

WASCOE Presidents Report
WASCOE Convention April 26, 2019
Jake Bourget

WASCOE Membership,

Another year gone by and what did I notice the most? Retirements! I know things are constantly changing and we need to continually keep ourselves updated to the new way, but the fact is a lot of experience, direction, and history walked out the door in the past year. In August 2018 we had 4 acting CEDs. 8 months later in April 2019 we have 15 acting CEDs! That's a lot of history out the door. I'm not a history person really, but what I do know about history is that we are supposed to learn from it and not make the same mistakes as what was made in our history. I believe that applies to FSA as well. Some lessons learned are now gone so I remind everyone that maybe we now must look harder; but look and ask what worked in the past. WASCOE has pushed for a Shared Management plan that makes sense for Wisconsin and is pleased we should now see it with so many vacant CED positions. We are glad the SED is taking a hard look at it and involving the collective minds of our COCs and management team. This will work for the same reason that WASCOE works. We have the power of the collective minds of the greatest PTs and CEDs in this state with our Directors, Committee Chairs, and Officers working together, and it makes me very proud of this organization. Collectively WASCOE has the power to ask the right questions of management.

Speaking of asking; I have too many conversations with people that won't speak up but have great questions! I urge everyone that if there is something you don't understand, others don't either, ask the question. If the numbers don't seem to add up, ask the question why. If there are holes in directions speak up to get them filled in. If we're not getting the explanations promised, ask where they are and when we'll get it. Morale of this story is simple, ask the question it keeps people honest, on task, and projects moving.

Here's a question that's been asked of me. "So how do we staff offices now?" Frankly, it's a tough one and it appears if they just keep people confused enough we will all just give up! We once used what was called workload. Count what you do and where you do it and that's where the staff goes. Sounds simple so we had to make it more difficult, so let's come up with a time-based system, webTA, where everyone keeps track of their time on each program and we'll divide staff up that way. But we seem to be sure to change a bunch of codes to use for your time throughout the year, so we can keep telling everyone after each year we can't use that data because we don't have a complete year or consistency between the years, so we still can't use it for staffing. So then let's throw something new in there and we'll call it the Optimal Office Efficiency Ranking system. But research shows we shouldn't use that alone and we need real numbers exactly like what we used to do when we started. We called it workload! But we can't tell anybody that so let's call the real work we do something fancy like Managerial Cost Accounting (MCA)!!!! Right back where we started? You tell me. But in all seriousness always remember don't lose sight of your office workload and how to best serve our customer. It will always come back to that and what we can't control is the budget. It always comes back to that!

I've been asked, "why have the conventions been around the state and not in the middle? Wouldn't it make sense to have them in the middle of the state, so everyone travels about the same?" Well, excellent point and we've done that. But what we've found is that we don't get new people to come and see what's going on. We are hoping that by moving it around the state and by putting it in your backyard you will come for the first time, like it, and still come to it when it's not in your back yard and meet new people in their back yard! The location is open for discussion each year and all ideas are welcome!

I want to remind everyone to stay updated by visiting the Midwest Area website. Be sure to check it out and set a bookmark to: <http://midwestnascoe.org/> hover over the word "STATES" in green and click on any of the states including Wisconsin!

I want to send out a special thank you to the WASCOE Officers Shelby Niskanen - Secretary, Jon Beam - Treasurer, and Jon Williams – VP, as well as all the Directors and Chairs for WASCOE. They are there at any hour of the day to help any of us with whatever they can to benefit you as a member and the agency. Tell them thank you whenever you see them.

Lastly, I just want to mention that I am in my last year as WASCOE-President. As an FSA employee I always felt that I wanted to be involved in WASCOE to be a part of a collective mind that only had one thing in mind and that is to lobby for change only IF necessary and WHEN necessary to make things better for our employees and our customers. In my last year I ask you, if you'd like to be a part of "necessary change" to make a positive difference please consider being a chair, director, or officer for WASCOE. I thank you all for many great years in WASCOE.

Thank you!