

MARCH 2020

PINNACLE

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

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*Cover Photo:
A Bee-utiful Day!
Contributed by D. Morris
Gainesville, GA*



Heather Feldman
Executive Director

- As we all continue to navigate the ongoing spread of Coronavirus (COVID) in Georgia, the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission has compiled the resources listed on page three from our federal, state, and local partners to help you during this public health emergency and the resulting economic hardships. The spirit of our region will continue to be strong. Let us all continue to take care of our families, help our neighbors in need, and do all we can to be there for our friends and loved ones.
- We are mindful of the health of our communities and staff and will be working remotely until further notice. The best way to contact GMRC staff is through email with your regular contact. We will continue to update our Facebook page and website with information and resources as they become available to us. Feel free to call or e-mail me directly at 770-538-2606 or hfeldman@gmrc.ga.gov if you have any questions or need additional information.
- THE CENSUS IS HAPPENING!!! Census Day 2020 is April 1st. Why is this important? The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data. The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts. It's also in the Constitution: Article 1, Section 2, mandates that the country conduct a count of its population once every 10 years. The 2020 Census will mark the 24th time that the country has counted its population since 1790.
- Several WorkSource and Finance department staff attended the Spring Southeastern Employment and Training Association's Spring conference in South Carolina. It was a great opportunity for staff to network with other workforce development professionals across the south. Topics included an update from Washington, D.C.; re-entry initiatives, Career Pathways for youth, WIOA budget management, One-Stop systems, and workforce initiatives for veterans just to name a few.
- We would like to wish Peggy Lovell all the best in her upcoming retirement. Thank you Peggy for all of your service to the entire agency for the last 42 years. You will be missed!



Sincerely,

Heather Feldman

Heather Feldman
Executive Director



COVID-19 RESOURCES

GMRC is supporting Governor Kemp's call for Georgia Manufacturers and Distributors to help with critical health care supply needs. If your business can provide, produce, distribute, store or quickly be re-purposed to create items included in the list of vital projects in the following form, we ask you to complete and submit it as soon as possible: <https://www.georgia.org/covid19response>

Healthcare:

- Georgia Department of Public Health Daily COVID-19 Update: <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-19-daily-status-report>
- Northeast Georgia Health System: <http://www.nghs.com/covid-19>
- Northside Hospital Forsyth: <https://www.northside.com/wtn/Page.asp?PageID=WTN000604>
- Stephens County Hospital: <https://stephenscountyhospital.com/about/news-updates/>
- Habersham Medical Center: <http://www.habershammedical.com/coronavirus>
- Union General Hospital: <http://www.uniongeneralhealthsystem.com/coronavirus/>
- St. Mary's Hospital Lavonia: <https://www.stmaryshealthcaresystem.org/health-and-wellness/coronavirus/>
- Mountain Lakes Medical Center: <https://www.facebook.com/MountainLakesMedicalCenter/>

Grant Deadlines Extended:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Competition – Deadline extended to May 1, 2020
- USDA Rural Business Development Grants – Deadline extended to April 15, 2020

USDA Rural Development:

USDA Rural Development has taken a number of immediate actions to help rural residents, businesses and communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Rural Development will keep our customers, partners, and stakeholders continuously updated as more actions are taken to better serve rural America. Please click on the following site for more information:

https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDA_RD_SA_COVID19_ProgramImmediateActions.pdf

Tax Relief:

- Click [here](#) to see an announcement from the U.S. Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for small and midsize employers. You can begin taking advantage of two new refundable payroll tax credits, designed to immediately and fully reimburse, dollar-for-dollar, for the cost of providing Coronavirus-related leave to their employees.
- Additional Resources from the IRS: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus>

Department of Labor:

- Filing for Unemployment: <https://dol.georgia.gov/blog/new-information-filing-unemployment-partial-claims-and-reemployment-services>
- U.S. Department of Labor Announces Availability of Up to \$100 Million In National Health Emergency Dislocated Worker Grants in Response to COVID-19 Outbreak: <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20200318>

Small Business Administration related to Disaster Loan Assistance:

