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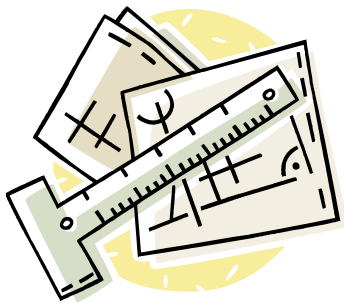
Community Literacy of Ontario

Our Voice

Performance Management Bulletin

Performance management is all of the good work that we do to improve our organization's performance and to maintain that level of performance. As part of its ongoing transformation, Employment Ontario will be implementing a standard performance management framework for all of its agencies. (Source: Presentation by Kevin French, Assistant Deputy Minister, to the Employment Ontario Service Delivery Manager's Forum, Toronto, November 24 and 25, 2008. www.eopg.ca)

In previous years, Literacy and Basics Skills (LBS) agencies have been working towards establishing a Continuous Improvement Performance Management System, or CIPMS. That work will continue in 2009 and future years, but we will now be using the more generic term of performance management framework (PMF) in common with all other agencies in Employment Ontario. LBS agencies were introduced to performance management through CIPMS training offered in the various literacy sectors and streams in 2007 and 2008.

As outlined in MTCU correspondence to LBS agencies on December 19, 2008, priorities for the coming year (2009-2010) include "establishing performance indicators to demonstrate improvement of outcomes and organizational capacity". You will find more information and resources about organizational capacity on pages 2 through 7 of this newsletter.

Measuring outcomes is done through effective data collection and analysis. To help all Employment Ontario agencies improve their data collection methods and report on their achievements, work continues to establish the new Employment Ontario Information System (EOIS). This system will support all Employment Ontario agencies, including those involved in literacy.

You can learn more about the EOIS and access new and updated information on Employment Ontario at the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway website. Be sure to check it regularly. You can find it at www.eopg.ca.

Organizational Capacity

Organizational capacity is an important component of performance management because by identifying our capacity, we not only identify what we are currently capable of, but we can also identify areas of strength and weakness. We can use these findings to help us determine the areas we want to focus on for program improvement.

When we talk about capacity, what specific areas of program management should we be looking at? First and foremost, we are looking at the resources, knowledge and processes that we use in our agencies. This includes things like human resources, financial resources, program management, community linkages, and technology.

Employment Ontario agencies that deliver Employment Services were recently required to complete a Capacity Survey which asked them to report on their organizational capacity. When completing the survey, agencies were required to not only indicate if they did or did not have a particular process or policy, they were also required to substantiate their answers. Results from the survey are being used as part of a larger process that will determine which agencies have the capacity to continue to deliver Employment Services under Employment Ontario.

The following areas of organizational capacity were highlighted in the survey:
⇒ Customer Service Management
⇒ Service Delivery
⇒ Governance
⇒ Human Resources
⇒ Information Technology
⇒ Finance
⇒ Privacy
⇒ Evaluation and Planning

The full survey can be downloaded from the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway website (www.eopg.ca). Although Literacy and Basics Skills agencies were not required to complete this survey at this time, it is expected that they will be required to fill out a similar survey in the future. Therefore, it is definitely worth reviewing the survey to explore the areas of organizational capacity that were assessed and to consider how your literacy agency might "tune-up" in these critical areas. For more information about why the Employment Services Capacity Survey is important and the organizational capacity areas it examines, be sure to read CLO's *November 2008 E-Communiqué* which can be found on our website at www.nald.ca/clo/communique.htm.

What is our organizational capacity as Literacy and Basic Skills agencies? Do we have solid, demonstrable capacity in all of the areas identified in MTCU's capacity survey? What resources, knowledge and processes do we excel at and where do we need to increase our capacity? If you can't readily answer these questions, now is the time to start examining your organizational capacity and identifying areas that need to be improved in the coming year.

A good way to begin to identify your current organizational capacity and your areas of strength and weakness is to examine your most recent Program Monitoring Report . Although we may not have been calling it organizational capacity, the program monitoring process is all about capacity and agency performance, where an agency is meeting or exceeding its potential, and where improvements are needed. This can provide you with an excellent starting point for future improvements.

Policies for Human Resource Management

Staffing is a key element of organizational capacity, but human resource management is not just about how many staff members work at your agency and the hours they work. It encompasses a number of issues including hiring practices, equity, policies about hours of work, performance appraisals, severance and more. Developing effective HR policies is a key component to success.

Your agency's human resources policies should include information about the following areas:
⇒ Employee rights
⇒ Hiring procedures
⇒ Performance evaluations
⇒ Rate of pay
⇒ Hours of work
⇒ Statutory holidays
⇒ Vacation entitlements
⇒ Leaves of absence (with and without pay)
⇒ Sick leave
⇒ Jury duty
⇒ Employee benefits
⇒ Professional development
⇒ Expenses
⇒ Conflict of interest
⇒ Harassment in the workplace
⇒ Confidentiality
⇒ Dress code
⇒ Complaint procedures
⇒ Termination

In Community Literacy of Ontario's *"Guide for the Development of Policies and Procedures – Volume 1"* you can find sample human resource policies. This guide is available online at CLO's website at: www.nald.ca/clo. Just click under "Publications".

