

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS ONE-STOP PARTNERS MEETING

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains One-Stop Partners met on Tuesday August 25, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. via a Zoom 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
Johnny Varner, Goodwill Industries
James Alexander, Goodwill Industries
Tonya White, Ga. Dept. of Community Supervision
Cindy Bryant, Gateway Domestic Violence Center
Beth Oropeza, Compass Center, United Way of Hall County
Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates
Marsha Hopkins, Hopkins Associates

Welcome

Benjie Hopkins welcomed everyone, and he reminded the group of the purposes of this bi-monthly meeting – to make collaborations and referrals between agencies. The more information we can share, the better we can get to know each other's roles, and the better we can provide services to those who need them.

Minutes

Marsha Hopkins reminded the group that minutes from the June 30, 2020 meeting were emailed previously, and these are posted at: www.onestopworkgamtns.org A request was made for all meeting participants to please email, soon after each meeting, a summary list of their key points and announcements to: hopkinsassociates77@gmail.com

This will assist us in having more a more accurate and useful record of the meetings.

Introductions

Benjie asked all call participants to introduce themselves.

Partner Updates

Partners were asked to offer updates, and to discuss some of their challenges in effective services delivery as well as any collaboration opportunities they have identified

Gateway Domestic Violence Center - Cindy Bryant

- Demand for services is great -- have clients in hotels, some housed in basement
- Center has continued to operate during Covid-19, providing housing and services to survivors of domestic abuse at a confidential location
- Have support groups that meet outside
- Transitional housing consists of ten apartments for use from a period of six months to two years
- Help is also needed for individuals who have been evicted during Covid-19
- Tremendous challenge to help clients find their own housing that they can afford
- Another big challenge is that when a client's lease is up for renewal, their rent is almost always increased
- Crisis line is always available at 770 536-5860 <https://www.gatewaydvcenter.org/>

- Cindy expressed appreciation for the availability of WIOA assessment and intake online
- She also praised the services of the virtual career coach and its value to the clients served by Gateway

Compass Center, United Way of Hall County - Beth Oropeza

- Volume of phone calls almost doubled during the month of August because of new evictions, because utilities are being cut off, and because unemployment assistance has been decreased
- Three new interns are working at the Compass Center -
- The Compass staff checks with area landlords to see if housing is available – great need for housing in this area - have found some landlords who are willing to work with them
- Would like to be able to have clients use WorkSource services, but many just want a quick fix rather than a long-term solution <https://www.unitedwayhallcounty.org/thecompasscenter>

GVRA- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency - Beth Williams <https://gvs.georgia.gov>

- new Assistant Directors are these: Sheila Pierce – Assistant Director for Provider Management, Julie O'Connor – Assistant Director for Programs, Paige Tidwell - Assistant Director for Client Services, and Jeff Allen – Assistant Director for Transition
- as the restructure continues, GVRA will be changing from four service areas to eight districts. The present service area for the 13 counties the One-Stop Center covers will change for GVRA to District 1 and will cover 21 counties ranging across the top of the state from the east border to the west border
- presently have three offices, Cleveland, Cumming, and Gainesville. The Cleveland office will be in District 1, but Gainesville and Cumming, will be in District 4 along with the Athens Career Center. District four will cover 18 counties
- continue to see clients remotely, or in person when requested to do so. If in person meetings are scheduled, protocols for safety are being followed
- Gainesville office still cannot see clients in the office, but we alternative sites to meet are sought
- continue to serve clients and put them to work
- on September 16th, the GVRA audiologist who works with clients with hearing impairments will be using the One-Stop facility to do testing and fittings

WorkSource Georgia Mountains – John Phillips, Diane Jackson, Whitney Williams, Jessica Williams

