

## Program Year 2000 Annual WIA Report

### LOCAL AREA INFORMATION

WIA Area #: 1                                      WIA Area Name: Northwest Georgia

#### **Name and phone number of the person completing the form:**

Karen E. Howell                                      706.277.7466

#### **Please provide a brief description of your area (e.g., urban, rural, suburban, coastal, predominant industries or the economic base - agricultural, manufacturing, technology, service-based, diversified, etc.)**

The Northwest Georgia Service Delivery Region (SDR) includes fifteen counties and forty-nine cities/towns. The SDR is bordered by Alabama to the west and by Tennessee and North Carolina to the north. Historically rural, the majority of its counties now comprise part of the Atlanta and Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). The Dalton/Whitfield County area will meet the criteria for being designated an MSA within the next few years.

The region's economic base is predominantly manufacturing which comprises approximately 40% of its employment base. However, with the movement from rural to suburban, the economic base has become more diversified, and the region has experienced steady growth in services and retail employment.

Approximately 30% of the region's labor force commute outside their home county. Of the fifteen counties, only Whitfield has a greater employment base than workers in the labor force. The region is among the fastest growing in Georgia and has enjoyed a low unemployment rate for several years. In fact, the region has attracted many foreign workers, and Hispanics are now the largest minority population.

#### **Describe your local WIA board and its chief accomplishments during PY 2000:**

The 37-member Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Board is unique in that the Board meets jointly with the Coosa Valley/North Georgia Council of Chief Elected Officials. In addition, there is a Chief Elected Official with membership on both the WIB and the Youth Council. This degree of involvement, decision making, and cooperation have strengthened the region's Workforce Investment Programs and the One-Stop System.

As required by law, private industry hold a majority of the positions on the WIB. Board. Business representation includes the major manufacturing and service sectors, large corporations and small businesses, and the fast-growing technology field. Of course, all

required agencies and organizations are also represented on the WIB. In support of the long-time goal of the region's officials and agency and business leaders to create a community and family culture that values and supports an educated and productive workforce, the CEO's appointed five educational agencies representatives to the Board.

The Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment/One-Stop system had its beginnings in 1997. Job Training Partnership Program Private Industry Council, Council of Chief Elected Officials, and the Director had the foresight to see that collaboration was essential to achieve workforce development initiatives for employers and employees. With this background and foundation, the Board established a Constitution and By-laws and signed a CCEO/WIB and Subgrantee agreement with Coosa Valley RDC early in the program year. With the CCEO, they quickly approved and had operational an ITA system, an on-the-job training program, and necessary policies and procedures such as grievance procedures, a support policy, demand occupations, etc.

The WIB/CCEO also approved one-stop center/system and operator selection criteria and selected a consortium of partners to operate the one-stop center(s)/system. They adopted the concept of a no-wrong-door approach, with one comprehensive one-stop center, six Department of Labor, seven technical colleges plus their satellites as associate one-stop partners, and fifteen Family and Children Services, four Rehabilitation Services offices, and Coosa Valley RDC as specialized sites.

Early implementation of the one-stop system and establishing core, intensive, and training criteria led to the system's efficient and effectively response to an unusually high number of layoffs impacting the region's workers. The long-term collaboration efforts between WIB/CCEO, the Department of Labor, Department of Technical and Adult Education, Family and Children Services, Rehabilitation Services, and other agencies and community organizations was effective in meeting the service needs of approximately 2,400 dislocated workers. With the effectiveness of the system's response and retraining provided through the ITA and OJT programs, the regional was awarded a one-million dollar emergency grant by U. S. DOL for dislocated workers.

### **Describe your Youth Council and its chief accomplishments during PY 2000:**

The Workforce Investment Board and Council of Chief Elected Officials has a history of strong interest and proactive involvement in the region's youth activities. Consequently, they appointed a diverse, experienced group of seventeen to the Youth Council. They consciously chose to have a mixture of WIB or former PIC members familiar with program operations, and new members who brought fresh ideas and view points to youth system operations. The effectiveness of the Council is enhanced by the inclusion of representatives from youth programs, Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), juvenile justice/law enforcement, a Chief Elected Official, and the Hispanic/Latin community.

