

## News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



# THE GATES PORTAL

## SPECIAL BUDGET REPORT with final status on passed legislation

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August 9, 2019

Traditionally the Governor releases budget directives to agencies in May. This year we have all been waiting for Governor Kemp to issue budget instructions. Finally on Tuesday, August 6th the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) released instructions to state agencies to prepare their new budget and submit requests to OPB by September 6th, only allowing for one month to work on budget preparation.



In an effort to find efficiencies in State government the Governor has instructed agencies to cut 4% from current fiscal year in the Amended FY 2020 budget and 6% from the full FY 2021 budget. Agencies have been further instructed to begin taking 4% less of their current fiscal year appropriations beginning October 1st.

*"The governor is asking agencies to find efficiencies in their organizations and submit budget reduction proposals for amended FY2020 (which ends June 30) of four percent and FY2021 of six percent," the governor's budget office instructions said.*

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**Special Announcements**



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You can read the budget [memo](#) and full [instructions](#) on the OPB website. The instructions do provide for exceptions but only at the direction of OPB. The instructions stated "Some programs or initiatives may be exempted from budget reductions. OPB will notify your agency as to those exclusions. Any requests for additional funds in either year will be allowed only for workload or enrollment driven programs as communicated to you by OPB." The instructions view programs with enrollment requirements (K-12, University System, Medicaid & DFACS) as exceptions because they are formula driven by federal authorization or state statute.

You are thinking - how will this impact vocational rehabilitation services? The instructions go on to say that agencies can take the reductions to create efficiencies and not just across the board from each division. Agencies should consider their strategic objectives and maximize their resources. GVRA does not have to take it out of VR; however, as the largest expenditure area it will be tough not to make cuts there. For the current fiscal year GVRA will need to find at least \$5 million in cuts and then \$7.5 million in FY 2021 which include state and federal matching 110 dollars.

This is a very new development and was announced late Tuesday, August 6th. The GVRA Board met early afternoon on Tuesday but there was no mention of the requested cuts. Since this is such short notice the GVRA Board will not meet again before the budget requests are due on September 6th.

#### **Final status on all bills passed by the legislature**

[HB 70](#) Rep. Chuck Efstoration proposed changes to the guardian and ward statute for youth and adults. This may effect those that work with guardians in dealing with court orders. *The House passed by substitute on 2/25/19 by a vote of 170-0. **The bill was tabled on Friday, March 29th but made it to a full Senate vote and was passed by substitute on Tuesday, April 2nd by a vote of 51 to 0. The House agreed to the minor changes made by the Senate and passed it 155-0 later that day. The Governor signed May 6th and the new law will be effective January 1, 2020.***

[HB 79](#) Rep. Carl Gillard sponsored a bill to change definitions and provisions pertaining to blind persons in child custody issues. The bill passed the House on 3/5/19 by 167-0. ***The Senate passed the substitute on Thursday, March 28th by a vote of 49-2 and then the House made a minor change on Tuesday, April 2nd by a vote of 167-0. The Senate squeaked in a final vote to agree to the final change by the House and passed the bill 49-1. The Governor signed May 2nd and the new law became effective immediately.***

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[HR 52](#) Rep. John Corbett sponsored this resolution to bring attention to dyslexia and the impact it has on their educational experience. This type of resolution is really urging educational systems to take this diagnosis more seriously and see the potential of those with dyslexia. The House Education Committee decided to move on it March 21st and voted it out of committee. ***The House passed the resolution on March 25th by a vote of 155-0. No other action is necessary because it is a resolution to raise awareness.***

[SB 100](#) Sen. P.K. Martin sponsored this legislation on the state relay service and audible reading program managed by the Georgia Public Service Commission into the 21st Century. I received a lot of input about this program when I ran for the GA Public Service Commission. By adding wireless devices and applications to the law and striking telephone relay the PSC will be able to upgrade to new technology, a long overdue update. The Senate passed the bill 55-0. ***The House passed the bill 164-1 on March 21st. The Governor signed the bill into law May 7th and it became effective July 1st.***

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## Call for Information

*THE PORTAL* is a communication tool for GATES and GATES members. If you have stories about your organization, staff announcements, program descriptions, or other information you want to share with other GATES members, please send the info to Charles Hall, [chall@asginfo.net](mailto:chall@asginfo.net)



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