- On March 18, 2020, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) designated all counties in Georgia eligible for low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering economic injury during this national event. Link to further information and application: <https://www.georgiasbdc.org/sba-economic-injury-disaster-loan/>



STAY UP TO DATE WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission: <https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaMountainsRC/>
WorkSource Georgia Mountains: <https://www.facebook.com/WorkSource.G>

Information Services

- Esri has provided some very useful tools and resources to assist the GIS community with their local response. Please visit the link below:
<https://www.esri.com/en-us/covid-19/overview>



Also visit GMRC's homepage www.gmrc.ga.gov for additional links to assist your communities and citizens.

The 2020 Census at a Glance

Counting everyone once, only once, and in the right place.

The U.S. Census Bureau is the federal government's largest statistical agency. We are dedicated to providing current facts and figures about America's people, places, and economy. Federal law protects the confidentiality of all individual responses the Census Bureau collects.

The U.S. Constitution requires that each decade we take a count—or a census—of America's population.



The census provides vital information for you and your community.

- It determines how many representatives each state gets in Congress and is used to redraw district boundaries. Redistricting counts are sent to the states by March 31, 2021.
- Communities rely on census statistics to plan for a variety of resident needs including new roads, schools, and emergency services.
- Businesses use census data to determine where to open places to shop.

Each year, the federal government distributes more than \$675 billion to states and communities based on Census Bureau data.

In 2020, we will implement new technology to make it easier than ever to respond to the census. For the first time, you will be able to respond online, by phone, as well as by mail. We will use data that the public has already provided to reduce followup visits. And, we are building an accurate address list and automating our field operations—all while keeping your information confidential and safe.



KEY MILESTONES

- 2018**
 - 2018 End-to-End Census Test
 - 2020 Census questions sent to Congress by March 31, 2018
 - Six regional 2020 Census offices and 40 area census offices open
- 2019**
 - Partnership activities launch
 - Complete Count Committees establish
 - Census takers update address list in person
 - Remaining 248 area census offices open
- 2020**
 - Advertising begins in January 2020
 - Public response (online, phone, or mail) begins
 - Census Day**—April 1, 2020
 - Census takers visit households that haven't responded
 - Apportionment counts sent to the President by December 31, 2020
- 2021**
 - Redistricting counts sent to the states by March 31, 2021

Connect with us
@uscensusbureau

Economic Development

- On behalf of **Hart** County EMS, a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant application of \$462,400 was submitted to assist with the purchase of power lift systems.
- On behalf of Double Churches Volunteer Fire Department in **Franklin** County, a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant application in the amount of \$120,000 was submitted to assist with the purchase of several self-contained breathing apparatus units (SCBAs).
- The following Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant pre-applications were recently submitted:
 - Downtown Development Authority of the City of **Dahlonega** for the Historic Holly Theatre Improvements; \$106,732
 - Franklin** County Industrial Building Authority for Phase 2 Infrastructure Improvements of the Central **Franklin** Industrial Park; \$571,095

WorkSource Mobile Training Units

- The Career Coaches attended a Goodwill sponsored job fair for **Dawson** County.
- A resume workshop was conducted for 36 students from **Stephens** and **Dawson** Mountain Ed Centers.
- 11 people completed WIOA applications on board the Career Coaches this month.
- Eight inmates from Colwell Probation Detention Center in **Union** County participated in a Career Exploration Workshop hosted by the Career Coach.
- Sharon Forks Library in **Forsyth** County saw it's busiest day yet with 11 people receiving assistance on board the Career Coaches.
- The Career Coach also assisted residents of the Salvation Army of **Hall** County.
- **Union** County library was buzzing with activity as nine people came on board to receive assistance. This is the second busiest day in Union we've ever had!

