

## **GEORGIA MOUNTAINS ONE-STOP PARTNERS MEETING MINUTES**

The Georgia Mountains One-Stop Partners met on Tuesday October 27, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. via a Zoom conference call. Participants in the call were:

Shelby Ward, North Georgia Technical College  
Shannon Cole, Lanier Technical College  
Tim McDonald, Lanier Technical College  
Jim Watson, Lanier Technical College  
Stephanie Benson, Athens Technical College  
Mark Winters, Georgia Department of Labor  
Pat Freeman, Legacy Link, Inc.  
Whitney Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains  
Jessica Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains  
Dawn Bruce, WorkSource Georgia Mountains  
Beth Williams, GVRA/VR Program  
Greg Vitek, Workforce Strategies Group  
Tonya White, Ga. Dept. of Community Supervision  
Cindy Bryant, Gateway Domestic Violence Center  
Beth Oropeza, Compass Center, United Way of Hall County  
Michael Fisher, Ninth District Opportunity  
Eileen Murphy, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (guest)  
Shandra Spear, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (guest)  
Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates  
Marsha Hopkins, Hopkins Associates

### **Welcome and Introductions**

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 we can learn about each of the partners and what services are provided, the more referrals we can make, and the better we all can serve our clients. Benjie also offered congratulations to Whitney Williams who has been selected to serve as Director of WorkSource Georgia Mountains. Whitney will assume the duties of long-time Director, John Phillips who recently retired.

### **Minutes**

Marsha Hopkins reminded the group that minutes from the August 25, 2020 meeting were emailed previously, and these are posted at: [www.onestopworkgamtns.org](http://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](mailto:hopkinsassociates77@gmail.com) This will assist us in having more a more accurate record of the meetings.

### **Focus Topic: Assistive Technology and Educational Resources**

Eileen Murphy and Shandra Spear gave an informative presentation about a wide range of resources available to assist individuals who may have challenges in accessing services and information. Almost anyone can benefit from one or more of the resources listed. Many of these resources are available at no cost to the individual. A document listing resources and links is attached to the email for these minutes.

The process for referral for VR services is to call any VR for information to start an application. To find the nearest local office, call 1-844-FOR-GVRA or 1 844 367-4872 or search: <https://gvs.georgia.gov/find-location>  
Contact information for presenters: [EILEEN.MURPHY@gvs.ga.gov](mailto:EILEEN.MURPHY@gvs.ga.gov), Rehabilitation Technologist, 470-533-9279 [SHANDRA.SPEAR@gvs.ga.gov](mailto:SHANDRA.SPEAR@gvs.ga.gov), Rehabilitation Technologist, 470-780-6661

### **Partner Updates**

**WorkSource Georgia Mountains** <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/wsgm>

Whitney Williams reported: Current hold on Adult Program application due to funding level. Keeping active

wait list. Information being collected so specific groups can be targeted. Dislocated Worker grant received through TCSG (Technical College System of Georgia). One part of grant is for a thirteen-week work experience at \$12.00 per hour. Partnership with Hall County Schools to assist with sanitation efforts in each of elementary schools. Need for additional work sites and for eligible workers. Requesting referrals of places and people. A flier describing program attached to email for these minutes. Other part of the Dislocated Worker grant for short term training programs.

Jessica Williams reported: Also, hold on applications for Youth Services. Hoping to be able to start those again in the next four or five months. Youth Center reopening in next couple of weeks to offer Lanier Technical College's GED classes for 5 to 7 students. WorkSource also working with Dawson County Chamber of Commerce and the Dawson County School System on short term certification program offered this Dec.

**Lanier Technical College** <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/wsgm>

Tim McDonald reported: TCSG actively pursuing several grants, all requiring collaboration with other organizations. This area is known for its success in collaboration.

Shannon Cole reported: Lanier Technical College working to get sites open. Hall County Campus will resume GED testing soon. Have 500 students with 12 or more hours. Offering online and in person classes. Will return to online only in December due to Covid 19 precautions. Using WebEx, an online web conferencing software. Also using Blackboard. Conducting correspondence courses for residents of area correctional facilities.

Jim Watson reported: He is now the Transition Coordinator for Lanier Technical College, working with all GED graduates to assist them with transition into additional training for certificates or diplomas. Three people finished welding cohort, following a break due to Covid 19. Now two of those individuals have passed their certification exams, and one is currently enrolled in classes at Lanier Technical College.