The Youth Council recommended, and the WIB/CCEO approved, contracts to fill gaps and complement other youth activities taking place in Northwest Georgia. There was no break in program services between the demise of JTPA and implementation of WIA. Available programs for youth include basic skills remedial activities, tutoring, study skills training and instructions including dropout prevention strategies, alternative secondary school services, paid and unpaid work experience, occupational skills training, comprehensive counseling and case management, and follow-up services.

The summer youth programs provided for a linkage to academic and occupational learning. Due to the limited WIA funding available to the region, the local Department of Labor offices increased their efforts to recruit unsubsidized employment for youth. For example, the Fort Oglethorpe office staff went to high schools to take applications, developed jobs, and matched student interests to the available jobs. Employers were enthusiastic about the effort as it assisted them in filling positions with interested, qualified applicants.

The Youth Council with WIB/CCEO concurrence addressed all ten required elements for Youth Programs, implemented the requirement for WIA youth to prepare a "Career Portfolio" to demonstrate the individual's work/education related skills and accomplishments, and developed YouthSuccessAcademy.org to provide youth-oriented information regarding employment, advanced training, work ethics, etc.

**List the comprehensive one-stop locations in the area:**

Department of Labor, Dalton Career Center

**Describe significant service strategies and system-building efforts during PY 2000:**

As noted previously, the system-building efforts began in the Northwest Georgia region in 1997. The WIB/CCEO continued to enhance communications within the system and with partners, interested officials and the general public through regular publication and distribution of the CareerDepot.org newsletter to approximately 750 individuals and offices. The CareerDepot.org web site was continued as a communication medium with plans, policies and procedures, requests for proposals, etc. posted online to provide 24/7 access. This is in addition to the site serving as a virtual one-stop shop for customers and potential customers for employment, education and training, and community resources.

The WIB and CCEO supported the growth and responsiveness of the one-stop system by allocating funds to provide equipment and supplies to partner agencies -- Labor, Family & Children Services, Rehabilitation Services, Technical and Adult Education --to strengthen the responsiveness to customers of the one-stop system. Items supplied included computers, printers, copiers, fax machines, Internet access, etc. They also

assisted with funding career resource center moves to the lobby for two of the regions Department of Labor offices.

**Other Items:**

Northwest Georgia has built the Malcolm Baldrige continuous improvement methodology into the criteria for operating and being part of the one-stop, workforce development system.

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WIA SUCCESS STORIES**

WIA Area #   1  

WIA Area Name   Northwest Georgia  

Name and phone number of the person completing the form:

  Gayle Kimble  

  706.861.1990  

**Summary of service or project:**

The Northwest Georgia Career Center On-the-Job Training Program ended Program Year 2000 with many success stories. As the office continues to serve many dislocated employees for our diminishing textile companies, it is apparent to us that dislocated workers are in need of developing employment skills in other fields and professions.

**When did it take place?**

Program Year 2000.

**Which partners were involved?**

Department of Labor and Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Act programs.

**Describe the results (e.g., did the customer get a great job; did the individual return to school or achieve a significant educational outcome; did you receive thanks from an employer, etc)? Please include applicable quotes, letters or articles.**

Below is information about 3 of our many success stories of individuals who successfully trained and found employment outside the textile industry.

Mr. A. had been a fixer in a yarn mill for nine years when he was laid-off by his employer. The OJT staff in Northwest Georgia Career Center assisted him in finding training and a position as a maintenance mechanic at an area housing authority. The move has career potential as it includes an opportunity to be promoted to supervisor of 300 apartments. The family health policy coverage in his new position saved the family from grave financial hardships. Only two days after the family policy went into effect, Mr. A's wife was diagnosed with cancer and had to have one of her kidneys removed. In addition to outstanding health benefits, Mr. A. now has a retirement plan, a regular forty-hour, Monday to Friday, day-shift work week, training opportunities, and a secure, steady position. He and his family now have a promising future.