- Youth Services are continuing virtually
 - Students are continuing GED classes virtually as well as many college classes online some one-on-one mentoring sessions are being held virtually.
 - some workshops have been developed on YouTube for the schools to use as needed
- Georgia Mountains Regional Commission has a new website. It is: <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/>
- continuing resume and job search through the Career Coach; accessed by signing for slots on the website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040a4caf29a3ff2-career1>
 - working on getting some employability skills workshops online
 - currently on hold for program year for taking applications because of budget cuts, but do expect other funding resources to be available soon – these funds will primarily target Dislocated Workers
 - partnering in Forsyth County to do a short-term certified production tech program targeting Dislocated Workers - participants will be guaranteed an interview with a manufacturing company
 - have received a national Dislocated Worker grant through TCSG (Technical College System of Georgia) - to provide humanitarian assistance at job sites - services such as taking temperatures at schools, distributing food at food banks, working at Boys and Girls Clubs, etc. - jobs would be full-time for 12 to 13 weeks. This funding is for individuals who have lost jobs due to Covid-19, those who are currently receiving UI, or individuals who are classified as long-term unemployed <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/wsgm>
 - Jason Norsworthy, Career Coach Counselor for WorkSource Georgia Mountains, recently compiled an updated listing of resources for job seekers – link here: <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/jobseekersresources>

Goodwill Industries of North Georgia – Johnny Varner, James Alexander <https://goodwillng.org>

- a six-week welding program is being offered using a mobile welding lab
- welding is available for any individual receiving SNAP benefits, as well as for veterans

- training programs are also being offered in logistics and in forklift
- have been partnering with Amazon to have drive-up job fairs; Amazon currently has a strong focus on veterans and/or spouses of veterans seeking employment - good incentives available

Georgia Dept. of Community Supervision (DCS), Senior Lead Community Coordinator - NE Region - Tonya White <https://dcs.georgia.gov/locations/gainesville>

- Tonya expressed her appreciation to John Phillips for his service as a member of the steering committee for DCS from its beginning
- office is open with limited staff, appointments needed for in-person meetings
- Tonya is continuing to work remotely - available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.
- emphasis on getting people back into workforce
- recently working with numerous agencies on Northeastern Re-entry Elevation Project,
- Goodwill Industries offering a modified version of this project including important steps such as creating a resume and choosing appropriate attire for an interview

Legacy Link, Inc. - Area Agency on Aging - Pat Freeman <https://www.legacylink.org>

- Legacy Link is working with the Georgia Cares program, offering helpful information to individuals who are about to begin Medicare or those who are already on Medicare; webinars about Medicare start soon
- because of current U.S. Department of Labor directives, the statewide employment and training program for older workers is not allowed to have employees on job sites
- all workers are contacted by staff through phone and email - There is no face-to-face contact yet, and non-profit and public worksites are not ready to have workers assigned to them
- home health services are still being provided for individuals, but some clients do not want to have people coming into their homes during the pandemic
- all RNs and social workers are still teleworking

Benjie reported that the area technical colleges have recently started their fall semesters with hybrid systems that include both remote and in-person classes. Start dates were:

Lanier Technical College on August 17th, **North Georgia Technical College** on August 19th, and **Athens Technical College** on August 24th <https://tcsg.edu/>

Georgia Department of Labor continues to be under an extremely heavy workload due to the pandemic, however some of the statistics are beginning to improve. Benjie reported that the April unemployment rate for the Georgia Mountains area was 10.6%, in May it was 7.5%, in June it was 5.9%. The rate for the Ga. Mtns. area is better than the rest of the state, and the state of Georgia is better than most of the rest of the U.S. Stephanie Ponce provided this link for updates: <https://dol.georgia.gov/gdol-covid-19-information>

Announcements

John Phillips announced that he will be retiring in October 2020 as Director for WorkSource Georgia Mountains. He stated that he was available if anyone needs his help. Benjie expressed thanks to John for his hard work, and he wished him well in his retirement. All the One-Stop Partners greatly appreciate John's able leadership of WorkSource Georgia Mountains.

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce is having an in-person Job Fair on Tuesday, September 15th from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Gainesville Civic Center. Over 45 employers are expected to participate. <https://www.ghcc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Fall-2020-Job-Fair-with-Exhibitors-3.pdf>

Date for Next Meeting

The next One-Stop Partners Meeting is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 27th. Details will be issued when available.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:40 a.m.