

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS ONE-STOP PARTNERS MEETING

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains One-Stop Partners met on Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was held at the One-Stop Center, 1856 Thompson Bridge Rd. Gainesville, GA. The following were present:

Maria Calkins, Gainesville Housing Authority
Kathy Chamberlin, Child Support
Patricia Huling, Parental Accountability Court
Lonnie Perkin, Fatherhood Program
Stephanie Ponce, GDOL, Business Services Unit
Michael Fisher, Ninth District Opportunity
Pat Freeman, Legacy Link, Inc.
John Phillips, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Diane Jackson, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Jill Bennett, Georgia Vocational Services
Beth Williams, GVRA/VR Program
Kevin Hankinson, DOL
Lupita Smith, GDOL
Shelley Davis, Workforce Strategies Group
Shannon Cole, Lanier Technical College
Jim Watson, Lanier Technical College
Jessica Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Shelby Ward, North Georgia Technical College
Whitney Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
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 October 29, 2019 meeting were emailed previously. Posted at:

www.onestopworkgamtns.org

Focus Topic: Universal Design Principles

Marsha Hopkins presented a PowerPoint about utilizing Universal Design for One-Stop Centers. She then led a discussion about how the principles of Universal Design may be implemented in facilities and in program delivery.

[View Universal Design presentation here.](#)

Discussion:

It is important to talk with customers to find out exactly what their needs are. Each person is unique. Even though staff members may be familiar with a specific disability, different people may present different aspects of that disability. All partners are encouraged to promote cohesiveness in service delivery – a clear “pathway” of progressive steps including customer interactions with various staff members, and completion of forms. Are customers aware of the connections between services? Do they know which step is next? Are they given

simple, specific instructions about where to go and what to do next? When services are needed outside the One-Stop, is information about what is available given to them?

A regional services directory compiled by Ninth District Opportunity is a valuable tool used frequently at the One-Stop. This source also includes information about area food banks.

United Way of Hall County has a One-Hall Committee focused on the coordination of services related to mental/behavioral health. Service providers are sharing information about individuals with mental/behavioral health needs. This new initiative includes funding for mental health counselors to work alongside law enforcement officers, accessing data about specific needs of individuals in crisis situations. Of course, HIPAA laws must be obeyed, but essential information is being shared among various agencies as they seek to offer effective services. This concept resembles our need to share employment related information among agencies in our service delivery system.

Individuals can become overwhelmed with the application process. This can be a barrier to service delivery. Customers can be made aware that there is a team working together to serve them.

The Compass Center (part of United Way Hall County) offers printed directions about how to obtain specific services – a simple process, step by step about what to do to get assistance

In Hall County, a reported 54% of the households are financially burdened, and 40% are financially stressed. Approximately 3,300 households in Hall County do not have transportation. The challenge is even greater in many of the rural counties of the Georgia Mountains region.

A suggestion was made that students from UNG might be recruited to keep a resources website up to date as a part of their service hours. There are different sources of funds for education, childcare, transportation, housing, etc. It is important to try to bring these resources together to serve our customers more efficiently. The technology is available, but there are challenges concerning sharing of information because of confidentiality requirements. Many organizations are serving the same individuals, and service can be more efficient when efforts are coordinated.

The need for Universal Design could be compared to being in another country and trying to find one's way around, not knowing a different language, not understanding signs. What is obvious to some may not be obvious to others. It is important to make processes and directions easily understood as well as accessible, so customers can take advantage of available services.

Lunch: Partners continued to share information about specific services and programs offered through their organization

Partner Information: Benjie shared information from Partner websites and requested additional comments.

North Georgia Technical College – Shelby Ward announced that NGTC Open Houses are planned for the following dates: March 3rd, Blairsville; March 10th, Clarkesville; and March 17th, Currahee.

<https://northgatech.edu/uploads/communications/news/flyers/Open-House-Poster-85x11.pdf>

There is now an agreement between North Georgia Technical College and University of North Georgia concerning transfer of credits. NGTC has signed an agreement to offer an Associate Degree in Science, and all credits will transfer to UNG. For their credit program, NGTC has had a 7% growth this semester.

Lanier Technical College - Shannon Cole reported that LTC has a new website with a fresh new look.

<http://www.laniertech.edu/> It was unveiled recently when TCSG Commissioner, Greg Dozier visited the Gainesville campus. Enrollment is up, and they have a school record of over 4,000 students enrolled.

Jim Watson announced that a new short-term training program for Microsoft certification is beginning. It will last for five weeks. A welding short-term training is also beginning. This is for ages 16 to 24 with various barriers to employment. Forklift training is also offered on a regular basis. A question was asked about how to find out about these programs. These programs are always accepting applicants. Once the minimum number is reached for a class, then a class begins.

