

# Coastal Operators Group (COG) Meeting

## Minutes

October 25, 2023

3:00 – 4:00 PM

Agenda Item	Notes	Next Steps
Welcome and Review 9/27 Meeting Minutes	In attendance: Amy Geren (CCWI/USM); David Watts (Adult Education); Jeff Martinelli (Workforce Solutions); Susan LeClair (MDOL Rockland CareerCenter); Kim Desso (MDOL Voc Rehab); Rob Klaiber (MDOL Portland/Springvale CareerCenter) ; Krista Campbell (MDOL Portland CareerCenter); Mike Robinson (Workforce Solutions); Rene Smith (MDOL Brunswick CareerCenter)	
Roux Pitch Competition Ideas	<p>Amy shared details of the Roux Institute’s pitch competition from 10/20 – 10/21.</p> <p>Winning pitches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First place (\$2000 cash prize) - <i>Innovative Residency Programming</i></li> </ul> <p>This idea is based on the challenge/opportunity of many new Mainers arriving in Maine with advanced skills and degrees that do not align within their careers here in the U.S., resulting in many professionals being underemployed and not filling in-demand jobs. To maximize new Mainer retention, Innovative Residency Programming is a cohort model that works with large institutions initially - i.e., finance, medical, advanced manufacturing - to develop career pathways within these institutions that lead to natural career advancement within the same institution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second place (\$1000 cash prize) - <i>Aspire ME</i>.</li> </ul> <p>This idea is based on job-seekers' uncertainty in knowing what kind of job is right for them within the local job market. It involves developing an app that makes connections between jobs and job-seekers based on business job availability, shared values, and local geography. The aspiration is to fill the local job market by connecting local interest and values with the careers available via a visually engaging platform that can compete with social apps.</p> <p>Other pitches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A platform for employees to find alternative routes to work as a solution to transportation challenges in the state;</li> <li>• An app that leverages community data with AI technology to map skills and gaps;</li> <li>• Using AI to map career goals and skills to curb youth migration;</li> <li>• Integrating AI to address burnout and skills gaps to build a bridge between technology and businesses; and</li> <li>• A skills readiness assessment coming from the employer side to signal if a job-seeker has the skills needed for open jobs.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion about AI and impacts followed.</p>	

<p>Goals Progress / Related Topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adult Ed COG Representation</li> <li>2. Virtual American Job Center Update</li> <li>3. Schedule Video Recordings</li> </ol>	<p>David is settling into his new position and is able to attend COG meetings more frequently (hopefully!) again. Amy is working with the State director to assign HUBs 8 and 9 for COG representation.</p> <p>Partners are meeting to review the contract with the developer of the virtual AJC. After receiving feedback, the State will finalize the contract so that work can begin. Timeline, once the contract is final, is &lt; one year for development of the platform through partner training and launch.</p> <p>Amy requested contacts from core partners to record videos that detail WIOA programming.</p>	<p>Amy: Send Kim and Jeff [and others] questions that would be covered in video interviews.</p>
<p>Updates from the group</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Programmatic updates/initiatives</li> <li>2. Biggest challenge of the month</li> </ol>	<p>Jeff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status quo with embedded career advisor with YouthBuild, Developed relationships with outside partnerships from that relationship; they have a network that Jeff is now leveraging with other partners.</li> <li>• May do work with My Space Teen Centers in Biddeford and Westbrook.</li> <li>• Focusing on professional development internally.</li> <li>• Educate ME conference – workforce development focus for secondary schools. Sending staff to attend so they might leverage secondary schools.</li> <li>• Hurdles: Looking for York County career advisor with experience working with youth/youth serving experience (or passion to work with youth). Case management doesn't always translate; need someone who is inquisitive and wants to learn about people and processes.</li> </ul> <p>Susan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rockland career center continues outreach.</li> <li>• Maximizing staff.</li> <li>• Working with justice involved, Fedcap, veterans (including in prisons/jails).</li> <li>• Local schools have reached out - have connected with guidance offices and can help with resumes for apprenticeships, etc. opportunities.</li> <li>• Personal management challenges, constant training can result in information overload. Focusing on getting back to basics.</li> </ul> <p>Rob:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Echoes what Susan touched on.</li> <li>• Thanks to Krista for bringing people into team meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Go Maine, Jesse from Workforce Solutions, Brad from SBA, Jenna from AmeriCorps</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Beneficial for staff to have back to basics information. Talking about how they work with clients is a good exercise for staff; hearing responses to monitoring questions.</li> <li>• CareerCenter in Portland is more and more reaching its capacity.</li> </ul>	

- Typical customer profile has low English language skills which slows down services.

Amy asked about eligibility for WIOA services.

Response: Cannot enroll and start training until they are authorized to work in the United States. Providers can help start the process of degree translation, which takes six months to a year. Can enroll in MJL, work on skills upgrading, building relationships by visiting English language classes, etc. The Lewiston office has WIOA partners in the office and can introduce to service providers for a personal hand-off. They also work with Adult Ed through a recovery program in Lewiston, and with English language teachers. Building connections with partner agencies help with future workforce development.

David:

- Started CNA programming expansion to be hybrid yesterday in the Midcoast counties. In-person cohort, plus students from Midcoast and Waldo hospitals, clinical instructors on site. Overseen through Damariscotta program at the request of Maine Health, via MCCS. This is a pilot program.
- The largest numbers in rural healthcare are from Knox and Waldo counties but had to shut down medical assistant program for the fall. Will hopefully have a rework of that program to remain hands-on. Hope to restart in February. Eighty percent or more of those clients are covered through rural healthcare grant.
- ESOL population arrival dates to the area keep moving – not sure when housing situation will be stabilized. Trying to identify childcare and transportation needs for students and trainees. Might qualify for bridge to employment grant.
- Challenges – lots of money, case managers, new nonprofits. JMG is looking to give money to Adult Ed. Complexity of system is a problem. Having trouble finding staff, clients.

Susan noted that there is open space in Rockland to co-locate for Adult Ed.

Kim:

- Challenge is still staffing. New hire starting on Monday – adult rehab councilor.
- Lots of moving starts.
- Community rehab program transition.
- Maine Med provides job coaching; RFP went out and award went to Goodwill. Will transition clients.
- Working with Point Sebago in Casco to hire seasonal workers.
- Vertical Harvest in Westbrook held a meet and greet virtually, and there is a Career Center meeting coming up. They have taken in 300 resumes already.
- So much is happening and VR doesn't always do a great job of co-enrolling when understaffed.

	Mike: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Getting close to hiring a career advisor in Belfast. (Cut short due to end of meeting.)</li></ul>	
Adjourn		4:01 PM

Next Meeting: November 22, 2023 @ 3:00PM