**North Georgia Technical College** <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/wsgm>

Shelby Ward reported: North Georgia Technical College has been conducting GED testing at all sites with strict protective guidelines since July. Providing face to face and remote classes at a reduced level. Some classes are hybrid. Also delivering online registration with virtual enrollment. Using HiSET (High School Equivalency Test). Also using Blackboard and WebEx. Offering classes at correctional institutions.

**Athens Technical College** <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/wsgm>

Stephanie Benson reported: Athens Technical College is part of a Career Plus Pilot. In this program, Students work on two technical certificates of credit while working on a high school equivalency diploma. This streamlines the process for those who struggle with portions of the GED.

**Georgia Department of Labor** <https://dol.georgia.gov/>

Mark Winters reported: GDOL is making some headway on unemployment claims. All career centers are still closed to the public, but they are fully staffed. Some employees are teleworking. Still working long hours.

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

Beth Williams reported: The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency continues to work remotely, but they are meeting with clients if they request it. Assistive Technology information shared today by Eileen Murphy and Shandra Spear is also shared with clients as resources for them. Continuing to take referrals. Available to assist anyone with disabilities, so send referrals.

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

Pat Freeman reported: The Federal Department of Labor is continuing to give some small payments for subsidized workers who are at home. About one third of the workers have gone back to worksites at offices and agencies, but not all the workers or the agencies are comfortable with doing so yet. A few workers are getting jobs. Looking forward to being able to resume face to face

**Georgia Dept. of Community Supervision (DCS)** <https://dcs.georgia.gov/locations/gainesville>

Tonya White reported: Continuing to work with men and women from Hall Co. and Dawson Co. who are

transitioning out of prison. Will be resuming a neighborhood fresh market program offering fresh produce for individuals who report to the day reporting center. In the coming cold weather months, there will be a great need for sleeping bags, socks, long underwear, hats, and gloves for homeless individuals under supervision who come to the day reporting center. Contact Tonya if anyone has a resource for these items to be donated. 470-728-6940 Email: [tonya.white@dcs.ga.gov](mailto:tonya.white@dcs.ga.gov)

**Gateway Domestic Violence Center** <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/wsgm>

Cindy Bryant reported: Continuing to serve survivors of domestic violence. Are back to full staff, using many precautions. Numbers have gone up during pandemic. Challenging to find safe place for survivors to go once they move out of shelter or transitional program. Thanks to Michael Fisher and Ninth Dist. for collaborations.

**Ninth District Opportunity** <http://www.ndo.org/web/>

Michael Fisher reported: Next season of energy assistance begins in November. This is a one-time payment to offset heating costs for low income individuals, beginning with seniors. The street outreach involves visiting homeless individuals weekly in approximately eighteen encampments around the Gainesville area. These groups range from two to about eighteen people. Many of these people are working full time, but they do not have a place to live. Ninth District provides food and supplies for them, and links them to local resources for assistance. Have recently assisted a ninth individual who had living the woods. He was helped to moved first into a hotel, and now is working and is living in permanent housing. This is a difficult task, and every success is celebrated. There is currently an eviction prevention program. HUD has made recent changes in procedures. Please share this video with all concerned: <https://spark.adobe.com/video/d1VzzdRoED5FN>

**Compass Center, United Way of Hall County** <https://www.unitedwayhallcounty.org/thecompasscenter>

Beth Oropeza reported: Continue to help people with rent and utilities. Referring people to Georgia Legal Services so they can fill out an affidavit to give their landlords. Salvation Army has additional funds to assist with utility bills and rent. Advising clients to pay whatever they can for their rent to try to avoid eviction.

**Workforce Strategies Group**

Greg Vitek reported: The local program for apprenticeships involving collaboration between the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, Lanier Technical College, WorkSource Georgia Mountains, and Workforce Strategies Group was nominated for recognition by National Assoc. of Development Organizations. The group recognizes outstanding programs that improve quality of life and economic conditions. Sector strategies work continues. Beginning to be able to re-enter plants. Focus has been on manufacturing. Plan to extend to areas of healthcare and IT. Developed four concentrations: marketing, employability skills, career paths, and detailed programs of skills training. Developed a two-year Quality Assurance program sponsored by Lanier Technical College, and with input from ten employers from the region.

Benjie reported: A recent Harris poll found that approximately 63% of workers who lost jobs during the pandemic are seeking employment in different fields. Training for new positions is needed. Unemployment numbers are looking better. Our region is in a better position than most of the rest of Georgia.

**Date for Next Meeting**

The next One-Stop Partners Meeting scheduled for **11:00 a.m. on Tues., Jan. 26, 2021**. Details to come.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:50 a.m.