EmploymentFirstMaine

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

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| **Date of Meeting** | April 11, 2014 |
| **Time** | 10am-noon |
| **Location** | DOL, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta – Frances Perkins Room |
| **Facilitator** | Betsy Hopkins |

**Present**

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| **Name/Affiliation** | **Name/Affiliation** |
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| Betsy Hopkins, Division of Voc. Rehab. | Rick Langley, Disability Rights Center |
| Rachel Dyer, Maine Developmental Disabilities Council | Leticia Huttman, DHHS/SAMHS |
| Jan Breton, Dept. of Education | Valerie Oswald, Dept. of Labor |
| Debbie Gilmer, Syntiro, APSE Maine | Sitara Sheikh, Division of Voc. Rehab. |
| Jeanie Coltart, Comm. On Disability & Employment | Karen Fraser, Bureau of Rehab. Services |
| Brad Strause, Alpha One | Ann Long, Maine Parent Federation |
| Chris Robinson, Division of Voc. Rehab. | Gail Fanjoy, KFI |

**Discussion and Issues**

**1. Vision Quest update – Betsy Hopkins**

Betsy reported on the Vision Quest project. Maine was chosen as a mentee state to receive technical assistance and policy expertise from ODEP-sponsored experts.

Maine participates in conference calls along with Delaware, Rhode Island

and Oregon and monthly Maine-only calls with Stephen Hall, our designated policy expert. Most recently, the Maine Vision Quest team heard from Delaware re their

i-waiver (or innovation waiver), which serves individuals across disability types, and focuses largely on transition-age youth. For Maine purposes, the team discussed the

possibility of an i-waiver with a focus on mental health consumers and employment.

The Maine team has discussed concerns re the Vision Quest process to date, and

Have reported back to ODEP that we are seeking specific, focused feedback re policy/

legislative opportunities in promotion of employment first goals. Betsy conducted a

call with Serena Lowe and Cheryl Mitchell, and they suggested that written feedback

be provided to Steve and that we be directive about what we’re seeking from this

process. Next call is April 22. Maine provided detailed data so far and got a preliminary

analysis but it had holes in it and needs more work. We need to establish goals

and priorities for this and focus on what we can turn around, potentially even in next legislative session, being mindful of cloture and other deadlines. What do we want to tackle the first year of EFM?

**2. Business Employer Work Group – Valerie Oswald**

Valerie reported on the employer survey being finalized by her group. It’s in draft

form now and being reviewed. Some edits have occurred that aren’t reflected in this

version yet, ie modifying question re the size of the business, adding what county

you work in, etc. This is a very basic survey, in next iteration might expand the survey. Discussed the possibility of adding a question re “interested in EFM?” “interest in

hiring a person with a disability?” Plan is to hand this out at the HR conference, distribute through the Chamber, ME Business Leadership network, etc.

Employer work group will send out draft to coalition members for review, with plan

for distribution.

**3. Capacity Building Work Group – Debbie Gilmer**

Debbie reported on her groups’ survey, regarding the needs of providers for employment first. They have developed a Google survey, to go to CRPs and

agencies that provide day service programs. Questions include do you hold a

sub-minimum certificate? What services do you provide? Day services part of

what you do? Questions provide opportunity to comment. Used definition from

EFM act re integrated employment, etc.

Discussed need to use EFM letterhead on surveys and/or on invitation emails that

link to electronic surveys.

**4. Policy Work Group – Rick Langley**

Rick reported on that morning’s meeting of the policy work group, where they

Discussed amending the group’s charter to narrow the scope, from “creating” or developing policy ideas to serving as a clearinghouse for the EFM coalition where

issues or policy goals naturally rise from the work of the other groups and the larger coalition, etc. Discussed the importance of the policy group in aiding the coalition

in activities seeking change in policy via rules change, legislative action, etc. and

the group’s role of helping to assess the venue for change, requirements of

legislation, mindfulness of the calendar (ie cloture in December), etc. The group

should be used to coordinate coalition response to policy ideas and gather

coalition recommendations.

The group discussed the process for development of the EFM coalition report

back to the governor and legislature. Role of this group to help promote policy recommendations coming out of the groups – whether they be policy changes, recommendations, practice reforms, and gather and report these ideas.

In scope work includes policies, rules, practices ideas, and deliverables currently

include producing a recommendations report. Challenges remain including

translating “first and preferred” into real policy.

**5. Data Work Group – Rachel Dyer**

Rachel’s work group is in the process of compiling draft group project definition for

next time. Among their challenges, assessing quality of data that is currently

available (ie, unmet needs numbers for developmental services equal 80?!).

**6. Transition Work Group – Jan Breton**

Jan reported that they are holding their second transition work group meeting this afternoon, and Karen will aid in project definition process so that they can report

out and share draft next time.

**7. Communication Work Group – Karen Fraser**

Karen shared the group’s elevator speech draft, which Brad took the lead in putting together. Short, focused, non-jargonish. Discussed the need to anticipate questions and have follow-up content available for people who have questions about

implications of EF. Agreed we would post this language and review it with the larger group.

Discussed listing members of work groups on website. And to add a steering

Committee page with names and contact info.

Group is developing a communications protocol for EF.

Every person. Every talent. Every opportunity.

**8. Next Meeting/Other business**

Discussed sharing work group project plans at May meeting. Groups should commit

to having those ready to share in advance and hopefully finalize in May. Agreed

updates would be shared with Rick by May 2 for sending out.

Also: it was agreed that next time and moving forward we would make time for a

“hot topic” item for discussion. Next time, Debbie will present on the Rhode Island

settlement that has made the news.

**Next Meeting**

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| **Date of Meeting** | Friday May 9, 2014 |
| **Time** | 11am – 1pm |
| **Location** | DOL, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta – Frances Perkins Rm. |

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