Vocational Rehabilitation - Beth Williams reported that VR has undergone a lot of restructuring recently. Additional people are being hired to provide services. 1,292 veterans were served by Vocational Rehabilitation in Georgia last year. 50% of those served were in the Atlanta area. 36% of the cases served were able to be closed with individuals entering employment. DOL staff members make many referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation.

Workforce Strategies Group - Shelley Davis reported that she and Greg Vitek have contracted with WorkSource Georgia Mountains to provide phase two of Sector Strategies. They are charged with developing the workforce pipeline utilizing WIOA tactics and funds and to build a sustainable employer business industry lead process. They will be working with communities, educators, college, high schools, and employers to reduce the skills gaps, specifically in skills-based positions, especially in manufacturing. The end goal is to create Registered Apprenticeships involving approximately two years of full-time work along with education. This will take approximately two to three years to coordinate and to implement fully.

GDOL - Stephanie Ponce reported that SELIT is a new employer in Banks County. The Business Services Unit of GDOL is assisting this company with customized recruitment. Two recruiters are focusing on this company. Unemployment remains low for the region. There are three times more jobs in the region than there are people available in the workforce. Mount Vernon Mills in Habersham County is closing. This will result in the loss of 600 jobs. Rapid Response, Local GDOL Centers GDOL will be assisting these employees, including a job fair specifically for the company.

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Rapid Response, Local GDOL Career Centers, will be assisting these employees. A company supported job fair is being planned. For interested parties/employers, Rapid Response is forwarding information directly to the responsible party/contact managing the job fair.

Kevin Hankinson announced that the Greater Hall Chamber has a job fair scheduled for **March 18th from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Gainesville Civic Center.**

<https://www.ghcc.com/about/events/#id=765&cid=117&wid=1001&type=Cal>

WorkSource Georgia Mountains - John Phillips expressed appreciation to the group for their support and concern during his recent illness. He also acknowledged the City of Gainesville for their recent donation of office furniture.

Jessica Williams reported that GED training for youth is now at a maximum, but new referrals are being taken, and there are additional training locations available in the community. She reminded everyone of the Open House on February 20th for Route 180, the new youth center. Monthly workshops on topics of interest to youth are being presented by professional volunteers.

Whitney Williams stated that a "Navigator" is now in place at North Georgia Technical College to guide students through the process for receiving WIOA funding. Soft Skills training is being offered at no charge through a Workplace Excellence Program. This program is presented from an employer's point of view.

<http://www.gmrc.ga.gov/WorkforceDevelopment.htm>

Legacy Link, Inc. - Pat Freeman reminded everyone that one of the most popular programs offered through Legacy Link is to offer information about Medicare information on their website <https://www.legacylink.org/>. Also, volunteers are available to assist with inquiries by phone or at their office. Information is available about Social Security scams. Legacy Link currently operates in 120 counties. This program has recently been renewed. There are 500 to 600 Older Workers who are working in placements such as judges' chambers, law enforcement, libraries, etc. This work experience often leads to employment.

Ninth District Opportunity, Inc. - Michael Fischer reported that the energy assistance program is being wrapped up for the year. It has been going strong since November. New funding is being sought for assistance with rehousing. However, is still extremely difficult to find affordable housing. A grant will be available soon for starting a street outreach program to assist homeless individuals. They are working to assure that Social Security and Veterans' benefits are made available to those who are eligible.

<https://www.ndo.org/web/services.html>

Child Support/Parental Accountability - Patricia Huling and Kathy Chamberlin reported that an average of \$13,000 to \$16,000 is being collected monthly in child support. This involves approximately 50 participants with 110 children. <https://www.hallcounty.org/Directory.aspx?did=130> Lonnie Perkin distributed brochures about Child Support. He is working with individuals who are not paying Child Support due to unemployment and underemployment. He is dealing with Goodwill and with WIOA to assist these individuals in obtaining job with income that can be used for child support. Although his program is called the Fatherhood Program, he is dealing with both mothers and fathers who are unable to pay child support.

Gainesville Housing Authority - Maria Calkins reported that 200 units of public housing are being renovated. A waiting list is now open. They are attempting to contact lists of people who have applied in the past, but many of them do not have current contact information. She also announced that ten weeks of free childcare is available through Family Promise to qualified individuals. They must be referred by an agency. Maria shared that a good information source about assistance with childcare expenses; subsidized or affordable or emergency housing; Food Stamps, etc. is available under "Resources" at: www.gainesvillehousing.org

Date for Next Meeting

The date for the next One-Stop Partners Meeting was set for **Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.**

Adjournment

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