

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS ONE-STOP PARTNERS MEETING

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains One-Stop Partners met on Tuesday, February 26, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was held at the One-Stop Center, 1856 Thompson Bridge Rd. Gainesville, GA. The following were present:

Philip Cortese, Athens Technical College
Stephanie Ponce, GDOL, Business Services
Beth Williams, GVRA/VR Program
Michael Fisher, Ninth District Opportunity
Whitney Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Mary Margaret Garrett, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Diane Jackson, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Janet Whittaker, Gateway
Kevin Whittaker, GDOL
Lupita Smith, GDOL
Jessica Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
John Phillips, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Jim Watson, Lanier Technical College
Shelby Ward, North Georgia Technical College
Tiffany Lofton, Lanier Technical College
Pat V. Freeman, Legacy Link, Inc.
Cory Addison, Goodwill
Stephanie Benson, Athens Technical College
Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates
Marsha Hopkins, Hopkins Associates

Welcome and Introductions

Benjie Hopkins, Operator for the Georgia Mountains One-Stop Center, welcomed everyone, and had each person give a brief introduction.

Minutes from the November 27, 2018 meeting were emailed previously. A copy is posted at:

www.onestopworkgamtns.org

Announcements

John Phillips announced that House Bill #123 is currently under consideration in the Georgia Legislature. This bill proposes that the state administration of WIOA programs change back to the Georgia Department of Labor from the Technical College System of Georgia.

Beth Williams announced that Shawn Ryan joined Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency as Executive Director on February 18, 2019.

Stephanie Ponce announced that Wayne Mack is the new Director for GDOL for GeorgiaBEST@Work and GeorgiaBEST@Home. These are free services, available online. He will be handling Regional Summits. The next Summit will be held in Forsyth County on July 31st. It is open to all employers.

GDOL has a new "Positive Recruitment" program, working directly with employers.

Tiffany Lofton is the new Dean of Adult Education for Lanier Technical College. Classes began on the new Gainesville Campus in January.

Focus Topic: Gateway Domestic Violence Center <http://www.gatewaydvcenter.org/>

Marsha Hopkins introduced Janet Whittaker, Shelter Manager for Gateway Domestic Violence Center. Janet has a BS in Manufacturing Engineering from Bradley University in Illinois and a Master of Arts in Christian Thought from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. She worked for ten years as Product Manager for Panduit as Division Manager for Tools and then for Printing. She served for fifteen years as an Associate for Sugar Hill United Methodist Church. She has been with Gateway for over three years.

Gateway was established in Gainesville in the 1980s to provide shelter for those who were involved in domestic violence. Since then it has grown to an 18-bed transitional housing facility. They are currently in the process of building a 46-bed center. Cindy Bryant is the Transitional Housing Coordinator for Gateway. She manages ten apartments, offering transitional housing for victims of domestic abuse. The mission of Gateway is to provide a safe place for individuals and their children to stay away from those who have abused them. Gateway also provides support services for abuse victims, collaborates with other community organizations, and seeks to prevent domestic violence.

Ms. Whitaker stressed that individuals have the right to choose if they will leave an abusive situation. She stated that approximately 15% of the abused population is male, and that some males come to the group sessions. Child care assistance is provided. A crisis hotline is in place to refer individuals to the local shelter. The AHIMSA House is available to assist pets while their owners are receiving services through Gateway and other Domestic Violence Centers <http://ahimsahouse.org/about-us/what-we-do/>

There are now three Thrift Stores operating to benefit Gateway. Two in Gainesville, at 1080 Dawsonville Highway and at 1642 Park Hill Dr., and a new one at 3640 Mundy Mill Rd., Oakwood.