Ms. B had been a twister in a yarn mill when she faced a lay-off. She sought other

employment for six months before learning of the OJT program. A mature worker, Ms. B. came to OJT stressed and intimidated from competing with a much younger workforce in finding employment. However, by carefully and thoroughly assessing Ms. B.'s skills and interests, it became evident that she had organization skills and was meticulous in attending to details. Ms. B. was trained and subsequently employed by a school bus manufacturing company and trusted with placing safety stripping on buses. Finding a position that matched her skills and interests served both the mature worker and the employer well.

Mr. C. had been employed for twenty years as a tufter in a yarn mill when he was dislocated from his position. He had been familiar with and comfortable in his long-held position, never considering the possibility of losing his job. When he came to the Department of Labor, he was anxious about having to fill out job applications and having to interview with employers due to his having limited reading and math skills. Mr. C. participated in several DoL workshops and made connection with the OJT program where he received intensive career counseling. He was also referred to adult literacy classes. Mr. C. is now employed by a local city government in the Streets and Sanitation Department. He has learned many new skills and is handling the responsibility well. His employer is very pleased with his progress.

**Other relevant information about the service or project:**

Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment System contracts with the Department of Labor to provide on-the-job training services for the region.

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WIA Area #   1  

WIA Area Name   Northwest Georgia  

Name and phone number of the person completing the form:

  Sheila Bishop (OJT Job Developer)  

  706.295-6051  

**Summary of service or project:**

On-the-job training services were provided to Beverly Jefferies, a dislocated worker from Prince Street in Cartersville, GA. Ms. Jefferies is a single mother of two who was eager to return to work immediately after her lay-off. After meeting with her at a job fair, we agreed to jointly pursue full-time employment for her through the assistance of the OJT program. Ms. Jefferies received testing, job referrals, and counseling while enrolled in the program. Within three weeks of our efforts, Ms. Jefferies was offered a job that would enable her to be self-sufficient, and she remains in that job today. She has received all of her raises based on her job performance and continues to progress in her learning and job opportunities.

**When did it take place?**

Ms. Jefferies received the services beginning November 2000.

**Which partners were involved?**

Department of Labor Rome Career Center and Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Act programs

**Describe the results (e.g., did the customer get a great job; did the individual return to school or achieve a significant educational outcome; did you receive thanks from an employer, etc)? Please include applicable quotes, letters or articles.**

Ms. Jefferies has successfully completed her training with the program and continues to enjoy her new employment. I received a card in the mail from the worker thanking me for my assistance "in making this job possible, and helping me to continue to adequately provide care for my daughters." The employer has verbally extended her thanks to me for assisting in job placement of Ms. Jefferies. The supervisor has expressed that Ms. Jefferies is a good worker and has done a great job.

**Other relevant information about the service or project:**

The On-the-Job training program is designed to assist the worker and the employer in matching skills with job opportunities. Beverly Jefferies' job success is a good example of the right person for the right job. Ms. Jefferies came to this employer with some skills and was able to learn the new skills necessary to do the job through her training experience.

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WIA Area #   1  

WIA Area Name   Northwest Georgia  

Name and phone number of the person completing the form:

  Dana Wilson  

  706.272.2301  

**Summary of service or project:**

In June 2000, Ms. Donna Wheat and her children were living in Providence Ministries, a Dalton homeless shelter. Ms. Wheat was referred to the Whitfield County Family and Children Services (DFCS) where her counselor, Virginia Smith, recognizing that she needed new skills in order to find employment, referred her to New Connections to Work (NCTW) at Dalton State College.

