

**GEORGIA MOUNTAINS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
YOUTH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Georgia Mountains WorkSource – Hall County
1856 Thompson Bridge Road, Gainesville, GA 30501
May 17, 2018

Attendees:

Members

Shelby Ward
Brenda Dalin
Lynn Warren
Scott Crain

Staff

Jessica Williams
Sonia Zavala
Shameka Harrison
Ebony Tucker
John Phillips
Bethany Coggins

Guest

Joyesha Blake
Jarod Anderson
Laura Stephens
Rosa Betancourt

The Youth Committee Members met at WorkSource Georgia Mountains – Hall County for the Youth Committee Meeting.

Meeting Called to Order:

Chairman, Shelby Ward, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Program Updates:

Introduction of New Staff Member- Bethany Coggins:

Youth Program Supervisor, Jessica Williams introduced the new staff member, Bethany Coggins. Bethany Coggins replaced Danielle Avelar in the Youth Case Manager role.

WIOA Updates:

Jessica Williams gave the Workforce Innovative Opportunity Act (WIOA) updates. She directed the Youth Committee Members to the Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board Youth Policy and Procedures Incentive Requests handout. The new updates were highlighted in yellow and had been approved by the board. Jessica referenced page six-Section D, Work Experience rate of pay determination. This allows the work experience wage to be more compatible with the job they are working and in line with their career pathway. It also allows the participant the opportunity to start the work experience or internship at \$10 per hour then gradually increase to \$12 an hour as skills are achieved. Jessica opened the floor for discussion on this modification. Scott Crain commented that the change is great since the entry level for some positions is \$15 per hour and can potentially go up to \$18-20 an hour.

Jessica explained further updates. As of July 1st, the contract initiated two years ago with Gainesville's Goodwill circa will be disseminated. The Request For Proposal (RFP) agreed upon with Goodwill was to help youth with criminal backgrounds, those on probation, or being released from the Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC) to obtain their General Equivalency Diploma (GED) training, soft skills, and help with work experience, career exploration and employment. Since most of the youth lacked personal transportation, the program was ideal because transportation was included. In Fall 2017, a group consisting of 11 youth commenced the program at Goodwill. Out of that group only one was successful because he was removed from Goodwill and moved to "in-house".

Several modifications have been implemented in order to make the RFP work with Goodwill; one being, initiating one youth at a time into the program. Since January, Goodwill has not been able to accept a youth into their program. There are two participants ready to start and Goodwill has not been able to provide the Youth Department with a start date. Shelby Ward opened the floor for discussion and asked Jessica what was Goodwill's response to the issue. Goodwill said that the participants are not motivated, have behavioral issues, miscommunicate, and will not show up. Jessica noted that when working with youth at risk, directions have to be specific and repeated. Scott Crain asked who else would provide the services when the contract is terminated. Jessica replied, Angela Pugh who is the Independent Living Mentor, would provide counseling and mentoring at WorkSource. There are no GED classes offered on site until August; therefore, the Youth Department is seeking retired teachers to volunteer teaching a few hours. There is commitment from a teacher but she cannot start until January 2019.

Ideally, the participants would gain GED training at the WorkSource location and then go offsite for work experience. The main issue would be transportation but Jessica is looking to implement the service in partnering with community services. Jessica mentioned that other programs have a contract with a taxi company and this might be a possibility. Scott asked what are the days and time for the program. Jessica answered that this still needs to be determined, but it will be the same schedule each week. Another suggestion was the Hall County Connection. However, the issue is that it does not extend to where all the participants live. Scott recommended Hall Area Transit as a means of transportation since they charge around \$2 a trip and go to the household on a set schedule. Scott noted that Tabitha at Hall Area Transit would be the best contact.

Discussion also addressed potential partners for the "in house" services. If the participant has a disability they are referred to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Typically the participant's Probation Officer refers them for services initially. WorkSource maintains connection with the VR. Shelby mentioned that North Georgia Technical College (NGTC) has a Transition Specialist and if needed could come to WorkSource to teach a Georgia's Best class once or twice a week. WorkSource Director John Phillips

commented that Lanier Village has residents that are retired teachers and this would be a resource to look into. John also mentioned the Rotary Club has retired business owners and teachers but this is an invite only club. The Youth Department is still working on having a youth center in the near future.

Workshops/Pilot Program:

Program Intake Assistant Sonia Zavala updated the Youth Committee Members on the workshops. Program Assistant Shameka Harrison and Sonia presented Mapping Your Future workshop to Banks County Middle School, attended West Hall High School during lunch hours to give out program information, and went to Habersham Central High School to do an overview session. Shameka attended Gainesville High School's Career Fair to provide program information. Sonia attended Gainesville High School's College Financial Day and assisted graduating seniors in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA). Sonia mentioned that she is doing overview sessions at the Regional Youth Detention Center every Tuesday and there is a recent graduate.