Privacy Policies

Does your agency have policies related to the information it collects? This isn't just a nice thing to do, it's the law. Agencies are responsible for maintaining the privacy of all personal and private information we collect from agency stakeholders (learners, volunteers, staff and others).

In fact, Employment Ontario's recent capacity survey required agencies delivering Employment Services to identify and demonstrate that they have privacy policies in place in accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). You can find detailed information about PIPEDA by visiting the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada's website at www.privcom.gc.ca.

Sample Privacy Policy

Source: Northern Connections Adult Learning Centres in Sharbot Lake, Ontario.

Our agency respects the privacy of our members, clients, volunteers, staff, donors, sponsors and stakeholders. We are committed to ensuring that appropriate measures and safeguards are in place to protect specific information that is held for the purpose of the program.
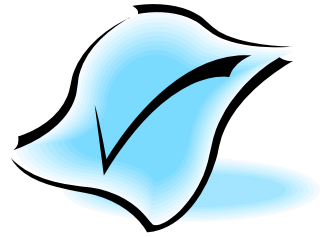
Accountability

⇒ We will ensure the safe custody and control of all private information.
⇒ Information will not be transferred to third parties without the consent of the individual.
⇒ The Board of Directors will designate an individual to be responsible for ensuring privacy and compliance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and all other privacy legislation. This person will also be responsible to implement procedures and train all employees and volunteers.

Identifying Purpose

We understand that some of the information we hold on members, clients, volunteers, staff, donors, and stakeholders is private, which is why we collect personal information only for the following purposes:

⇒ To establish and maintain a responsible relationship and provide ongoing service and support.
⇒ To conduct appropriate screening procedures for those volunteers and staff who may find themselves in a position of trust with the clients of the organization.
⇒ To develop, enhance, market or provide opportunities consistent with the program mandate.
⇒ To maintain, manage and develop our programs and operations, through statistical review, solicited feedback and support.
⇒ To meet program and government requirements.

Consent: Members, clients, volunteers, staff, donors, sponsors and stakeholders do have choices and can refuse or withdraw consent for us to keep and use information. They may request that their names be removed from our various lists; they can refuse to provide personal information to us, and they may withdraw consent at any time. In all cases this may limit our ability to provide appropriate service and support to these individuals.

Limiting Collection: The collection of personal information shall be limited to that which is necessary for the purposes identified by the organization. Information shall be collected by fair and lawful means.

Accuracy: At all times we strive to keep personal information accurate and up-to-date.

Safeguard: Personal information shall be protected by security safeguards appropriate to the sensitivity of the information. Access to information will be on a "need to know" basis only.

Individual Access: Upon request, an individual shall be informed of the existence, use and disclosure of his or her personal information and shall be given access to that information. An individual shall be able to challenge the accuracy and completeness of the information and have it amended as appropriate.

Challenging Compliance: We will investigate all privacy complaints and respond appropriately. Complaint procedures will be kept in place and available to all stakeholders.

Financial Policies and Procedures

Does your agency have financial policies and procedures in place that are monitored and updated regularly? Policies help to protect all financial stakeholders — program staff, bookkeepers, the Board of Directors (or other governing body), and funders.

Financial policies help demonstrate your organizational capacity and this is one of the questions asked on the LBS Program Monitoring Report. Finance policies and procedures is also one of the indicators of capacity in the recent Employment Ontario survey for agencies delivering Employment Services.

Financial policies and procedures do not have to be complex but they do have to reflect the needs of your organization. For example, if you have more than one funding source, your policies and procedures will need to address the individual requirements of each funder and identify how you keep funds separate and accounted for. To use another example, your financial policies will also need to identify who has the authority to authorize expenditures, both for approving expenses and for actually signing cheques. A common practice is for two people to be authorized to sign cheques. Often, more than two people are designated for this purpose so that if one person is not available someone else can sign. All authorized signatures must be on file with your banking institution and records must be updated whenever there is a change.

Your policies must also indicate how often financial reports must be approved (monthly or quarterly) and by whom they must be approved (by the Board of Directors or some other authority?). Your policies must also state for how long your financial records should be kept so that if there are any questions or concerns about financial records and reports, information can be verified. Your audit practices are also part of your financial policies. At the end of each fiscal year, all financial records must be audited for LBS agencies that receive more than $100,000 in annual funding. Agencies receiving less than this amount often still have an accountant review their records for accuracy through a procedure called an engagement review. Another item covered in your policies is the financial reporting requirements to funders and other stakeholders.

In Community Literacy of Ontario's *"Guide for the Development of Policies and Procedures—Volume 1"* you can find sample financial policies. This guide is available online at CLO's website at: www.nald.ca/clo. Just click under "Publications".