At NCTW, Ms. Wheat was placed in Customer Service and Computer Training classes. With the assistance of Karen White, NCTW Coordinator, Ms. Wheat moved into subsidized housing and out of the homeless shelter. The Department of Labor Dalton Career Center and one-stop system assisted Ms. Wheat by furnishing her apartment

After she completed the two training programs, Ms. Wheat attended the NCTW Group Job Search workshops, designed to prepare students to be job-ready with appearance and manners. J. C. Penny Beauty Salon in Dalton gave Ms. Wheat a completely new look by styling and coloring her hair to update her appearance for a more professional look. Ms. Wheat had a wonderful attitude and perseverance, but a poor work history. She had not been able to hold a job for longer than 6 months. Thus, she was assigned to work at the Dalton Career Center so NCTW staff could coach her in a work environment. During her training, she answered a 15-line switchboard, shredded papers, filed, and distributed and prepared mail. At the same time she was counseled about various life skills such as crisis management, stress management, and financial planning.

After she was deemed job ready, Ms. Wheat was referred to Rainbow Services, a Welfare-to-Work contractor for the Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Board. Donna was placed at Better Beginnings Daycare as a bi-lingual receptionist.

A final barrier for Donna was to overcome a need for transportation. She had no car and was relying on limited local public transportation. NCTW helped Ms. Wheat obtain and complete a Wheels-to-Work application. A little over two months later, Donna was able to buy and finance a car through the program.

**When did it take place?**

Starting in June 2000.

**Which partners were involved?**

Dalton State College New Connections to Work; Whitfield County Family and Children Services; Providence Ministries, a homeless shelter in Dalton; Dalton Department of Labor Career Center; J. C. Penny Beauty Salon; Rainbow Services, a Welfare to Work (WtW) program; Wheels-to-Work

**Describe the results (e.g., did the customer get a great job; did the individual return to school or achieve a significant educational outcome; did you receive thanks from an employer, etc)? Please include applicable quotes, letters or articles.**

Ms. Wheat continues to be employed by Better Beginnings and has received a \$1.00 per hour pay increase from her starting salary. She maintains regular communication with NCTW staff. She is expected to no longer be served by the WtW program after December 2001.

**Other relevant information about the service or project:**

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WIA Area #   1  

WIA Area Name   Northwest Georgia  

Name and phone number of the person completing the form:

  Alan Proctor  

  706.272.2301  

**Summary of service or project:**

In February 2000, Ms. Sharon Moss was in a situation where many services were needed in order to help her gain control of her life. She had three children and was going through a divorce. Her personal issues prevented her from gaining or retaining employment. Ms. Moss, fortunately, received help through the one-stop system.

She was first assisted by the Murray County Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) where she began receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). DFCS staff saw that Ms. Moss was going to need intensive counseling, and they referred her to Rehabilitation Services (DRS) for additional services. She was diagnosed as being depressed and was seen weekly for counseling in addition to receiving assistance with transportation and child care. DRS developed a full service needs list to move Ms. Moss into employment and self-sufficiency.

Ms. Moss was placed in an internship with DFCS to obtain needed skills on-the-job. After being assessed as ready, she was referred to New Connection to Work (NCTW) with Dalton State College to attend computer skills training. This training seems to be the turn around that was needed as everyone working with Ms. Moss noticed her new sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

After successfully completing the class with NCTW, Rehabilitation Services counseled and assisted Ms. Moss with job search and referred her to the WIA on-the-job training staff at the Dalton Career Center. As a result, Ms. Moss received on-the-job training at Georgia Carpet Finishers in Murray County.

**When did it take place?**

Starting in February 2000.

**Which partners were involved?**

Georgia Department of Labor Career Center; Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Act On-the-Job Training program; New Connections to Work, Dalton State College; Murray County Family and Children Services; Rehabilitation Services, Dalton.

**Describe the results (e.g., did the customer get a great job; did the individual return to school or achieve a significant educational outcome; did you receive thanks from an employer, etc)? Please include applicable quotes, letters or articles.**

Ms. Moss successfully completed her on-the-job training program. She is currently employed by Georgia Carpet Finishers as a Production Scheduler and earns \$8.50 per hour.

Ms. Moss is very pleased with her prospects. She believes she was provided with skills that will enable her to find employment on her own should she ever be out of work again. She is most grateful to all of the people who assisted her.

**Other relevant information about the service or project:**