Shameka and Sonia are working on a Pilot Program that is intended to start Fall 2018. The program is for youth working on their GED and Lanier Charter Career Academy (LCCA) students wishing to gain soft skills, financial literacy, knowledge of hand and power tools, welding, engine repair and maintenance, detailing and customizing. The program will consist of training for one semester and then an internship the second semester. Ideally, the program will have five students from GED and five students from LCCA. LCCA has agreed on the Youth Department using their building. Shameka and Sonia met with Tim McDonald, Vice President of Economic Development at Lanier Technical College, to discuss the College providing an instructor but there were none available. Shameka and Sonia will be meeting with Dave Moody, Executive Director of Lanier Charter Career Academy, to finalize the usage of the building.

GED Program Update:

Youth Case Manager Bethany Coggins stated that there were 215 new participants and since last year 90 participants have completed their GED and are going into a career path.

Freudenberg's Human Resource Specialist, Rosa Betancourt, asked where the WIOA participants come from. Jessica Williams replied that the participants reside in the 13 county region and are high school dropouts referred from other agencies, schools, or who come in to enroll in GED program and are eligible for WIOA services.

Scott Crain asked if WIOA's GED program was in any form related to the University of North Georgia's GED program and the answer was no. The providers are the technical colleges in the area; Lanier Tech, North Georgia Tech, and Athens Tech.

Rosa Betancourt stated that Freudenberg wants to offer work for the youth post-GED obtainment. She explained that employees are starting through a temporary agency but after three successful months are hired by the company. Jessica asked if Freudenberg would be able to provide work experience for participants while working on their GED and made Rosa aware that WIOA would provide workers compensation. Rosa answered that this would be something she would have to relay to someone higher up and she would get back in touch with Jessica.

Shelby Ward mentioned a company that is allowing participants to work while they work towards obtaining their GED and after GED completion are hired full time. Participants have a year to obtain their GED in order to continue working there. Company provides dinner and gives the student 500.00 after GED completion.

John Phillips mentioned that WorkSource could look into paying for drug testing if it means providing youth with work experience.

SHIFT:

Independent Living Mentor Angela Pugh updated the Youth Committee Members on the SHIFT Program. Angela has 20 youth on her caseload. There are one high school and two GED graduates. Two participants have obtained work on their own and have received great reviews. Angela has recently started having Workplace Excellence every Tuesday and during this time participants are taught soft skills and work ethics. There is a need for a GED instructor. If the Youth Committee Members know of someone, please contact Angela.

Youth Conference/College Program Update:

Senior Case Manager Ebony Tucker spoke about the Annual Youth Conference. The conference is set for June 8, 2018 at Unicoi State Park from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. For recruitment purposes, non-partner agencies are being extended an invitation to bring a maximum of ten participants. These agencies include Boys and Girls Club, Mountain Education Charter High Schools, Gainesville Housing Authority, and Avita. The conference will consist of an introductory session, three breakout sessions, door prizes, success story panel for Q&A, and closing remarks. The sessions are Ways Phones Change Our Lives by Concord Baptist Church, Banking; Finance and Saving by BB&T; and Healthy Relationships and Boundaries by Rape Response; and Motivational Speaker Jarod Anderson will make the closing remarks. Thus far, 107 participants have responded. The Youth Department is looking to the Youth Committee Board Members to donate door prizes. They need to be turned in by May 30th. Rosa Betancourt mentioned that Freudenberg has tablets they might be able to donate.

There is a texting system called SARAH which can be used to send texts to all participants and the system provides case notes. Ebony said she would look into it.

For college updates, there were four graduates from regular programs and three graduates from the short term program at Medical Institute of Northeast Georgia.

Old Business:

Review and Approval of Minutes:

Minutes were tabled until the next meeting due to a quorum of Youth Committee Members not being present.

Future Meetings:

August 23, 2018 – Project Search- Northeast Georgia Medical Center, Gainesville, GA

Guest Speakers:

Jarod Anderson, Gainesville High School Social Worker and personal consultant, will be doing the motivational closing remarks at the Youth Conference. He spoke to the Youth Committee Members on youth not having sense of purpose and direction and gave them his book, *Five Star Mentality*.

Laura Stephens, Project Search Instructor, spoke about Project Search. She stated that the goal of Project Search is for the participants to become employed and be hired in the community. Participants defer high school diploma for a year to participate in the program. Participants gain soft skills and participate in rotations which include mail room, plant operations, nutrition, and at Milton Martin Honda, if student is interested in cars/detailing.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned by Shelby Ward, seconded by Scott Crain.