

Coastal Operators Group (COG) Meeting

Minutes

March 18, 2026

2:00 – 3:00 PM

Agenda Item	Notes	Next Steps
<p>1. Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review 2/25/26 meeting minutes Determine next month's meeting date [April 22nd is school vacation for public schools] 	<p>In attendance:</p> <p>Joy Rodrigue (Workforce Solutions) Jeff Martinelli (Workforce Solutions) Sheila Muldoon (Workforce Solutions) Samantha Funk (Workforce Solutions) Allen Lambert (Adult Ed Hub 7) Barb Stoddard (Adult Ed Hub 8/New Mainers Resource Center) Linda Greer (Adult Ed Hub 9) Kim Desso (MDOL Vocational Rehabilitation) David Grima (MDOL Bureau of Employment Services) Robert Ducharme (MDOL Bureau of Employment Services) Rene Smith (MDOL Bureau of Employment Services) Amy Geren (OSO / Catherine Cutler Institute, USM) Clare Murray (Catherine Cutler Institute, USM)</p>	<p>Minutes were approved and will be posted on CCWI website. Meeting scheduled for 4/22</p>
<p>2. Updates from the group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmatic updates/initiatives Biggest challenge of the month/connection requests 	<p>Barb Stoddard, New Mainers Resource Center sent updates via email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAE's workforce programs now enrolling: English for job preparation, bridge to healthcare, green building pre-apprenticeship 75 workforce dept students will complete end of this month Planning for FY27: ongoing CNA, MA, bank teller training, relaunch CDL training, pilot programs for hospitality, Early Childhood training PAE & NMRC sending # of students to SMCC Industrial Tech career fair today (3/18) at South Portland campus <p>Linda Greer, Adult Ed Hub 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program in Kittery will have 6 students finish up Retail Rise Up de-escalation module. Should have 6 certifications. Had a volunteer from Walgreens who is trained as ESOL teacher. Marcy led most of work. Has gone very well. Mixed group. At least one student working on HiSET. 	<p>myworksourcemaine.gov</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amy will forward information from Kim's presentation We should work to help improve virtual assistant, Dee – contact information TBD We should make suggestions for any missing resources for job seekers –

	<p>Allen Lambert, Adult Ed Hub 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitioning to spring, graduation. • UMaine Augusta campus in Brunswick is shifting locations to more modest sized site, this will have impact on ELL classes, and we will need a new home for those students in next 4-6 weeks. It is important that it is in Brunswick Landing where many residents live because transportation is a challenge. Allen is confident they will secure something. • 400 enrollments per year for ELL (typical for this area) • Amy responded to suggest SMCC's Brunswick Campus, and CTE Region 10. • The expansion of CTE Region 10 into the landing will not happen until the fall, so that will not work for immediate need. • Looking to expand some more workforce dev classes at CTE Region 10 in the fall. At SMCC there might be a possibility. <p>Sheila Muldoon, Workforce Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with Hub 7, Allen's team. Joy will try and attend at least quarterly with the Hub 7 team to continue updating. • Funding updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spent youth money for training. Saw increase of youth seeking training this year. Factors contributing to the fast spend-down could be that we do not have healthcare grant anymore, and a lot of youth were interested in CNA training. ○ Still have work experience/career exploration. If they want training, they would have to co-enroll in the adult program. Adult program training funding will likely be spent in next month. ○ Still have dislocated worker, still have the big grant, but have spent down WIOA funds for this year. Will likely have a waitlist until we get PY 26 money. • Reminder - priority of services will be impacted – having to turn people away if income was their only eligibility. 1- Vets, spouses, 2- low income, receiving assistance (TANF, food stamps, general assistance); If they have documented disability, we do not have to look at household income, just their personal income. • Amy mentioned you could steer folks toward extended ASPIRE benefits (transport, clothing, tech, etc.) to fill gaps. AS well, Chris Quint will be presenting on Friday regarding updates to Workforce Perkins and PELL – 	<p>contact information TBD</p>
--	--	------------------------------------

	<p>eligibility the same, but allowance for credentials, etc., and resources to get there.</p> <p>Joy Rodrigue, Workforce Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working on quarterly reports and performance assessments, which is time consuming <p>Samantha Funk, Workforce Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing update: one career advisor left, one on maternity leave, now Sam and Sheila are managing ~100 clients in addition to their own workloads Sam attended a meeting with Hub 8 adult ed (with Michelle Davenport, business services coordinator) beginning of the month and will attend quarterly or every other month. <p>David Grima, MDOL Bureau of Employment Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group of Career Centers continuing to put on statewide in-person or virtual about women in construction, and green energy jobs Continue rapid response work; came across closing electrical products manufacturer in Rockland– we attend to things like that. Hosting RR weekly online meeting. Only had one customer in three weeks seeking rapid response services on their own initiative. Unemployment season is drawing to end. Fewer people with weekly claims or new claims. On March 25, will be participating in business expo; the public is invited (potential to be hiring event). Will be there offering services to public and employers. Amy mentioned the Renewable energy career fair last October – those are the green jobs. There is also a ClimateWork Maine conference tomorrow in Portland. Amy will attend, as will Michelle from Workforce Solutions. <p>myworksourcemaine.gov</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help to improve the chatbot Dee. Right now, it can only answer a few questions. Let David know if you have other questions. We should all be going through as a job seeker to see what resources are missing. Amy will send information from Kim Moore, including the presentation from yesterday. 	
<p>3. Upcoming Professional</p>	<p>Human-Centered Skills for the AI-Enabled Workforce: 3/24/26</p> <p>ClimateWork Maine Summit on Maine's Economy: 3/19/26</p>	<p>https://web.portlandregion.com/atlas/events-v4/register/9034</p>

Development and Career Support Events	<p>Inclusion Maine: 4/1 – 4/3/26</p> <p>UMS Pathways to Careers Summit: 4/2/26</p>	<p>https://www.climateworkmaine.org/summit-2026</p> <p>https://www.inclusionmaine.org/conference</p> <p>https://www.maine.edu/pathways-to-careers/pathways-internships-summit/</p>
4. Meeting Adjourned		~ 2:30pm

Next meeting:
April 22, 2026 @ 2:00PM