

## Employment First Maine Coalition Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: Friday, June 10, 2016  
 Time: 10am – 1pm  
 Location: MDOL, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta  
 Facilitator: Elaine Ecker, Lisa Mills

### Present

Lisa Mills, PhD, ODEP	Jan Breton, DOE
Jon McGovern, SUFU	Debbie Gilmer, Syntiro, Maine APSE
Lisa Sturtevant, OADS	Gail Fanjoy, KFI
Leticia Huttman, SAMHS	Jeanie Coltart, Advocate
Ann Long, MPF	Karen Fraser, BRS
Linda Larue Keniston, WorkFirst	Dick Brown, CWC, ABIAC
Janet May, CCIDS	Libby Stone Sterling, VR
Jennifer Kimble, MMC	Terry Morrell, DDHHL
Elaine Ecker, NAMI	Catherine _____ (on phone)
Gary Shaheen, ODEP	Kevin Owen, VR
Valerie Smith	J. Richardson Collins (phone)

1. **Welcome/Introductions/Minutes** – Minutes from the May 8, 2016, meeting were accepted as written.
  
2. **Cross-Agency Employment Data Systems** – Lisa Mills, PhD. The PowerPoint presentation contains the bulk of the information Lisa provided, and it will be posted on the EFM website and referenced herein as part of these minutes. It was initially sent out to our mailing list on June 10<sup>th</sup> after the meeting. Here are a few other notes and the slides to which they pertain:
  - Slide 3: “Employment is everyone’s business,” which makes it essential that data is shared across systems. Having no or incomplete data is a huge issue, without which it ends up recording “intent” rather than “performance outcomes.”
  - Slide 5: What gets rewarded gets done. If not rewarded, may only end up with diligent reporting, but not desired outcomes. Tie reimbursement to outcome.
  - Slide 6: Reduce reporting frequency—not monthly, maybe quarterly, or even semi-annually—get same results with less burden on reporters. Sometimes

numbers don't change significantly, because while people get new jobs, others lose jobs. Need to focus on longevity.

- Slides 10-12: Problem with tracking individuals from multiple programs is how to identify them without revealing SSN, birthdate, and protected health information. Need to come up with a separate numbering system that all programs use. Person assigned a code number that doesn't reveal identity within "warehouse" database.
- Slides 13-14: Using just numbers is misleading—need percentages for information to be relevant or comparable to other states' performance. In Maine, may need to account for seasonal employment, which is different than losing a job and then starting again later. Would need to clearly define "seasonal."
- Slide 15: Need to define what "working" is. Also, could look at person-centered plan or IEP to see if they have employment goal. Is goal recorded? Are services attached? Are they actually working?

There are individuals who opt out—they don't want to work, sometimes preferring things like their day programs and family assistance for extra money, etc. Not motivated to move toward employment. Suggestion from another state's new policy: To have people agree to go through an employment service program (perhaps 30 days) in order to make a fully informed choice and get access to other services. Need incentives for individuals and families, not just providers, and requiring an employment program might help with that. "Having employment exploration as part of your plan enables you to receive other services you want." Fits under principles of Employment First law, as well as informed choice. Suggestion was made that effective employment exploration needs to include some hands-on work experience.

Challenge to reward providers who are paid fee-for-service. Need to change from fee-for-service to performance outcomes—or a combination of both.

- Slide 17: Carefully define integrated employment—don't include everything—it makes the data muddy and useless—makes it impossible to separate out true integrated employment.
- Slide 30: Look to see at what contact points individuals could receive employment info, even as early as intake and eligibility. Start at the very beginning of service system.
- Slides 31-34: Perhaps start collecting data to answer 2 questions at the core of Employment First: 1) Is employment the first and preferred option in service

delivery; and 2) Is Maine increasing the number of state residents with disabilities who are working in integrated community-based employment or customized employment?

### **3. Employment First Coalition Next Steps**

- a. Most of the remaining time as a statutorily established Coalition (until October 9, 2016) will be spent on completing the report to the Legislature.
- b. Content framework: In addition to the Coalition's recommendations, other contextual and related information will be included, e.g. dovetailing with what's happening with WIOA, Employment First in other parts of the country, etc. Will however make sure it is clearly a "Maine" report. Also reference the Policy Analysis & Recommendations for Maine report Lisa Mills presented at the December 11, 2015, meeting. Need to include/consider feedback received at the Employment First forum. Even though we didn't have a work group on transportation, it needs to be included, too.
- c. Strategy/Timeline: Lisa Sturtevant suggested that we utilize time remaining in the ODEP technical assistance grant to have Lisa Mills actually write the report. It was agreed that it isn't feasible to write it ourselves. The final report will be presented to the legislature in November, after the election and before cloture.

4. **Adjournment** – at this time the next meeting of the Coalition has not been set. It is expected that the Steering Committee will be meeting/working over the summer months and a full Coalition meeting may be scheduled for September.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elaine Ecker  
Chair