

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

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State Budget - What a difference from two years ago

Special Announcements:

GATES Board of Directors Meeting:

Friday, January 28, 2022, ZOOM Call - 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM

State Budget - What a difference from two years ago



Dawn A. Randolph, MPA

January 26, 2022

Key Events This Week

General Assembly will be in four days this week.

Budget meetings:

This week House Appropriations Subcommittees will hear about details from the Amended FY '22 budget.

Thursday, Jan 27, the House Human Services Subcommittee will hear AFY '22 at 3pm. [Link to view the meeting.](#)

It is a FIRST – Entire session schedule set until Sine Die on April 4th

Never in my 26 years advocating and lobbying before the Georgia General Assembly have we had an adjournment resolution ([SR382](#)) that establishes the entire 40 voting days of the session after the first week. The leadership of the House and Senate have established a session with long weekend breaks every other week and committee days with a late crossover day and a fairly even flow until they adjourn sine die on Monday, April 4th. All bills will need to cross out of the originating chamber by the 28th voting day on March 15th. This seems to give the Appropriations Committee most of February to work on the budget and take their time for all legislation. The end date of April 4th is

unprecedented in an election year which does not allow legislators from raising funds for their campaigns until the session adjourns.

Budget Overview

Last week the full Appropriations Committees of the House and Senate held their annual Joint Budget Hearings to listen to each agency official present their budget. Presentations were from high level commissioners and agency directors, not from attached agencies or smaller agencies. Executive Director Wells did not present last week and Commission Candice L Broce, Department of Human Services, covered mostly DFACS and children's services. She did not address any specific item in the GVRA budget. You can see the Human Services, Public Health, Medicaid and Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities agency presentations [here](#).

Unlike two years ago when I titled the update for this week with "Georgia has a Revenue Challenge and Drastic Cuts Ahead" we are now looking at \$4 billion of excess dollars. This has resulted in the Governor proposing the following:

- \$2,000 salary increase for teachers to finish his \$5,000 commitment to educators
- Fully fund QBE (education formula) for the first time in a decade
- \$5,000 salary increase for all permanent fulltime state employees
- 9% match for state employees 401K retirement plans, up from 3%
- \$1.6 billion one-time tax refund for taxpayers, ranging from \$250 for a single filer to \$500 for a family.

You can view the Governor's Budget [address to the joint committee](#) at the 40-minute mark and the State Economists Economic outlook at the 1-hour mark. Both speak to the strong financial position of our state budget with only some caution from the State Economist that the incredible spending and growth will slow the rest of this fiscal year to a normal pace. This is the largest budget a Governor has ever recommended at over \$30 billion in state funds in FY 2023. Most agencies have been restored to prior pandemic budget levels, although not all. GVRA has not been restored.

Amended FY '22 Under Review

The House subcommittees began this week to review the Amended FY '22 budget through a hybrid meeting style (both in-person and online). Commissioners and Directors can choose to be in-person at the meeting or online. In terms of the House Human Resources Committee, Chairman Katie Dempsey (R-Rome) will hold her meeting Thursday, Jan 27th from 3-4pm, [agenda and watch online](#). Executive Director Chris Wells will be the fourth agency official to present. The committee will also take public comment on the AFY 2022 budget items (information sent out in a separate email).

Amended FY '22 Budget Details

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation

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:

\$5,000 pay increase for fulltime employees **\$365,257 state funds**

Upgrades to the case management system **\$100,000 state funds/\$469,484 total funds**

VR Program

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

Recommended Changes:

\$5,000 pay increase for fulltime employees **\$1,549,142 state funds**

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

The only increases in the DBHDD budget are for the \$5,000 pay increase for fulltime employees for the amended budget.

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 Caitlin Hyatt, chyatt@asginfo.net



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