Career Coach Monthly Totals for February

Category of Responses	Month Total	Year Total	Responses Per County
Total Job Searches	45	45	Banks— 0
Total Job App	3	3	Dawson— 25
Total Resumes	59	59	Forsyth— 31
Total Interviews	0	0	Franklin— 3
Total Interest Survey	0	0	Habersham— 0
Total Training Sessions	1	1	Hall— 13
Total Testing	1	1	Hart— 0
Total Typing Assessments	0	0	Lumpkin— 0
WIOA Info	23	23	Rabun— 5
Public Relations	1	1	Stephens— 23
			Towns— 0
			Union— 15
			White— 2
			Other— 16

WorkSource Rapid Response

- WorkSource Georgia Mountains partnered with the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) and North Georgia Technical College to provide services to the soon to be dislocated workers at Mt. Vernon Mills in **Alto**, Georgia. We provided four separate Employee Information Sessions on February 10th and February 13th. Mt. Vernon Mills closed on March 9, 2020. They have petitioned to be Trade Act Certified, and almost 400 employees came to hear about the many services available. Additionally, on February 26th, GMWD provided a day of Overviews and WIOA application assistance on-site for employees interested in returning to school for more training. Rapid Response also planned a weeklong Job Fair on-site at Mt. Vernon. There were over 40 employers scheduled to be there.
- WorkSource Georgia Mountains also received information that Milliken & Co. will be closing their **Hart** County facility in June of 2020. On February 14, 2020 GMWD partnered with GDOL to present services to the affected employees. The majority of the current employees attended this employee information session.

WorkSource Youth Program

- Youth staff participated in the **Hall** County Annual Transition Fair. The Career Coaches were onsite to allow students to do career inventories. Youth staff also presented a Dress for Success and Interviewing breakout session. The fair hosted more than 300 students from **Hall** County and surrounding counties.
- Youth staff participated in College Career Fairs at high schools in **Hall** and **Habersham** Counties.
- Youth staff participated in Interviewing Workshops at **Forsyth** County Schools.

STIMULUS BILL

On March 27, 2020 an economic stimulus bill designed to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, H.R. 748, was signed into law. The bill includes \$1.5 billion in supplemental funding for the Economic Development Administration (EDA), which will allow EDA to provide needed resources to communities to address the needs they are facing resulting from the COVID-19 public health crisis and the resulting economic decline. This bill is the third tranche of funding passed in response to COVID-19, following the passage of HR 6074 and HR 6201. In addition to the supplemental funding for EDA, the bill also includes additional funding for other agencies that may be of interest to GMRC members:

◇ **USDA Rural Development**

\$25 million to support Distance Learning and Telemedicine

\$100 million for the ReConnect Program to help ensure rural Americans have access to broadband

\$20.5 million to support \$1 billion in Business and Industry loans

◇ **Small Business Administration (SBA)**

\$562 million to ensure that SBA has the resources to provide Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) to business that need financial support.

\$10 billion in direct grants to businesses that do not qualify for the EIDL program

\$17 billion to have SBA step in and make six months of principle and interest payments for all SBA backed business loans

◇ **Department of Transportation – Transit Systems**

\$25 billion for public transit operators to protect public health and safety while ensuring transportation access to jobs, medical treatment, food, and other essential services remain available during the COVID-19 response

◇ **HHS Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA)**

\$275 million for HRSA, including \$185 million to support rural critical access hospitals and rural and tribal health and telehealth programs

◇ **Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Disaster Relief Fund**

\$45 billion to provide the immediate needs of state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to protect citizens and help them recover from the effects of COVID-19

◇ **Department of Labor (DOL)**

\$360 million for DOL to invest in programs that provide training and supportive services for dislocated workers, seniors, migrant farmworkers, and homeless veterans

◇ **HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**

\$5 billion to allow states, counties, and cities to respond rapidly to COVID-19 and the economic and housing impacts caused by it

UPCOMING GMRC COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

- 
- ⇒ Apr. 30, 2020* City of Lavonia - *Native Intelligence Report, Frank Norton*
 - ⇒ May 28, 2020 Dawson County - *Legislative Appreciation*
 - ⇒ June 25, 2020 City of Hiawassee
 - ⇒ July 30, 2020* Union County - *State Road & Tollway Authority, David Cassell*

GMRC Council Meetings begin at 6:00 PM; Executive Committee meets prior at 5:00 PM.

***WD Board Meeting at 4:00 PM**