Financial Management Checklist

⇒ Our financial systems conform to generally accepted accounting practices for non-profit groups.

⇒ Managers, key personnel and our Board of Directors (if applicable) know how to read and understand financial statements. (i.e., a budget, an income statement, and a balance sheet.)

⇒ Training in how to read/understand our agency's financial statements is provided as required for the appropriate personnel.

⇒ We conduct special screening and reference checks for all staff and board members who handle money and have signing authority.

⇒ We follow standard practices for setting budgets.

⇒ We follow standard practices for financial reporting and specific guidelines for each funder.

⇒ We follow standard auditing practices, and the auditor is approved by the appropriate manager or governing body.

⇒ Statements of income and expenditures are reviewed regularly by the appropriate manager or governing body. Annual financial statements are approved by the appropriate manager or governing body.

⇒ Our expenditures are consistent with our proposed budget.

⇒ Agency planning takes into account the current finances and future needs of our agency.

⇒ Our organization has clearly identified who is responsible for specific financial decisions.

⇒ We have specified how financial information will be shared with board members, donors, our membership and the general public.

⇒ Our organization's assets are adequately insured.

⇒ Our financial reports are submitted to the relevant funding agencies in a timely and accurate fashion.

⇒ All supplies, services and equipment are purchased within budget guidelines.

⇒ All expenses can be directly linked to the delivery of LBS services.

⇒ Expenses outside of approved budget guidelines are reviewed and authorized by the appropriate staff and board members.

⇒ All financial records and documents are kept in a secure location. Blank cheques and cancelled cheques are kept in a locked drawer or cabinet when not being used.

⇒ Clear guidelines are established and followed for the use of credit cards by staff and board members.

⇒ All legislation regarding financial policies and procedures is reviewed regularly and changes are made as required to reflect current legislation.

(Source: *A Guide for the Development of Policies and Procedures.* Community Literacy of Ontario)

Organizational Capacity Resources

Literacy Link South Central (LLSC) developed *A Collection of Policy and Procedure Templates for Adult Literacy Service Providers.* As its name suggests, this resource includes a variety of templates in the areas of human resources, financial management, referral, community outreach and more. You can find this excellent resource at LLSC's website at: www.llsc.on.ca/resources.html.

For more information about financial policies and procedures, be sure to review the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' *Financial Policies and Procedures Fact Sheet* at www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/facts/01-047.htm.

The HR Council for the Voluntary and Non Profit Sector has an excellent website full of valuable HR information. In particular, be sure to check out their *HR Toolkit* which contains information on policies, hiring, motivating and training staff. See: www.hrvs-rhsbc.ca/home.cfm.

Board Governance is part of organizational capacity and performance management. An excellence source of online information on this topic is a Canadian website called *Board Development* (www.boarddevelopment.org). This website contains user-friendly information on the board's role, the importance of boards, tools and resources and board training .

Charity Village (www.charityvillage.com) provides a number of informative articles and resources about organizational management, including financial management, human resources management, organizational change and more.

Online Training from CLO in Organizational Capacity

CLO offers a number of online, self study training modules on our "Literacy Basics" website. Modules include *The ABCs of CIPMS, Employment Ontario, Strategic Planning* and *Evaluation.*

All of these modules include tips, tools and techniques that can help agencies enhance their programs, demonstrate their strengths and incorporate a culture of continuous improvement.

To access these informative training modules, please visit:
www.nald.ca/literacybasics

CIPMS: Online and Interactive Project

Community Literacy of Ontario is managing an innovative project called *"CIPMS Online and Interactive"*. A key deliverable is to develop an online Moodle classroom. CLO's Moodle classroom will provide performance management resources, tools, training, online discussion groups, and the chance to practice using various performance management tools.

The classroom will be designed for self-directed online learning, with some interactive components. CLO's Moodle classroom will be launched in May 2009 and for that initial month it will offer live and interactive training facilitated by CLO staff. After the initial launch, our classroom will then continue in a self-directed format and be accessible to all literacy practitioners and other stakeholders across Ontario.

Moodle (http://moodle.org/) is a user-friendly, interactive online learning environment. Moodle is a very popular way to participate in online training and is used in virtually every country in the world by large organizations such as colleges and universities and also by small non profits and individuals. Participants in the *CIPMS Online and Interactive* training will not have to download any special software. Participants will simply click on an Internet link, register at CLO's Moodle site and join in. Access to our classroom will be free. Watch for more information in the coming months.

If you would like to learn more about Moodle, *AlphaPlus Centre* has developed an 8 week training course to help literacy practitioners learn about and explore Moodle's tools and features. Future dates for this course depend on funding, but you can sign up on a waiting list. For more information, please visit http://moodlee.alphaplus.ca.

Another fun way to learn about Moodle is to visit a demonstration of a Moodle course that was designed by *The Learning Hub* from The Centre for Employment and Learning (Avon Maitland District School Board). You can access the demonstration at the following link: www.learninghub.ca/moodle_demo/moodle_demo.swf.