

Minutes of MOU Core Partner Meeting of September 27, 2019

Attendance sheet available upon request

Meeting called to order at 9:30 by D. Ramos

D. Ramos opened the meeting with introductions since new people were in new positions. DTA Director, Nelson Abreu brought two other DTA staff to the meeting. E. Rousseau was a guest speaker on transportation issues/concerns of all partners. We are excited that E. Rousseau will now be part of the MOU group.

First item on the agenda was to follow-up on the very important Customer Intake Form. This form is our main means of tracking our shared customers. Beth noted that she had not received any forms since implementation. Members agreed to the use and L. Jochim agreed to start using them.

E. Rousseau of SRTA provided an overview of the current state of regional transit and what improvements the organization is investing in and exploring. He noted examples such as smart technology for users to track where busses are along routes and collection of data to improve timing of bus routes and examining routes to the NB Business Park to enhance services. He noted that 70% of the riders are low-income and the last thing that they want to do to is to increase fares. J. Oliveira invited E. Rousseau to speak at a Mass Workforce Association in order to gain additional partners to press the state for funding regarding transit funding above the 2.5% level. SRTA has Forums on FB – Erik will send the October dates to D. Ramos to share with partners.

D. Ramos noted the need to find out who should be contacted at the business park to discuss the challenges in meeting the transportation needs. She will pursue with the Economic Development staff since they are overseer of the park.

J. Boren noted that other options in addition to SRTA should be explored and that there is a need to be more creative in addressing transportation need, including considering a shuttle inside the business park.

Other questions from the group included the possible expansion of night service and issue of bus pass tickets expiring. E. Rousseau noted he is working with RIPTA for a possible solution as the MBTA controls the quick expiration dates on the Charlie cards.

N. Abreu from D.T.A. noted his organization has successfully utilized “Yes We Van” an Uber-like service. Uber Business was also raised as a possible transportation solution.

J. Oliveira questioned if a survey should be conducted to determine the need for services to and inside the business park.

E. Rousseau noted that they are working with MassDOT to increase funding and that he is the President of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities (MARTA). (<https://matransit.com/>)

The topic of Career Pathways was revisited since the WDB had discussed with the Career Center Operator's Nestor Leon. Nestor brought the request back to the CC for further discussion and to implement some further training of the CC staff. The group then moved on to a general discussion regarding Career Pathways and J. Daniels of the Career Center provided the group copies of a presentation that was given to the counselors of the Career Center in regard to career lattices/ladders. It was designed so the staff has the stools to aide customers with their career planning. Per WIOA guidelines career pathways information must be provided to the customers. C. Aguilar briefly spoke about WorkKeys as a possible resource as well.

L. Mello-Frost noted there were a lot of great resources about Career Pathways and in particular the WorkforceGPS DOL site that was shared with the group by D. Ramos at the last meeting where Career Pathways for the priority industries were also shared.

C. Aguilar noted these resources should be made available on the website and possibly by other means.

J. Sylvia stated that there would be a need to identify the target audience in order to allow for user friendly access to these resources which may include reorganizing the website or adding a section for GNBWB Partner resources.

B. Costa noted that some of the information would be useful to career center clients also.

J. Oliveira then noted that the meeting identified transportation issues and communications about Career Pathways as topics that need more exploration and planning. He proposed that two working groups that could oversee this be created.

A working group for transportation issues was formed with J. Oliveira [chair], E. Rousseau, N. Abreu, J. Boren and D. Ramos.

A working group for Career Pathway was formed with J. Daniels [chair], L. Mello-Frost, B. Jensen and J. Sylvia.

It was agreed that the working groups would meet and report back at the November 15th meeting.

The topic of Rosetta Stone was revisited and to see if information provided by M. Zahn was looked into. B. Costa discussed need for better translations system said that the commercially available Rosetta Stone seemed like it would not work as a wholesale item. Other options used were the Language Line and Google translate. Beth felt there were some moderate successes with Google translate, but the Language Line was not very good and increased frustration among all parties which was echoed among the group. Some of the partners have multi-lingual employees that enhance their ability to communicate with their customers (D.T.A.).

L. Jochim state she had a colleague who had a special headset that he used for translating that he said was very good and agreed to find out more about the device and report back to the group.

Since the topic of serving our WIOA populations with barriers to employment is a pressing concern, D. Ramos shared a tool that displays barriers and proposed solutions. She urged all members to look at the document to see if there were solutions that fit within our state parameters for serving these populations. The document can be found here:

<http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/WIOABARRIERPOPULATIONchart.pdf>

Follow ups for next meeting:

- Mobile Hearing Devices
- Interns
- Inviting Carl Alves to speak to the homeless populations
- Asking Wendy to share information about TOPS otherwise known as Section 30 and how it relates to customers collecting UI

J. Oliveira asked everyone to think about the following question: What other associations to we belong to and how can we use them to increase our sphere of influence in the system? Please email those associations to D. Ramos [donna@masshiregreaternewbedford.com].

Next meeting:

Friday November 15th, 2019 9:30 – 11:00 MassHireNB Career Center 618 Acushnet Ave NB

Adjourned at 11:00 am