

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



Drastic Cuts to State Agencies?

Dawn A. Randolph, MPA

January 22, 2020

Key Events This Week

Budget Break this Week. Here is the full [schedule](#) and you can watch the Joint Budget Hearings [online](#) already archived.



Key committee times:

Thursday, Jan 23 8:30am - 12:00pm

8:30am Dept of Human Services including GVRA

11:15am Dept of BHDD

First, I am sorry I did not get this to you sooner. I succumbed to some strange bug last week and it kept me from getting to my computer. However, I have been closely monitoring the budget and to bring an update.

As you will recall the Governor gave instructions last year to all agencies to reduce their budget in Amended FY 2020 by 4% and 6% in FY 2021. When you consider that many agencies are exempt due to entitlement (Medicaid) and enrollment (Education) that puts a heavy burden on those agencies with only state funding and requirements for federal match. The question is always, what does this mean in real

In This Issue

[Drastic Cuts to State Agencies?](#)

Special Announcements



State Use Council Meeting
Thursday, January 23, 2020
10:00 AM
Floyd Building - West Tower

dollars? It is a loss of \$160 million from this year's revenue and only \$566 million projected increase for FY 2021.

Revenue Challenge

Last year the legislature cut the income tax rate from 6% to 5.75% and want to continue that downward trend to 5.5%. That would wipe out any projected revenue increase and leave no room for the Governor's priorities or ability to restore cuts. They anticipated that the change in federal income taxes would create a [windfall](#) for Georgia. That windfall never materialized and now the act of balancing a budget is teetering on the point of a needle. A recent poll of Georgians showed a HUGE majority (75%) would prefer to leave the tax rate as is to ensure services are funded. The AJC [covered the poll](#) commissioned by the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute ([2020 budget and tax poll](#)).

State of the State & Budget Address

I have poured over the budget since Governor Brian Kemp gave his State of the State Address last Thursday, Jan 16, 2020. As I covered in our first Portal of the year his focus in his speech centered on reducing gang violence, increasing adoptions, ensuring a better foster care experience and reducing sex trafficking. However, he put no dollar amounts on anything but providing an increase in tax credits for foster parents from \$2,000/child annually to \$6,000/child annually. There were no other details on agency budget impacts. He did use his address to state his commitment to continuing to raise teacher pay and put a \$2,000 raise in the budget to complete his campaign commitment to raise teacher pay by \$5,000 during his first term. You can view the Governor's State of the State Address [here](#). Look for Day 4 - January 16 and start viewing at 1:19. The budget is now [online](#) and both amended budget and full budget are in one document.

Health and Human Services Budget Impact

The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget scheduled each budget day around themes. Thursday will be health and human services budget agency day. They will start by hearing from Department of Human Services Commissioner Robyn Crittenden at 8:30am. Unfortunately, the attached agencies, including GVRA, will not be presenting individually. Here is a quick overview of budget cuts. I can say right now the Governor has not recommended any cuts to Vocational Rehabilitation direct services. However, there are plenty of administrative and staff cuts in GVRA.

NOTE: This year's cuts for the amended budget are in bright red and big budget in dark red, while any additions are in green.

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation

GATES Board Meeting

Friday,
January 24, 2020
10:00 AM

Tommy Nobis
Center

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*Charles Hall,
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Department Administration

Purpose: The purpose of this appropriation is to help people with disabilities to become fully productive members of society by achieving independence and meaningful employment.

Recommended Change:

Reduce funds to realize savings from program reorganization and personnel restructuring initiatives. **Total Funds (\$1,307,851) State Funds (320,358) / Total Funds (\$1,610,186) State Funds (427,245)**

Reduce funds for contractual services. **Total Funds (\$150,000) State Funds (31,950) / Total Funds (\$150,000) State Funds (39,795)** - this is likely for Accenture Contract.

VR Program

Purpose: The purpose of this appropriation is to assist people with disabilities so that they may go to work.

Reduce funds to realize savings from vacant positions. **Total Funds (\$4,222,529) State Funds (899,399) Total Funds (\$4,339,455) & State Funds (1,199,198)**

Dept of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities - Service Impact

Adult Developmental Disabilities Services

Purpose: The purpose of this appropriation is to promote independence of adults with significant developmental disabilities through institutional care, community support and respite, job readiness, training, and a crisis and access line.

Recommended Changes:

- Increase funds to provide a \$1,000 pay raise to full-time, regular employees with current salaries of \$40,000 or less **2,041,263**
- Increase funds to annualize the cost of 125 New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) slots for the intellectually and developmentally disabled. **2,749,798**
- Increase funds to reflect a reduction in the Federal Medical Assistance Program (FMAP) from 67.30% to 67.03% **2,127,829**
- Reduce funds for intensive family support services. **(1,000,000) & (1,000,000)**
- Reduce funds for assistive technology assessments and research. **(1,000,000) & (1,000,000)**

Total Change (\$2,834,138) & \$3,425,041

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Purpose: The purpose of this appropriation is to provide evaluation, treatment, crisis stabilization, and residential services to children and adolescents with mental illness.

Recommended Change:

- Reduce funds for community innovation programs. (342,131) & (456,174)
- Reflect savings from a shift to fee-for-service reimbursements of high fidelity wraparound services. (406,691) & (542,255)
- Reduce funds for System of Care to reflect projected expenditures. (1,046,881) & (1,395,841)
- Reduce funds for enhanced staffing at crisis stabilization units to reflect projected expenditures. (1,974,566) & (1,974,566)
- Reduce funds for supported employment and education services. (3,060,000) & (3,542,709)
- Eliminate funds for four crisis respite homes due to non-implementation. (5,923,288) & (234,000)

Total Change (\$12,751,386) & (\$14,070,657)

Adult Mental Health Services FY 2021

Purpose: The purpose of this appropriation is to provide evaluation, treatment, crisis stabilization, and residential services to facilitate rehabilitation and recovery for adults with mental illnesses.

Recommended Change:

Increase funds to provide a \$1,000 pay raise to full-time, regular employees with current salaries of \$40,000 or less. 5,107,473

Increase funds to reflect a reduction in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) from 67.30% to 67.03%. 461,019

Reduce funds for provider support and training. (1,148,837) & (1,219,593)

Reduce funds for supported employment services to reflect utilization rates. (1,994,944) & (2,452,885)

Reduce funds for behavioral health services. (8,341,192)

Total Change (\$3,477,231) & (\$7,437,568)

Flow of the Session

This may be a longer session than one would expect in a big election year. I provided the current adjournment resolution in the portal and we are now working to Day 14 that will occur on February 10th. Speaker David Ralston (R-Blueridge) noted at several press conferences and speeches last week that he wants to give each member sufficient time to understand and advocate for their issues. What may be one person's pork is another person's bread and each community will be impacted differently and that must be considered.

[Back To Top](#)

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