New York, NY September (1987 - 1990)

Investment Banking Department College and MBA recruiter, member of Round Table on Diversity.

**Bankers Trust Company**, New York, NY (1986 - 1987)

College recruiting staff, arranged schedules and functions for recruiting, researched corporate minority recruiting practices within the banking industry.

**EDUCATION**

BA, Wheaton College, Major: Psychology, Norton, MA 1985 (semester early)



Waynflete School, Portland ME 1982

**Board Membership:** National Association of Women in Construction, Maine Chapter

**Founding Member:** Maine Reentry Center for Formerly Incarcerated People  
Currently seeking 501c3 status in Maine