

Quarterly One-Stop Partner Meeting

Minutes

December 19, 2023

Agenda Item	Notes	Next Steps
Attending	Amy Geren (OSO), Abbie Yamamoto (Adult Education, Hub 8), David Watts (Adult Education, Hub 7), David Wurm (Workforce Solution [Title IB service provider]), Cait Grant (YCCC [Carl Perkins]), Tom McLaughlin, LearningWorks [YouthBuild]), Nate Snow, LearningWorks [YouthBuild]), Linda Winton (Adult Education, Hub 9), Teyonda Hall, Portland Housing Authority [HUD])	
Welcome / Introductions, Review of the Agenda	Amy introduced an inclusive model of introductions by including pronouns and general appearance details as demonstrated in a WorkforceGPS webinar on communication and access for job-seekers with hearing, visual, or cognitive disabilities.	
Approval of June Meeting Minutes	No edits suggested	
Effective Communication & Modifications for Clients of Workforce Services	<p>WorkforceGPS Webinar (November 2) – Effective Communication & Access for Job-seekers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaf & Hard of Hearing: 53.5% employed (70.4% hearing); 4.8% unemployed (4.7% hearing); 24.9% not in the labor force (24.9% hearing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3rd largest employed disability type ○ 4th highest unemployment rate ○ Cognitive disabilities (7.4% unemployed) ○ Ambulatory disabilities (4.6% unemployed) ○ Visual disabilities (6.2% unemployed) ○ Independent living difficulties (5.5% unemployed) ○ Self-care difficulties (4% unemployed) • Communication tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relay phone appointments ○ Live ASL interpretation during Zoom appointments ○ UbiDuo – texting platform for in-person meetings ○ Phone/tablet – voice to text translation; live classes & appointments; texting 	Amy will share WorkforceGPS link to access slides and notes.

- Zoom – live captioning; transcripts; chat; AI Companion
- Paper & pencil

MDOL Training (November 28)

Effective Communication & Modification in Career Centers – Railey Guthrie, Melissa Harvey, and Sharisse Roberts

- Legal obligations – ADA
- Text font and size – Ariel or Calibri (black on canary); 18 pt. font
- Image – ESOL / non-print access

Plain Language Overview

My colleague at the Cutler Institute, Zeph Craven, recently shared his learning on the importance of using plain language.

I’m not an expert on Plain Language or writing in general, but I’m eager to share what I have learned with you.

Plain Language is a method of writing and editing that makes writing easier to read. You may not identify as a writer in your role, but every time you send an email, or create a PowerPoint, you are using your writing skills.

In my role, I do a lot of writing, organizing, and communicating internally and externally.

I really need my writing to be clear and accessible.

That’s why I care enough about Plain Language to be sharing it with you now.

I also want other people to use Plain Language because we all need our writing to be clear, for our teams, stakeholders, and customers of the workforce services.

What is Plain Language?

Plain language is a method for writing and editing.

We use it to write in a way that’s:

- clear
- accessible
- and prioritizes the reader.

The goal is not to provide simpler information or less information, but a clearer and more effective way of communicating the same information.

A piece of writing can be created using Plain Language guidelines from the start, or those guidelines might be applied during the editing phase.

...To make writing easier to read.

Amy will share plain language presentation PDF.

The first step in that is to prioritize the reader.

You can do that by

- Identifying the reader
- Placing information in order of importance and logic
- Putting 'need to do' before 'need to know'
- Design the text layout to be scannable
- And by keeping it simple, say what you mean directly and plainly

All of this makes it easier for the reader to process the meaning behind your writing.

Here are three guidelines to do just that. [Concrete & specific actions]

1. **Use fewer words** to communicate the same idea.

Concrete ways to do that are to keep your sentences under 20 words,
Use consistent words, no elegant variation
Remove unnecessary words,
Organize the text to one idea per sentence,
Use words your reader understands.

2. **Make your text scannable**

"Scanning" is looking quickly for information instead of reading text closely.
Most readers will do this anyway, so help them do it!
Guide the eye with headings, bullets, bolding, and plenty of empty space;
Try one sentence per line;
Use large text;
Avoid italics and all caps, they make it harder to read;
Underlining text should just be for links;
Use color but avoid highlighting.

3. **Write in a direct voice**

When possible, address the reader directly, as "you";
Write actively > 'Who did an action to what thing,' for example 'the presentation was given by Amy' becomes 'Amy gave the presentation'
If the text answers a question write that question as the title or heading.

Why does Plain Language matter?

Clarity: When we write something, we want to communicate effectively and clearly so that our readers will understand the information we want them to know.

Accessibility: We want our ALL our readers to understand what we want them to know.

