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**Save the Date**  
**AVCOG Spring General Assembly and Workshop**

**Wednesday, May 19, 2021**  
**9:00 - 11:00 am**

## AGENDA

9:00 am – Introduction & General Assembly Meeting

9:15 am – **Kate Dufour**, Director, MMA's State and Federal Relations (SFR) Department American Rescue Plan Act Funding Discussion

9:45 am – **Heather Johnson**, Commissioner, Maine Department of Economic Community Development Implementation of 10-Year State Strategic Plan

10:15 am – **Joan Walton**, Community & Regional Transportation Planner, AVCOG Transportation priorities in the AVCOG region

10:45 am – Recognition Awards

Email Lisa Bonney at [Lbonney@avcog.org](mailto:Lbonney@avcog.org) to receive the link to attend.

## AVCOG is Now Hiring

Transit Coordinator - [job description](#)

- This is a full-time position operating out of AVCOG's Auburn location.
- Applicants should submit cover letter, resume, and a list of three references to Lisa Bonney at [Lbonney@avcog.org](mailto:Lbonney@avcog.org). This position will remain open until filled.

Wishing Marsha Well



As AVCOG's Transit Coordinator for 27 years, Marsha Bennett has been fundamental to Lewiston and Auburn's transit system. Marsha oversaw construction of two bus stations and increased citylink's ridership from 133,000 in 1995 to over 307,000 in 2019.

Amy Landry, AVCOG's Executive Director, notes, " We would like to thank Marsha for her many years of service and her tireless efforts to champion public transit in Lewiston-Auburn and beyond! Marsha has dedicated much of her career to improving transit in our region. We wish her well in her new role at WMTS."

## Meet the New Members of AVCOG's Team



### **Lynda Smith, Accountant**

Lynda grew up in the Lewiston-Auburn area. Although she moved to Tennessee for a few years, she couldn't wait to come back to her home state of Maine. She earned an A.S. in Accounting from Central Maine Community College in Auburn, and a B.S. from Southern New Hampshire University, where she's currently working on her Master's. Lynda has worked for several small businesses, helping to increase office process efficiency through spreadsheets and software programs, as well as creating office procedures. She lives with her husband, Don, in Litchfield and has three sons and four granddaughters.

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### **Ron Landis, Transportation Planner**

A native of Philadelphia, Ron recently relocated to Maine after visiting the state on vacation several times. Ron recently graduated from Temple University with a B.S. in Community Development in 2019 and Master of City & Regional Planning degree in 2020. Ron comes to AVCOG with transportation planning experience from his previous internship experiences with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and Montgomery County Planning Commission, located in Norristown, PA. He lives in Portland with his girlfriend and his year-old puppy, Raffi.

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### **Jaime Berard, Loan Officer/Portfolio Manager**

Jaime grew up in the Augusta area, and after spending 20 years in Vermont, she is grateful to return home. Jaime earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in business management from Thomas College in Waterville. Jaime formerly worked as a credit analyst for two regional banks in Vermont. Having previously worked in Small Business, she realized through the pandemic and working on PPP loans, that working with small business owners is where her heart is. She has four children (one grown) and lives in West Gardiner with three of her children, husband, and two cats.

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## **Household Hazardous Waste - Opening Day**

**Saturday, May 15 from 8:00 - 11:45 am** is the first day of the season to dispose of your household hazardous waste at the the Western Maine Environmental Depot, co-located with the Lewiston Solid Waste Facility on 424 River Road in Lewiston.

The depot will be open on the third Saturday of every month from May-October.

For participating municipalities and a list of disposable items, check our [website](#) or contact Lisa Bonney at [Lbonney@avcog.org](mailto:Lbonney@avcog.org) or 207-783-9186.

## Funding Available from the Restaurant Revitalization Fund



U.S. Small Business  
Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration is pleased to announce the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, which is specifically designed to provide direct funding awards to help small restaurants get back on their feet. The program is open to eligible businesses involved in food service i.e. restaurants, cafes, caterers, tap rooms, bars, and many other small businesses who generate at least 33% of their revenue from food and drink sales for consumption on site.

This fund features an easy-to-understand application, and for the first 21 days of the program applications will be reserved for Women-Owned, Veteran-Owned, and socially & economically disadvantaged small restaurants.

The Maine District Office of the Small Business Administration will be hosting a few webinars to answer any questions you may have, so please register to attend:

- Friday, April 30 at 10:00 - 11:00 am  
[Register for the Webinar](#)
- Wednesday, May 5 at 10:00 - 11:00 am  
[Register for the Webinar](#)

Additional information about the Restaurant Revitalization fund can be found at [www.SBA.gov/restaurants](http://www.SBA.gov/restaurants), or contact the Maine District Office at [Maine\\_DO@sba.gov](mailto:Maine_DO@sba.gov).

### 2021 Stream Crossing Grant

Maine DEP is providing grants again this year for upgrading stream crossings to provide for better fish habitat, flood resilience, and easier maintenance. These grants are limited to a \$125,000 grant per project, and up to two projects can be awarded to a municipality in the same award year. This year there is \$4 million dollars available for grants.

