

Employment First Maine Coalition

MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT VERSION

Date of Meeting	March 14, 2014
Time	10:30am – 1pm
Location	Department of Labor, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta Frances Perkins room
Facilitator	Betsy Hopkins

Present

Name/Affiliation	Name/Affiliation
Brad Strause, Alpha One	Jan Breton, DOE
Jim Phipps, Iris Network	John Allen
Lisa Mills, ODEP	Kevin Owen, VR
Anne Nadzo, Goodwill	Rachel Dyer, MDCC
Debbie Gilmer, Syntiro, APSE Maine	Jenn Ardito, SRC
Gail Fanjoy, KFI	Simmons Maline, CCSM
Jeanie Coltart, Comm. On Disability and Employment	Linda Larue-Keniston, Maine Assoc. for Community Service Providers
Peaches Bass, DOL/DEI	Denise McCarthy, VR
Bethany Goding, Mobius	Chris Robinson, VR
Lisa Sturtevant, DHHS/OADS	Leticia Huttman, DHHS/SAMHS
Ann Long, MPF	Dulcey Laberg, OCFS
Janet May, Ctr. For Community Inclus.	Riley Albair, DRC
Avery Olmstead	Denise Adams, MCD
Betsy Hopkins, DVR	Peter Phair, NAMI
Karen Fraser, DOL	
Liz Ray, DHHS	

Discussion and Issues

Watched ODEP Webinar: “Rising to the Occasion: Taking Employment First to the Next Level through Transformational Leadership”

Q&A on “Rising to the Occasion” webinar with Lisa Mills, ODEP

Gail asked Lisa for recommendations on running “dual systems” during this transitional period, i.e., serving those actively receiving employment services and those clients who may be waiting to receive employment services. Lisa discussed “blurring the lines” between what we talk about as an employment services vs. a non-employment service; good places to start could include giving an employment focus to “other services” and utilizing Medicaid waiver funding of career planning and exploration in order to reduce the division between being “in” or “out” of employment services.

Debbie noted that the webinar discussed presuming employability, and shifting investments in determining “how” to work, not if someone can work.” Exe for determining the how?

lots of money spent to answer “can this person” work, but ppl approach a service or assessment based on their marching orders. If you tell someone to answer :if” they will, if you tell someone the answer is never “no,” the way we approach the work will result in more useful assessments. Otherwise assessments offer very little in terms of developing road map to career development. Book”what color is your parachute?”: support for discovery in the approach, people to expect to get a job and find a new career. Refocus energies of ppl doing the work – this will lead to different products, which will get job development off to better start, better framework to going forward. The first steps are important, if we get them wrong, it affects the entire process to an extreme degree. Need to challenge ourselves on the success rates in job development.

Debbie asked if Lisa had any insight as to why the number of support employment hours seems to be decreasing. vision quest discussion around improving actual hours worked by people with disabilities. Any insight on why or how to change?

LM: states that have strong cultures of work seem to do better on disability employ. The expectation that people will work is just stronger, more held across

the population. We are always trying to accommodate exceptions in the work we do. The idea of “choice” can sometimes cloud our thinking in terms of what is a quality outcome and what isn’t. Simplistic answer: the first group of people we helped with supported employment are no longer counted anymore who don’t receive supports. Our expectations are lower for ppl w sig disability, exception policies (can’t decide a minimum of hours, etc) and then policies meant to be exceptions have a habit of becoming the rule. We aren’t challenging ourselves. VR consumers who use the typical model also see their hours static or declining. We have not evolved the model of SE as much as we now know we need to do. We have tended to focus on the number of people participating, because that is the data we can get. Just bc a lot of people are rec’g the service does not mean they are getting good outcomes: number of hours working, etc. Funding cutbacks also play a role; ppl getting some services, not what they need.

Review and Acceptance of January Minutes

Minutes Accepted

Work Group Updates

Transition

Jan reported that the team met last month, with about a dozen members present. The group spent time discussing their charge, defining their work plan, and marking out where they might go.

One main concern of the group is duplication of efforts; Maine has three transition groups currently meeting, with quite a bit of membership overlap. The group discussed the possibility of streamlining efforts by temporarily or permanently disbanding their work group in favor of pulling info from other transition groups. Jan could report out on the DOE/DHHS group to EFM, get feedback, and then incorporate that feedback into this outside group’s work. Jan and Betsy presented this idea to the EFM coalition for feedback.

Several EFM members noted that while concerns over duplication of effort were

valid, EFM's role on transition may be substantially different from that of the other groups, and there appears to be room for this coalition to make efforts on areas that are out-of-scope for those groups. EFM could still make recommendations and ensure broader focus on transition with employment as the ultimate priority.

General consensus emerged that this work group could refine their purpose further, rather than disband temporarily or permanently. Janet May volunteered to act as work group Chair. Karen will help provide technical assistance to the group in order to develop scope/purpose, and then carve out areas that may be duplicative.

Legislation/Policy work group

Betsy reported on Kim's discussion at the last coalition meeting of potentially folding the work of the Legislative and Policy group into that of the Vision Quest team. EFM is getting guidance from ODEP (Abby Cooper and Stephen Hall) on policy and legislation that has worked in other states, as well as review and feedback on policies, rules, MOUs, etc., in place in Maine. Very similar to the charge of the Legislation/Policy work group. The work group would continue to meet regularly, have monthly calls, get updates on the Vision Quest work and report out to the larger Coalition, etc. Vision Quest work materials will also be available and posted to the EFM website.

Two work group members raised concerns about work group communications not getting to all of the members.

