

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS ONE-STOP PARTNERS MEETING

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains One-Stop Partners met on Thursday, April 30, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. via a conference call. Participants in the call were:

Pat Freeman, Legacy Link, Inc.
John Phillips, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Diane Jackson, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Whitney Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Jessica Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Beth Williams, GVRA/VR Program
Greg Vitek, Workforce Strategies
Michelle Dockery, North Georgia Technical College
Tim McDonald, Lanier Technical College
Shannon Cole, Lanier Technical College
Johnny Varner, Goodwill Industries
Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates
Marsha Hopkins, Hopkins Associates

Welcome

Benjie Hopkins, Operator for the Georgia Mountains One-Stop Center, welcomed everyone.

Minutes from the January 28, 2020 meeting were emailed previously. These are posted at:

www.onestopworkgamtns.org

Partner Information: Benjie asked each call participant to share information from their respective organizations

WorkSource Georgia Mountains – John Phillips, Diane Jackson, and Whitney Williams reported:

- staff is still working remotely, and they are working harder than ever
 - the State has applied for a national dislocated worker grant for individuals affected by the Coronavirus
 - staff is currently working on updating the One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding with all partners
 - they are also updating the Workforce Comprehensive Plan for the region
 - working electronically now – including business services meetings as well as staff interactions with clients
- Jessica Williams reported regarding the WorkSource Youth Program:
- have had some good success recently
 - in Shift program (mainly for individuals with a criminal background), four participants have gotten employment
 - have had a request for a welding apprenticeship
 - application process started back on April 1st, and at least twelve applications have been processed
 - continuing to communicate with our participants electronically

Workforce Strategies Group – Greg Vitek reported:

- have been working to meet the targets of Phase II of the Sector Strategy
- organized and conducted the steering committee meeting in early March with representatives from economic development, from economic development, from industry, from education, from service groups, and from industry throughout the thirteen counties of the region
- have had electronic meetings with employers only - they discussed workforce development and the COVID situation – well attended and interactive sessions

- some employers operating at over capacity due to demands resulting from COVID – some Sundays and overtime
- other employers have had sixty percent reduction in workforce – especially those with automotive affiliation
- next task is to compile all information from steering committee and employer input
- then have the next round of sessions to determine the priority projects as a sector that we want to address
- then start to organize resources in the direction of working on them

GDOL – Mark Winters reported:

- Office is currently closed to the public, but staff is working six to seven days a week, twelve hours a day
- overwhelmed with emails, phone calls, and claims
- everything is focused on unemployment, and getting individuals who are in need paid
- Benjie mentioned the report from GDOL Commissioner Butler about Georgia having 1.3 million unemployment claims in the past five weeks. Benjie expressed support on behalf of all Partners in this time of great challenges.

Vocational Rehabilitation - Beth Williams reported:

- All GVRA staff are working remotely. We are expected to continue working remotely for at least a couple more weeks. When we return, it will be staggered so that everyone is not returning at the same time.
- They are delivering hand sanitizer and masks to the offices for staff to use when they return to work.
- The remote work is working well for staff to be able to contact all clients and determine what is needed for them. FaceTime and phone calls are being used to contact clients.
- Some clients are continuing to work, some are on hold until things pick back up, and others have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. When we return to work, we are expecting a flood of applications due to those who lost their jobs.
- Staff meetings are occurring through Microsoft Teams, Skype, or via phone conference.
- We are continuing to serve clients the best that we can. It is just being done in a different way.

Legacy Link, Inc. - Pat Freeman reported:

- Offices closed to the public at the end of March
- All RNs and Social Workers are working from home
- Other staff members alternate coming into offices every 7 days
- GDOL paying for trainees not going to their worksites during the pandemic

Lanier Technical College – Tim McDonald reported:

- The college transitioned to full on-line instruction in response to the Coronavirus
- A few students are being allowed on campus to complete requirements for specific classes – labs, etc.
- Priority is given to dual enrollment high school students who are graduating seniors and to LTC students who were scheduled to graduate this semester
- Possibility of beginning to reopen sometime in June – This is a tentative date
- Will be putting together short term training with credit
- Utilizing WebX instead of Zoom platform

Shannon Cole reported:

- 50% to 75% of Adult Education students have continued their programs
- GED testing and proctoring will be available online

North Georgia Technical College – Michelle Dockery reported:

- Michelle is Transition Specialist, filling in for Shelby Ward
- Echoed many of the statements from Lanier Technical College
- Have created a YouTube Video and a PowerPoint
- Constantly staying in touch with students

Goodwill Industries – Johnny Varner reported

- Had already planned for greatly increase virtual communications
- From July 2019 through February 2020, served over 5,000 virtually,
- 3,000 served since March 1, 2020
- Conducting virtual job fairs, phone interviews, and career coaching
- Planning a resources fair in May
- Had 2,500 people hired at Amazon

Benjie mentioned that some Partners were not able to participate in the meeting. However, we are aware that all are continuing to serve the workforce needs of our region. A recent article in The Gainesville Times featured Maria Calkins with the Gainesville Housing Authority and Michael Fisher with Ninth District Opportunity, Inc. This is a link for that article:

<https://www.gainesvilletimes.com/news/government/how-pandemic-could-cause-wave-evictions/>

Marsha Hopkins offered information regarding ‘creative collaboration’ and ‘creativity’ as in-demand skills. This seems to be an especially important topic considering the enormous current challenges resulting from the Coronavirus.

The following is from Workforce GPS concerning the importance of ‘creative collaboration’:

The World Economic Forum (WEF) 2018 Future of Jobs report identified three top skills required for workers to thrive in the fourth industrial revolution. In 2022 the most in demand skills - according businesses surveyed by WEF - will be:

1. Analytical thinking and innovation,
2. Active learning and learning strategies, and
3. Creativity, originality, and initiative.
4. Considering the importance of imagination, innovation, collaboration, and the ability to grasp multiple perspectives to each of these, this sets creative collaboration as the foundation of all top three future skills.

<https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2020/03/05/19/21/The-Future-of-Work-is-Creative-Collaboration>

Also, LinkedIn conducted surveys identifying ‘creativity’ as the top soft skill needed by employers for a second year in a row.

<https://learning.linkedin.com/blog/top-skills/the-skills-companies-need-most-in-2020and-how-to-learn-them>

This is a time to think and act creatively to provide the best workforce services possible. Thanks to all Partners for what you are doing.

Date for Next Meeting

The next Partners meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 30, 2020. Details will be issued when available.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:45 a.m.