Submissions are due **November 19**, but generally some field work and engineering work is required, so it's the perfect time to start considering whether you have projects that would be good candidates. For more information please contact Shelley Norton at [snorton@avcog.org](mailto:snorton@avcog.org).

More [general information](#) and a [list](#) of past projects can be found on the Maine DEP website.

Have you or someone you know  
lost their job?



Visit [OnwardME.org](https://www.onwardme.org). The new OnwardME platform launched earlier this month is worth visiting. This one-stop resource provides support to Mainers impacted by job loss in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Displaced workers looking for help can:

- Connect to emergency resources
- Connect to training programs to upskill for a new career
- Be matched with employers looking for people with their current skill set

The website brings together the resources, organizations and direction Mainers need to navigate life during the COVID-19 state of emergency. The platform connects people to funds and necessities such as groceries, shelter or medicine.

It also provides connections to start retraining for a new career and work opportunities for people in-demand skills. By providing these different connections, the people of Maine can get back to work and know that despite the social distancing, they are not alone.

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## COVID-19 Economic Recovery Dashboard

Curious to know how Maine's economy is recovering from the pandemic? Take a look at Maine's Center for Business and Economic Research's comprehensive [COVID-19 Economic Recovery Dashboard](#).

This data dashboard provides statewide and community data from a variety of public and private sector sources that assist with monitoring the economic and community conditions during the response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several interactive tools track Maine's COVID-19 economic recovery in real-time. Users can monitor economic recovery indicators across multiple locations or view recovery indicator trends for a single region. Indicator variables will be updated monthly, or as new data is released.

This work was funded by the US Economic Development Administration through the US CARES Act of 2020. These resources are intended to compliment and not replace other economic and labor market data and analysis provided by state agencies and other outlets in Maine. If you have questions, ideas, or would like to connect with one of their experts, contact them at [usmcber@maine.edu](mailto:usmcber@maine.edu).

This dashboard can be accessed on the new [COVID-19 Recovery page](#) on AVCOG's website, along with links to information to help communities and businesses move beyond the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## Maine JobLink

[Maine JobLink](#) is a web-based job-matching and labor market information system. It provides job seekers, employers, and training providers with easy-to-use tools that support a wide range of activities. As a service of the public workforce system, Maine JobLink is completely free to use. You only need a computer and internet access to do the following:

- Create and post a resume or job order
- Determine whether you're eligible for state-or federally funded workforce programs
- Search for the ideal job or job candidate
- Search for the ideal training or service provider
- Research labor market information

- And much more

Create a self-service account today to manage your job or resume search. Friendly, knowledgeable workforce development professionals are also available at your local CareerCenter to assist you. Whether you're an individual looking for the perfect career opportunity, an employer looking for the ideal job candidate, or a training provider who wants to get the word out about your programs, check out the tools and services on Maine JobLink and let Maine work for you.

## Statewide Maine Wild Blueberry Weekend

Maine's first ever Wild Blueberry Weekend is scheduled for **August 7-8, 2021** as a celebration of the state's iconic fruit and the people behind it – the growers and processors. The weekend will revolve around an Eat. Drink. Experience. Maine Wild Blueberries theme. Hospitality, foodservice, and value-added producers are invited to join as partners in providing Mainers and visitors the opportunity to taste wild blueberries in many different ways.

### Event Goals:

- Increase public awareness of wild blueberries, which are uniquely different from ordinary blueberries.
- Drive visitors to participating farms and encourage them to get to know their local farmer.
- Sell Maine wild blueberries in a variety of formats, including fresh and value-added products along with food and beverage items.
- Promote COVID-19 economic recovery of Maine wild blueberry farms and processors along with restaurants, bakeries, breweries, inns, etc.

### How to Participate as a Partner:

- Add wild blueberries to your menu: Offer wild-blueberry themed products and beverages to the regular or daily menu at your business during the weekend.
- Promote Wild Blueberry Weekend on Social: Share details about the weekend on your social media platforms and via e-newsletters to customers (before, during, and after the event). Sample posts and assets will be provided.
- Have Your Business Listed on the Wild Blueberry Weekend landing page: All businesses that participate will be listed on the event landing page (currently in development). Social media promotion efforts will drive traffic to the event landing page to help raise awareness for the weekend.
- [Register](#) your business by **May 15** and supply 1-2 high quality images of your product to Caroline Paras at [caroline.paras@maine.edu](mailto:caroline.paras@maine.edu).

For more information, contact Caroline Paras, Research Assistant for the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine at [caroline.paras@maine.edu](mailto:caroline.paras@maine.edu) or 207-318-7900.



## AVCOG Business Loans

AVCOG is now offering the following loan programs:

### **COVID Loan Program**

- Borrow up to \$10,000
- 3 years at 3% interest
- Visit our [website](#) for more details

### **Micro Loan Program**

- Up to \$50,000
- Quick loans available for qualified borrowers
- Visit our [website](#) for more details

### **Business Loan Program**

- Up to \$150,000
- Visit our [website](#) for more details

For assistance contact Jaime Berard at [jberard@avcog.org](mailto:jberard@avcog.org) or 207-783-9186 x220



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**Our mailing address is:**

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