

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS ONE-STOP PARTNERS MEETING

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains One-Stop Partners met on Tuesday, October 29, 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:

Beth Williams, GVRA/VR Program
Lonnie Perkin, Child Support/Fatherhood, Ga. Dept. of Human Services
Greg Vitek, Lanier Technical College
Jessica Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Whitney Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Maria Calkins, Gainesville Housing Authority
Beth Oropeza, United Way of Hall County
Pat Freeman, Legacy Link, Inc.
Lupita Smith, Georgia Department of Labor
Kevin Hankinson, Georgia Department of Labor
Shannon Cole, Lanier Technical College
Shelby Ward, North Georgia Technical College
Stephanie Benson, Athens Technical College
Jim Watson, Lanier Technical College
Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates, One-Stop Operator
Marsha Hopkins, Hopkins Associates, One-Stop Operator

Welcome and Introductions

Benjie Hopkins welcomed everyone, and had each person give a brief introduction.

Minutes

Minutes from the August 27, 2019 Partners Meeting were emailed previously. A copy is posted on the One-Stop website: www.onestopworkgamtms.org

Program Focus - Service Delivery: Challenges & Solutions

Marsha Hopkins began a group discussion about service delivery challenges. She shared ideas from a recent radio broadcast, including the importance of quality relationships between individuals in small groups, and the effect those relationships can have on larger groups. All organizations deal with content – that is, knowing “what”, and with process – that is, knowing “how”. It is also important to know connection – that is, knowing “who”. When there is a challenge or a problem, we need to ask, “Who has knowledge of this issue, and is willing to help me?” The Spanish term *allegado* may be applied – that is, an individual who is knowledgeable in a specific area, and who is willing to lend assistance.

Partners offered ideas about how to guide individuals through the application process, into and through training, and all the way to completion, and into employment:

- Importance of empowering individuals to become independent rather than enabling them to be dependent.
- Some families can provide guidance if they know the process and the supportive language needed. Interruptions often occur in plans for education when there is a family illness or other crisis. This results in a young person taking a job to meet immediate financial needs rather than entering a training program.
- School counselors are overloaded with responsibilities. A large percentage of students indicate they intend to continue their education beyond high school (to leave “meaningfully”), but many of them do not do so. Students need volunteer mentors/champions/navigators to guide them through. One survey indicated that many successful students cited individuals from outside the school as having the greatest influence on them.

- Dual enrollment was mentioned as an excellent option for some students. This program gets the students in the college system, gives them a head start, and gives them the feeling of being a part of the world of higher education.
- Hart County High School has a College and Career Academy that sponsors monthly lunch meetings at the school where local employers and students have lunch together and discuss career paths. <https://www.hart.k12.ga.us/domain/1337>
- North Georgia Technical College sponsors meetings with high school and GED students and employers at their career center
- It is important to ask students at an early age, “Who is your mentor?” If there is not one, then identify someone who can take that responsibility. Develop long-term relationships. One school assigned several students as young as kindergarten age to be followed by a fourth-grade elementary teacher through the students when they complete fourth grade.
- The Retired Teachers’ Association was recommended as a good source for mentors. Their state headquarters is in Flowery Branch. <https://www.garetirededucators.org/>
- One challenge noted was that counselors often do not identify students and refer them to Vocational Rehabilitation Services prior to their junior or senior year. Students as young as 14 with physical, emotional or mental needs may be served by VR.

Lunch: During lunch, the Partners continued their conversations and made additional connections for improving services.

Partner Updates:

Lanier Technical College: Shannon Cole has been named as Dean for LTC. 24 students who have been nominated by instructors for the GOAL (Georgia Occupational Award of Leadership) award. <https://www.laniertech.edu/dyk2.aspx?id=130748>. This competition identifies and rewards outstanding students from each of the technical colleges in Georgia. The overall state winner receives a car to use during a year of ambassadorship for the entire system.

Greg Vitek reported that the Apprenticeship Program continues to grow. The Apprenticeship Program will soon have an Employer Roundup session. There is a new grant from Appalachian Regional Commission to help improve the economy of the region and improve wages of employees.

North Georgia Technical College: Shelby Ward reported that student applications are increasing for the new Agribusiness program that includes an interconnected, recycling system of aquaponics growing shrimp, fish, and lettuce. The food produced will be shared with local schools.

Athens Technical College: Stephanie Benson reported that ATC has a new agribusiness building on their Elbert County campus. ATC has a new student entry and a “hub” to house multiple student services such as financial aid in one location.

Legacy Link, Inc.: Pat Freeman noted that this is Medicare Enrollment season, and Legacy Link has useful information available concerning what services are available and how to access them. Also, a computerized comprehensive data base of services for veterans is being developed by a Legacy Link employee who is veteran.

Georgia Department of Labor: Kevin Hankinson announced a Veterans’ Resource Fair at St. John’s Baptist Church, Gainesville to be held on Saturday, November 2, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Job search, health screenings, and food for the community will be included. <https://accesswdun.com/article/2019/10/845072/american-legion-hosts-annual-resource-fair-for-veterans-community>

Also, a Community Job Fair will be held at the GDOL office, 2756 Atlanta Hwy. Gainesville, GA on Nov. 6, 2019 from 10:00 until 2:00 p.m.

<http://www.dol.state.ga.us/Access/Service/ListJobFairEmployers?eventIdentifier=2019-09-25-14.26.47.113242>

Compass Center, United Way of Hall County: Beth Oropeza reported that the Compass Center continues to stay busy serving clients. They are encouraging the use of the "211" call system to determine locally available services. They are encouraging churches to utilize this when individuals approach them for assistance. A question was posed concerning a tracking system for services. Beth stated that several area churches use a program called "Charity Tracking" to cross-reference information.

Gainesville Housing Authority: Maria Calkins encouraged all Partners to contact her for assistance when they are working with individuals residing in Gainesville Public Housing. She can help guide them through the process.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains: Whitney Williams announced that a contract has been made with Angela Pugh to assist adults who are part of the WSGM program. Some of the eligibility guidelines have been changed, and adjustments are being made to reflect these requirements. Jessica Williams stated that work is progressing on the new Route 180 Youth Center, and the youth are beginning to take ownership of the space. A grand opening event will be scheduled early in the new year. The GED class is growing, and three individuals have recently graduated. There is also a GED class at the Juvenile Detention Center with an instructor through Lanier Technical College. That program has had 11 youth graduates this year.

Child Support/Fatherhood, Ga. Dept. of Human Services: Lonnie Perkin announced that he has been in his position since mid-September. He is responsible for making connections between fathers and the resources needed for them to earn an income and to pay child support. His office is at 955 Ridge Rd. Gainesville, and he serves a multi-county area. <https://childsupport.georgia.gov/fatherhood-program>

Vocational Rehabilitation: Beth Williams reported that an Accenture Team is gathering information from all staff in the state. This information will be used to improve VR processes and client services. VR also recently developed planning tools with high schools to improve services for students served in the high schools.

Announcements: Whitney Williams reminded Partners to send information about workforce related events to Danielle Avelar at davelar@gmrc.ga.gov to be included on the WSGM Facebook page.

Date for Next Meeting

The date for the next One-Stop Partners Meeting was set for Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. at the One-Stop Center.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.