**Communications Committee Meeting**

Thursday, February 11, 2021, 10:00 – 11:30 AM

**MEETING MINUTES**

Attendees

*Attendees*: Brit Ayers, Alan Crawley, Brittney Crisafulli, Jamie Harris, Susan Kaliush, John Lane, Molly Mesnard, Katherine Morris, LiLi Taylor and Emma Wilson.

Handouts

February Agenda, Committee Activities Overview Document, Status Updated February Newsletter Topics Guide, PROPOSED March Newsletter Topic Guide Template

1. **Opening**

Committee Coordinator LiLi Taylor opened the meeting, extending a special welcome to EARN Maryland Administrator Brittney Crisafulli who was invited to present to the Committee on the EARN Maryland (EARN) program.

1. **Old Business**

*WIOA Alignment Group (WAG) Updates:*

Co-Chair Kimberlee Schultz shared the Committee Activities Overview presented at the January meeting of the WIOA Alignment Group.

*Survey Results from January Newsletter*

Sixty-three individuals responded to the survey as of the meeting date. The Committee agreed that this first effort yielded some lessons learned for future surveys. For example, the Committee agreed that future surveys should more clearly identify the target population, which in this case, was frontline service providers. The survey asked respondents to identify how their agency collected data on Financial Literacy training, but not all partners conduct this kind of training, or may conduct it embedded in another broader training. Alternative questions could have been: “What agency do you work for?”/“Does your agency provide financial literacy training?”/“If yes, does your agency offer individual workshops focused on the topic or is the training embedded in other services?” This model would have provided a fuller picture of where financial literacy training is available and how it is provided by various partners. Information on how partners collect data only offers a very small slice of the overall picture.

The Committee will forward the survey results to the Data and Dashboard Committee for analysis.

*Newsletter Analytics and Strategies to Build Readership*

Issue #22 (January 2021) of the newsletter was released on January 26, 2021. LiLi shared an analytics report for the newsletter that provided several data points related to distribution and open rates. The table below compares data for Issues #21 and #22:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Issue # / Date** | **Total Delivered** | **Unique Open Rates** | **Total Opens** |
| #21 / Nov/Dec ‘20 | 5,248 | 15% (766) | 1,475 |
| #22 / Jan ‘21 | 5,327 | 36% (1,904) | 3,807 |

Susan shared that she believes the dramatic improvement in open rates month-over-month may have been due (at least in part) to a difference in the day/time of publication. She published Issue #22 on a Tuesday morning, versus an afternoon or a day later in the week.

Katherine Morris had created a Google sheet to create a “meta” list of all of the email addresses each committee member blasts emails to streamline the distribution process and improve the accuracy of the analytics in reflecting true open rates. Committee members did not report receiving it, so Katherine resent it during the meeting. Susan asked all Committee members to enter their collected email addresses to compile a single, universal list. When Susan combines the addresses from the Google sheet, recipients will have the ability to opt out of the subscription if they wish by clicking on “Unsubscribe All” at the bottom of the newsletter.

1. **New Business**

*Status Updates on February Newsletter Content*

LiLi walked the Committee through the February topic outline approved at the January meeting of the WIOA Alignment Group and updated the group on which content has been completed and where work is still outstanding. Emma Wilson committed to following up on the COVID Corner article on the Gilchrest Center.

*EARN Presentation*

Brittney Crisafulli joined the meeting to share information with the Committee on the state-funded EARN Maryland workforce program, which submits a comprehensive annual report to the General Assembly detailing its activities and outcomes. The legislative report has a set annual due date at the end of December, but due to the exceptional conditions of the COVID crisis, the submission date was delayed to February. With that in mind, the Committee Chairs proposed featuring the EARN program and report in the March newsletter issue. Brittney provided a presentation on the program and participated in developing the March Newsletter Topic Guide.

*Topics Identification for March Newsletter*

The theme for the March newsletter will be EARN Maryland. The following content was suggested:

* Feature Story – Profile of the EARN Maryland Program; *what it is, how it works, who it serves, how partners work together to implement projects.*
* Success Stories – Win-Win Success story featuring both an EARN program participant and Strategic Industry Partners
  + COVID Corner – The EARN program, Pivoting in a Pandemic (Responding to Changing Training Needs within Industry: Healthcare/Manufacturing/BioTechnology/Hospitality/MD Food Bank)
* Did You Know
* National Women’s History Month - Profile/contribution of women’s employment stats Maryland; Impact of pandemic on women; see EARN report for graphic showing increased participation of women; Women in Labor History <https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/women-in-labor-history> /And Still I Rise website - Black Women Labor Leaders <https://and-still-i-rise.org/>
* Accessibility Tip of the Month – Hyperlinks

**Next Steps**

* **LiLi** will write up meeting minutes and send to committee members for review/approval.
* **LiLi** will post the February meeting agenda and approved minutes on the [Benchmarks of Success website](https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/wioasuccess.shtml#:~:text=Benchmarks%20of%20Success%20is%20a,the%20earning%20capacity%20of%20Marylanders%E2%80%A6).
* **ALL Committee Members** will enter the email addresses they forward the newsletter to in the Google sheet Katherine created. Susan will then add the email addresses to the newsletter distribution list in GovDelivery.
* **Emma Wilson** will follow up with the Gilchrest Center for additional information.
* **LiLi** will forward results of the survey to the Data and Dashboard Committee for analysis.
* **LiLi** will begin work on articles for the March newsletter.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, March 11, 2021 10:00 – 11:30 AM