Various grants provide about 65% of Gateway's funding. This includes support from United Way of Hall County. The remainder of their funding is provided through donations from individuals, organizations, and churches. The approach is to treat the whole family unit. Occupational therapy is offered as well as assistance with legal issues. Volunteers are needed. There are positions for interns in Human Services, college level, age 18+. The average stay at Gateway is 46 nights. However, service can extend up to two years. Gateway partners with other shelters in other counties as needed. Hotels are also used to house individuals in need of shelter. Jessica Butler currently serves as Executive Director of Gateway.

Partner Information

Benjie Hopkins reported that administrators for the 2020 U.S. Census have contacted the One-Stop Center to promote recruitment of individuals to assist them. Individuals must be at least 18 years old, and a U.S. Citizen. Pay ranges from \$14 - \$22/hr. Applications may be completed online.

Benjie stated that during the period from October through December, 628 individuals were served through the One-Stop Center. This figure is up 24% from last year. Referrals to services are also being measured. Lanier Technical College continues to offer GED on site two days each week.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains staff convened recently to plan outreach strategies for identifying more individuals who can benefit from services offered. Ideas from all sources are welcome.

North Georgia Technical College and Lanier Technical College are each employing one full-time individuals to work with eligible students at these institutions to make sure they are aware of and are benefitting from WIOA services. These individuals will be employees of the Technical College System of Georgia. This strategy will also be implemented in additional technical colleges.

Benjie requested that all Partners review the One-Stop website at: <https://onestopworkgamtns.org/> and report any changes or corrections needed to him or to Marsha at: hopkinsassociates77@gmail.com or 470 577-0823.

Lanier Technical College held a Career Day recently. One of their new areas of concentration for training is in the area of watersports since there are some 17,000 boating-related jobs in the state, and approximately \$632 million is spent annually on boating in Georgia.

North Georgia Technical College continues to experience an enrollment increase. Spring enrollment is up 2% The most recent statistic regarding employment of NGTC graduates is 94% entering employment after graduation. Shelby Ward distributed a flyer from NGTC Continuing Education Department inviting the public to participate in upcoming educational trips out of state.

Philip Cortese announced that Athens Technical College now serves Morgan County. He reported that CDL training has been shortened to 5 ½ weeks at both the Monroe and the Elberton Campus of ATC. There is a new Outreach Coordinator for Hart County. (Lanier Technical College has also shortened the training period for CDL.)

The Georgia Department of Labor reported 114,000 jobs were added in Georgia in 2018.

The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services served approximately 36,000 individuals in 2018. For every \$1 spent by GVRA, \$3 is returned to the economy.

Legacy Link continues to offer employment training as well as housing assistance for seniors. From March 6 through April 10, Living Well Classes are being offered once each week for six weeks. Some of these wellness programs are offered in churches, others are offered in public housing centers.

Ninth District Opportunity has over 500 staff members and an annual budget of approximately \$40 million.

The organization serves 24,000 individuals in 14,000 families. They recently served as the lead agency for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' "Point in Time Count", a one-night project to identify homeless individuals in the region.

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission's website offers a "Calendar of Events for Workforce Development" under the WorkSource Georgia Mountains section: http://www.gmrc.ga.gov/WD_Events.htm

The WorkSource Georgia Mountains Career Coaches continue to operate throughout the region offering job search and resume services. The "Services Overview Session", required prior to application for services, is also offered on these coaches. This orientation is also offered on computers in the lobby of the One-Stop Center's office in Gainesville, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Jessica Williams reported that the next Summer Conference for Youth is scheduled for June 7, 2019. This event will offer information about workforce training and employment options for youth in this region. There will be a contest to name the conference. Door prizes are being sought. A special prize will be a laptop to be given to one youth participant. Jessica will be presenting a proposal to the Georgia Mountains Workforce Board concerning a new expansion of Youth Services.

Cory Addison reported that Goodwill Industries continues to seek opportunities to work with WIOA and with Vocational Rehabilitation in providing employment training. Their organization has a contract with DHS.

Date for Next Meeting

The date for the next One-Stop Partners Meeting was set for Tuesday, April 30, 2019 at 11:00 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:40 p.m.