Karen suggested that the group do more scoping and purpose development.

Jeanie emphasized that work group communications and meetings (ie., teleconferences) should be planned to be inclusive to hearing-impaired individuals.

Betsy will share feedback with Kim and a follow-up work group meeting will be scheduled soon.

Business Relations

Lisa reported that their work group has met 2.5 times, and has grown to include 8 members: Anne, Avery, Valerie Oswald (VR), Joyce LaRoche (ME State CoC), Lisa Soucie, Drew Bolduc, Suzanne Lapierre (OFI), and Barry McMillian (DHHS). The group has finished their project definition work group plan. Lisa read the project overview to the Coalition.

Lisa explained that the group would like to look at how various agencies already engage with business. They hope to start making efforts to connect with businesses right off and have begun exploring how they may do that, including through surveys and attendance at chamber breakfasts. There is a need to partner with business groups that are already out there, in order to not duplicate efforts. Business scope plan has been helpful. Trying to stay very focused on improving practices that relate to business engagement.

The work group will work on putting together a mock survey to be shared with the Coalition for feedback.

Tentative work timeline at present:

- July 2014: initial report of findings submitted to the larger coalition
- August 2014: recommendations developed with coalition input
- September 2014: EFM report of final recommendations to the legislature in order to be ready for cloture in the fall.

Peaches commented that these efforts sound relative to the work of the Disability Employment Initiative, and there may be room for more coordination and integration with DEI here.

Data

Rachel reported that their group has met a few times to discuss their charge and start seeking out information, in addition to examining work coordination and planning. In a few weeks, Karen will help their group to gather their conversations into a project plan. In/out of scope questions are important, ongoing, much to define here. They are looking forward to updating the larger Coalition as the project plan is developed.

Rachel notes that Dana Duncan is no longer with DHHS and should be taken off

the listserv.

Capacity Building

Debbie reported that the Capacity Building work group has met four times now, and now includes 8 members. Debbie recently worked with Karen to draft the workplan and narrow the project scope. Debbie read the recently developed work plan deliverables to the group.

Timeline discussion: if there are things that need legislative action, planning needs to start soon since the long session begins Jan 2015. Therefore, there is urgency for work groups to prepare recommendations that EFM may want the legislature to consider.

Work group hopes to have their analysis of needs completed by spring, report finding to the coalition by August 2014, and then coordinate with the coalition to prepare legislative and policy change recommendations.

The survey to providers has been through initial drafting stages but is not ready for coalition review yet. Some discussion around whether there should be separate surveys for different types of providers around what technical assistance they may need to realize the EFM vision.

Some work group notes and materials are already posted on the EF website, more will be coming soon.

Communication work group

Karen reported out on work group progress. Membership includes Brad Strause, Denise McCarthy and Rick Langley. Karen read over the group's charge and described deliverables. The group will serve as a resource to all EFM work groups and the larger coalition. They will listen to cross-group activity and try to troubleshoot/ assist in using tools and resources to move things forward.

Other deliverables:

- Developing an EFM tagline and logo, which will be shared soon. Focus on maintaining consistent and clear messaging, throughout work group efforts and engagement activities with providers, business, etc. Some members

commented that an elevator speech template may be helpful.

- EF website: a critical piece of EF communication and sharing. Rick is currently revamping to make it more usable. New site should include a calendar with all work group meetings, timelines, resources, materials, etc. Should be live by April 1, 2014.
- Standard communications protocol and plan for EF coalition and workgroups. Currently researching communication plans, then group will review and come to conclusion. Will be simple enough to execute fairly easily.

Karen encouraged groups to connect with the Communication team. Can we help your surveys and messaging? There to connect the loose ends.

Meetings are scheduled every two weeks. Next mtg on the 20th. First agenda item: discuss feedback from today's meeting.

Department Reports

DOL Update

Betsy reported that VR is in the process of drafting their state plan for the next three years. Public Hearing will take place on April 17th, please share!

DHHS Update

Lisa reported that public hearings will be held on the upcoming rule changes regarding employment services and definition of employment for the Section 21/29 waivers. Employment services have also been proposed for the in-progress TBI waiver. Hearing dates have not been scheduled yet.

DHHS just released strategic plan for the agency, and each office is releasing specific goals. These will also be going out to public comment, will be coming out in the next month. Many opportunities for people to engage with changes.

Leticia reported that SAMHS and BRS are seeking input on delivery of rehab services to consumers of mental health services in Maine. RFI, not an RFP. Survey

moneky is up on SAMHS front webpage. Closes March 24th. Please share with interested stakeholders.

Leticia also reported on continuing collaboration with the CCSM and Peer Support Center on Maine Can Work. Peer-oriented guidebook, focused on changing conversations in mental health settings. Have trained some peer facilitators.

April 1 – Behavioral Health Homes start date. Integrated systems delivery system for indiv with serious mental health conditions, or children with serious emotional disorders. In BHH, lots of quality metrics will get measured. MaineCare will be asking for reports back, will include employment stats, the # of adults in full, part-time, or supported employment. DHHS clearly starting to look at impact of employment on other services.

DOE Update

Jan reported that DOE did training for educators in southern maine on effective transition practices. Maine will also be presenting at an upcoming regional education conference.

Interest in reporting out the data on what happens to students with disabilities after they graduate. DOE has encountered difficulties collecting this information. Surveys are sent to those who graduated a year ago, but responses are sparse. Do have some data, interested in sharing with Data committee.

Next Meeting

Date of Meeting	Friday April 11, 2014
Time	11am – 1pm
Location	DOL, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta – Frances Perkins room