

Coastal Operators Group (COG) Meeting

Minutes

October 26, 2022

3:00 – 4:00 PM

Subject	Comments/Details	Action Item(s)
Welcome	In attendance: Amy Geren (OSO), Jillian Sample (CCWI), Jeff Martinelli (Workforce Solutions), Rene Smith (Brunswick Career Center), Rob Klaiber (Greater Portland and Springvale Career Centers), Kim Desso (Maine DOL VR), Mike Robinson (Workforce Solutions) Susan LeClair (Hinkley & Rockland Career Centers), Stephanie Haskins (Adult Ed), Paulette Bonneau (Adult Ed), David Watts (Adult Ed)	
Review 9/28 Meeting Minutes	No edits suggested.	
<i>Finalize the committee mission statement</i>	<p>Rob’s suggestion regarding the dual focus on job-seekers and businesses was added to the draft and highlighted for review. The final mission statement for the group was approved, as follows:</p> <p><i>The Coastal Operators Group (COG) is a committee of the four WIOA-required entities that are in a position to ensure that the initial triage of job-seekers and service provision to employers are consistently conducted by knowledgeable staff. The goal of the COG is to strengthen integration efforts and communication channels between regional WIOA partner staff by increasing opportunities to share best practices and relevant challenges, and to improve the systems in which we work.</i></p>	
<i>Hear Updates and potential challenges from program partners</i>	<p>1. Programmatic updates/initiatives that you want other partners to be aware of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Watts shared about a new grant that is coming online. The money coming in after WFS grants have been used, and is for creating English language education, healthcare, manufacturing training; it will be in conjunction with employers, on site. It will be rolling out after a coordinator is hired. David is the point contact. • Rockland career center is collaboration with the Maine State Prison on work ready programs at prisons; partners are currently involved, and they appreciate the opportunity to be involved. • Rob added that in York they have a connection with prerelease and they are looking to creating programming. They are doing lot of events in the community – Westbrook, YCCC (not as well attended). Next month – 1st Wednesday of the month at the career center, and at outlets in Kittery {November 4th}. 	

- Rene notified that they will be holding a career fair at college in Brunswick on November 10th 1:00 – 3:00 PM. The center now has two staff due to increased demand.
- WFS has been keeping busy with the health care and dislocated worker grants. Mike thanked Rob for coordinating an interview room at the Portland career center on Wednesday beginning next week; career advisors will rotate so someone will be there each week.
- Kim noted that October is national disability awareness month. They have been doing presentations – Windmills training. There will be a history presentation on Friday 10/28 at 1:00 PM, and Kim shared link so that members of this group may attend if interested:

<https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/81537165745?pwd=cWRWZjlldGZnYVBXRHRmExZ3F4QT09>

Meeting ID: 815 3716 5745

Passcode: 04573875

1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

There is a VR staff member at WFS on Wednesday afternoons. They have done some research on COVID adaptation and have heard that 99% of participants say communication skills improved during this time.

- Jeff updated that the opioid grant will be concluding on December 31st – extended to include dental and rent relief. Numbers continue to move forward for enrollments. They have been getting emails and calls from people throughout the state who want to be involved. The youth grant is moving along well – farm program ‘Go to Grow’, launched last spring. David noted that in the Midcoast, it seems like there has been an uptick in organic farms in Knox and Waldo Counties – is there an opportunity to bring program out further? G2G provides farm sites and hands-on training. Merry Meeting partner does an evaluation to assess aptitude for farming, and they screen individuals for WFS (paid work experience).
 - Stephanie said there have been a lot of director changes within Adult Ed., which has resulted in transformation within the org. Their small programs have been needing to adapt to accommodate hotels hosting new Mainers, making very large programs suddenly. Their programs are focused on health care, Northern Light Health – learn while you earn opportunity. Working out the kinks – good for younger students and adults, although cumbersome.
 - Paulette said that York County has received people moving to the area into a hotel in Saco, specifically – Biddeford Adult Ed has been assisting with English Language classes. People are waiting for work time limit, but are eager to work, and are doing well with classes and training. She notes that they are in pretty good shape with stable Adult Ed leadership.
2. Biggest challenge of the month
- So much to do, so little time
 - Light traffic, so staff can get frustrated since they are not offering as much support as they could.
 - Doing new stuff is taking a lot of energy and trying to stay positive to not fall short.
 - Hiring staff – hard to do extra without needed staff.
 - Bandwidth
 - Staffing: everyone getting COVID

<p><i>Have draft goals for developing at the next meeting</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David mentioned starting to talk about the idea of student assessments and figuring that out. It's a requirement, and funding needs to go to people with low skills, i.e., recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. He would like to assure we are helping each other get people where they need to be. Adult Ed would like to develop a desk aid like Workforce Solutions has and shares with the group. This group has the strength to figure these things out. An initial assessment is supposed to include CASAS. As the primary Title II provider of education for basic skills, it makes sense for Adult Education to provide that service - we do it every day throughout the state. Our staff is educators who are trained to interpret the reports generated from the CASAS system. And referrals are made to Adult Education for clients who test as basic skills deficient. This is low-hanging fruit when it comes to partnering in the One-Stop Center between Title I and Title II. We just haven't gotten there yet because we haven't defined the process among all of the partners. The determination of "basic skills deficient" depends upon a client's goal. A high school diploma does not = have the basic skills required for certain jobs. Doing the testing, then presenting that information to a client, are great ways for Adult Education to collaborate in the One-Stop Center and help streamline the referral process to a client's home Adult Education center, which would help eliminate duplication of services during the Initial Assessment phase. Amy is creating draft desk aids, based on information in the MOU. The intention is to share with partners for edits and make them available for cross-training opportunities between partners. 	<p>Amy will look into what other states are doing for reference.</p>
<p>Next steps and holiday weeks meeting schedule & format</p>	<p>The next two meetings fall close to national holidays (Thanksgiving and Christmas). Amy asked for availability those weeks or consensus on adjusting the schedule. The group agreed to shift both meetings one week early.</p> <p>What is the level of comfort for resuming in-person meetings?</p>	
<p>Adjourn</p>		<p>3:47 PM</p>

Next meeting: 11/16 @ 3:00 PM