

Coastal Operators Group (COG) Meeting

Minutes

May 27, 2026

Agenda Item	Notes	Next Steps & Shared Resources
1. Welcome & review of the agenda	In attendance: Jeff Martinelli (Workforce Solutions) Sheila Muldoon (Workforce Solutions) Samantha Funk (Workforce Solutions) Joy Rodrigue (Workforce Solutions) Allen Lambert (Adult Ed Hub 7) Linda Greer (Adult Ed Hub 9) Barb Stoddard (New Mainers Resource Center, Adult Ed Hub 8) Kim Desso (MDOL Vocational Rehabilitation) David Grima (MDOL Bureau of Employment Services) Rene Smith (MDOL Bureau of Employment Services) Sue LeClair (MDOL Bureau of Employment Services) Dave Lorenzatti (MDOL Bureau of Employment Services) Amy Geren (OSO / Catherine Cutler Institute, USM)	
2. Support cross-training between agencies	Accessible digital content discussion Amy completed a micro-credential training on accessible digital content, level one, which makes her eligible to enroll in the next level toward earning a full Accessible Digital Content Micro-Credential. Has anyone heard of MDOL or other entities' compliance strategies? Rob noted that MDOL has always made it a priority for what they post. Overview: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2022 data, more than 1 in 4—over 70 million—adults in the United States have one or	Access the Accessible Digital Content Micro-Credential here (opens in a new page)

	more disabilities. That is a huge percentage of your audience that you may be excluding if your digital content is not designed with accessibility in mind. • If the products in your online store are displayed as images without alternative text descriptions, a customer who is blind and uses a screen reader will not be able to identify which item has the features they need, and will purchase it somewhere else. • If your YouTube video does not have captions or transcripts, people who are interested in your topic but are hard of hearing will click away and give their watch time to another creator. • If your event sign-up form requires a mouse click to navigate and submit, someone with arthritis who navigates by keyboard will not be able to register. The Department of Justice issued final rules under ADA Title II, which governs state and local government services, including public schools and universities, libraries, and public agencies. These new regulations explicitly require public entities to make their web content and mobile applications accessible, following Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level A and AA criteria. The rules include specific timelines for compliance based on the population of the number of people in the governmental or geographic area they serve: • April 24, 2026, for entities serving 50,000+ people, like states, counties, cities, public universities, or consolidated school districts. • April 26, 2027, for smaller entities, like towns and villages, or special districts (like local housing authorities or fire departments). Linda asked if the micro-credential is available for anyone. Amy will share the link with these minutes in the Next Steps & Shared Resources column.	
3. Updates from the group	Kim Desso (information provided via email): • The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation seeks Business Engagement Specialist candidates who excel in networking and enjoy developing dual customer relationships. The individuals hired for these positions will work with a team of skilled professionals to support employers and clients of Vocational Rehabilitation in Cumberland and York Counties. If you, or someone you know has successful experience supporting individuals with career development, networking and	

	building professional relationships with many different stakeholders, and helping people with disabilities achieve their career goals, please share this link: Business Engagement Specialist (opens in another page). • Portland VR welcomed Kimberly Morris, Rehabilitation Counselor II on 5/18 • There are two current vacancies for RCII positions that should be up some time next week • It will be a busy summer with many programs for youth, i.e., Try-A-Trade – for youth adults, PEERS, College Bus Tours, No Barriers, etc. Barb Stoddard (information provided via email): • Lots of grant writing over the last month and ongoing, including MDOL, MDOE, and MEHAF; PAE is proposing new and expanded pre-apprenticeship and jobs readiness programs. • On April 30 NMRC offered a Pitch Perfect workshop through the City of Portland/Portland Chamber of Commerce's Portland Professional Connections program that helped job seekers develop interview skills. • NMRC will have its remaining four licensing guides (Engineering, Accountants, Pharmacists and Physical Therapists) finalized for publication next month. Rob: • Next Wednesday Portland is having a hiring event. Next Thursday there will be one in Brunswick. • CJ with the Brunswick CareerCenter is focusing on renewable energy jobs. • Defense and advanced manufacturing grant, i.e., contracts with the department of defense. Training for employers of ~\$10K per employer to upskill workforce. Shared Defense & Manufacturing Training Fund: Defense & Manufacturing Training Fund Work Source Maine • Rural Health Care grant is getting going as well. Shared Healthcare Training resource: Training For ME: Ongoing Training • Shared Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP): https://www.myworksourcemaine.gov/pages/competitive-skills-scholarship-program-cssp	
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	• Shared Maine Apprenticeship Program: https://apprenticeship.maine.gov/ • Shared Workforce Resources for Schools and Students: https://www.maine.gov/labor/schoolresources/ Sam: • Spoke with Charles Mugabe of Catholic Charities of Maine regarding the public defender shortage in Maine. Can offer an internship for paralegals in immigration law. Joy: • Enrollments in the adult program have slowed down. Jeff: • AGC cohort enrollment will start coming in. Still have work experience and OJT dollars. Sheila: • Continuing to enroll clients; pushing training to the fall. Can get youth in summer experiences then begin fall training. Linda: • A lot of adult students coming in for high school completion due to tight economy. • Will be retiring August 31st.	
4. Wrap-up and next steps		Adjourn 2:30 PM

Next meeting:
June 24, 2026 @ 2:00PM