	<p>Government standard: The Plain Writing Act of 2010 requires federal agencies to write “clear government communication that the public can understand and use.” We’re not writing laws in Latin anymore, but that doesn’t mean everything we write is understandable. Plain Language has been implemented in various legal efforts, organizations, and agencies; for example, the CDC, WHO, the European Union, the Parliamentary Counsel Office of New Zealand, and the US Department of Labor.</p>	
<p>Workforce Development Collaborative Impact</p>	<p>Maine Economic Improvement Fund No one in the meeting applied for the funding opportunity shared at the September Meeting. Amy provided the update that the MEIF’s coordinator at the Catherine Cutler Institute is retiring, so this position will be transitioning.</p> <p>The Roux Institute Pitch Competition on Workforce Innovation: Competition Results The event was held October 20 – 21 in Biddeford. There was a lot of energy and some great ideas from a group of 28 participants - wonderful local interest in the topic!</p> <p>Many of the ideas involved technology to reach both job-seekers and businesses, including apps and the use of AI. Participants were judged on the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem or opportunity description • Solution to the problem or opportunity • Impact of the solution or idea • Feasibility of marketing and implementing the solution or idea • Presentation style <p>Each team of three had three minutes to present, followed by one minute of Q&A with the judges (myself, a local business founder who mentors students at Roux, and the head of learning programs at Northeastern University).</p> <p>First place went to an idea called Innovative Residency Programming. This idea is based on the challenge/opportunity of many new Mainers arriving in Maine with advanced skills and degrees that do not align within their careers here in the U.S., resulting in many professionals being underemployed and not filling in-demand jobs. To maximize new Mainer retention, Innovative Residency Programming is a cohort model that works with large institutions initially - i.e., finance, medical, advanced manufacturing - to develop career pathways within these institutions that lead to natural career advancement within the same institution.</p> <p>Second place went to an idea called Aspire ME.</p>	

	<p>This idea is based on job-seekers' uncertainty in knowing what kind of job is right for them within the local job market. It involves developing an app that makes connections between jobs and job-seekers based on business job availability, shared values, and local geography. The aspiration is to fill the local job market by connecting local interest and values with the careers available via a visually engaging platform that can compete with social apps.</p> <p>Other pitches included a platform for employees to find alternative routes to work as a solution to transportation challenges in the state; an app that leverages community data with AI technology to map skills and gaps; using AI to map career goals and skills to curb youth migration; integrating AI to address burnout and skills gaps to build a bridge between technology and businesses; and a skills readiness assessment coming from the employer side to signal if a job-seeker has the skills needed for open jobs.</p>
Status Updates	<p>One-Stop Certification Materials have been compiled for review by the OSC Review Committee, which is scheduled to convene on January 5th.</p> <p>Virtual American Job Center The contract with the consultant has been reviewed and signed by both parties, and the team will be meeting as a group tomorrow (12/20) to kick-off the next phase of the project.</p>
Organizational Updates	<p>David Watts: Working on youth program (16-24). MidCoast combining career exploration, financial literacy, job readiness, with opportunity to earn stipends for meeting specific milestones, by end Jan. Also, culinary skills onboarding program will be opening in the new year for applicants. Having issues with hiring workplace instructors. Long-time medical assistant instructor left in June and haven't hired yet. Hybrid CNA program finished first cohort, onboarding New Mainers – nine applicants for one location and all are new Mainers.</p> <p>David Wurm: Cohorts emerging from many partners with similar January start-dates. They have two new pre-apprenticeships, construction-focused projects. One is with Associated General Contractors with recent immigrants who are being housed at a hotel in Saco. Will be providing construction skills to get them into a pathway. The AFL/CIO is doing a construction academy for the immigrant population as well between greater Portland and Lewiston. Continuing to monitor intakes and referrals and preparing to meet needs and retain staff.</p> <p>Abbie Yamamoto: It is high recruitment season currently for the Health Care pre-apprenticeship, accounting, and other workforce programs in beginning in January; will continue recruiting until start of classes. Testing is ongoing when classes are out of session.</p> <p>Linda Winton: Currently doing year end HiSet testing in hopes of getting a few more graduating seniors signed up. They are still looking for a Workforce Coordinator for 16-20 hours. Hoping to offer another Certified Clinical Medical Assistant program in the fall; have used Workforce Solutions programs to help finance. New catalog will be mailed to residents this week. New classes being offered with National Digital Equity Center (NDEC) providing free computer classes to ages 65 and up. Also looking for a Reading Specialist for 10 hrs. week with a goal to get more people to be able to take the HiSet.</p>

	<p>Nate Snow: Fully staffed for the first time in the four years he has been with LearningWorks. Construction and Culinary instructors have been hired. Received funding to bring internal mental health counselor; finding funding and person was the goal to support youth. HiSet testing is ongoing. One cohort is finishing, another group in the middle, and they are enrolling for the next cohort in February. High need and demand for the program.</p> <p>Cait Grant: EMTs will continue; other programs starting in January including partnering with Sanford Adult Ed for funding for multi-language learners. Expanding Sanford site for welding to support Hussey Seating and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Shipyard is expected to close starting sometime in 2025. Tech Center seats are full and are turning students away; thinking about how to transition and assist some seniors.</p> <p>Teyonda Hall: Some graduates are experiencing childcare issues and unable in some cases to accept job offers and are unable to use certificates. They are meeting with a collaborative group in January, talking to United Way and CIE to discuss ways to leverage what exists and how to connect.</p>	
Adjourn	2:30 PM	

Next Meeting: March 19, 2024 @ 1:30 PM