



COO Peer Network Meeting Summary
Thursday, September 9, 2004, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Hosted by Points of Light Foundation, Washington, DC

Topics:

- 1) Update on Shared Services Among Members
- 2) Background Checks for Volunteers
- 3) Supporting the Acquisition of Leadership Talent for Nonprofit Organizations
- 4) Vice Chair for COO Peer Network
- 5) Next Meeting
- 6) Attendees

1) Update on Shared Services Among Members—Phil Collyer, National Assembly

The National Assembly's Business Partners Program is a service for Assembly members and their affiliates that leverages their combined purchasing power to reduce expenses. There are now 16 business partners, three of which were highlighted:

- Citizens Conferencing (phone, video and web conferencing)—2½ times less expensive than previous conferencing service. Points of Light Foundation and Women in Community Service both switched to Citizens are very pleased.
- Insight Public Sector negotiates lower rates on technology products and services for nonprofits. Women in Community Service has used this company.
- Consorta is a group purchasing co-op that offers reduced costs on thousands of products and services, such as office supplies, food, printing, appliances, etc. MENTOR found a significantly better rate for FedEx through Consorta.

Attachment: 4-page handout that summarizes the 16 business partners and provides contact information.

For more information, contact Phil Collyer, Director, Business Partners Program, National Assembly at pcollyer@nassembly.org.

2) Background Checks for Volunteers—Margo Pedroso, MENTOR

FBI fingerprint-based checks are the most complete and accurate background checks available, yet they are often inaccessible, expensive, and time-consuming.

In 2003, Congress passed an 18-month pilot program that allowed three organizations (MENTOR, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and the National Council on Youth Sports) direct access to FBI fingerprint background checks. Each organization is using a different method for obtaining background checks.

MENTOR's portion of the pilot is called SafetyNET. MENTOR serves as the "pass-through" for criminal background checks for local mentoring organizations across the country. It costs \$18 to screen each volunteer (the standard FBI fee), and the turn-around time is 3-5 business days. Any criminal records are sent to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which makes the fitness determinations. For more information, visit <http://www.mentoring.org/safetynet/factsheet.adp>

Lessons learned:

- FBI checks can be done quickly.
- \$18 fee is too expensive for smaller organizations.
- There are misconceptions in the field about the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of background checks.
- State/local laws on background checks have not been superceded, which means that many organizations can't use this system even if it's better than what they currently have access to.
- The pilot program has approximately a 10% "hit rate" (a criminal record is found):
 - 55% percent of these individuals indicated on the background check application that they did not have a criminal record.
 - One-quarter of these individuals had a criminal record in a different state from where they applied to volunteer, which demonstrates the need for a nationwide check.
 - Fifteen percent of these individuals provided a different name or date of birth than was on the criminal record, which means that the criminal record might have been missed by a name-based background check.

Next steps:

- Ask Congress to extend pilot program.
- Work with Congress on a permanent workable system for obtaining criminal background checks on volunteers who work with children.
- Other organizations can become part of this process.

For more information, contact Margo Pedroso, Director, Institute for Public Policy and State Affairs, MENTOR, mpedroso@mentoring.org

3) Supporting the Acquisition of Leadership Talent for Nonprofit Organizations— Maureen Curley & Lauren Franks, Bridgestar

Bridgestar, an initiative of the Bridgespan Group, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing leadership for the nonprofit sector.

Trends in nonprofit sector:

- There are more nonprofits today than ever.
- Many nonprofits are growing and adding senior management ranks (often COO).
- The number of nonprofits currently recruiting senior managers is increasing.

In December 2003, Bridgestar launched a pilot program in Boston to increase the flow and effectiveness of senior leadership within and into the nonprofit sector. The pilot includes peer group meetings, “all-community gatherings” to discuss issues of pressing importance to nonprofit leaders, and online interaction tools.

Bridgestar produces a monthly E-newsletter that explores leadership and career-related issues in the nonprofit sector. Recent issues have focused on the role of the nonprofit COO, compensation, and nonprofit accountability.

Bridgestar also offers ways to recruit Board members and senior management. The National Council on the Aging used Bridgestar to recruit staff for the Access to Benefits Coalition.

For more information, visit www.bridgestar.org or contact Maureen Curley, Chief Relationship Officer (maureen.curley@bridgestar.org) or Lauren Franks, Membership Development Manager (lauren.franks@bridgestar.org).

4) Vice Chair for COO Peer Network

The group will elect a Vice Chair at the next meeting. Please send an e-mail to David Carrier (david@nassembly.org) if you are interested in this position.

5) Next Meeting

The last COO meeting was scheduled to be held in New York City, but it was cancelled, so the group decided to have the next meeting there. Walt Decker of

the American Foundation for the Blind offered to host the meeting. Suggested dates are Wednesday, January 12, 2005 and Wednesday, January 26, 2005. Please let David Carrier (david@nassembly.org) know which date works for you.

Topics:

- Election of Vice Chair
- Demonstration on accessibility of websites
- Managing Internet-related liability in youth work
- Collaboration among nonprofits
- Outcome measurement

6) Attendees:

Bill Bentley, Points of Light Foundation

Eliza Byard, GLSEN

David Carrier, National Assembly

Phil Collyer, National Assembly (speaker)

Maureen Curley, Bridgestar (speaker)

Walter Decker, American Foundation for the Blind

Dennis Fleming, Rockland County Youth Bureau

Lauren Franks, Bridgestar (speaker)

Marcia Kropf, Girls Inc.

Jackie Lendsey, Women in Community Service

Margo Pedroso, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership (speaker)

John Ratliff, Women in Community Service

Alan Rubin, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership

Cynthia Smith, First State Promise

Wendy Zenker, National Council on the Aging