

NEW HEALTHCARE WORKERS RECEIVE TRAINING USING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION'S WIOA PROGRAM

One field that is in demand in Northeast Georgia, and throughout the country, is healthcare. During the Pandemic, healthcare workers were thrust into the spotlight and their dedication and willingness to serve others deemed them as "essential workers." We would like to highlight two students who went through the Workforce Development Division's WIOA program, to gain the skills to enter into the healthcare field. Edsabel and Della both attended Innovative Healthcare Institute in Athens. Edsabel received training and certification in Certificated Nursing Assistant and Patient Care Technician. Upon completing training, Edsabel became employed full-time as a Phlebotomist at Piedmont Athens Regional. Della also received the same training, and became employed full-time as an EKG Monitor Tech at St. Mary's Health Care. This partnership resulted from Innovative Healthcare Institute providing the training and WIOA funding providing the tuition costs and a gas allowance while they attended the training. Congratulations to these two new professionals!

INNOVATIVE HEALTHCARE INSTITUTE
 PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Congratulations

IHCI Graduate:	Edsabel
Programs of Study:	CNA, PCT
Employment:	Phlebotomist, Fulltime
Employer:	Piedmont Athens

INNOVATIVE HEALTHCARE INSTITUTE
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Congratulations

IHCI Graduate:	Della
Programs of Study:	CNA, PCT
Employment:	EKG Monitor Tech, Fulltime
Employer:	St. Mary's Health Care



MAY IS OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

Older adults play vital, positive roles in our communities – as family members, friends, mentors, volunteers, civic leaders, members of the workforce, and more. Just as every person is unique, so too is how they age and how they choose to do it

– and there is no “right” way. That’s why the theme for Older Americans Month (OAM) 2022 is **Age My Way**.

Every May, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) leads the celebration of OAM. This year’s theme focuses on how older adults can age in their communities, living independently for as long as possible and participating in ways they choose.

While **Age My Way** will look different for each person, here are common things everyone can consider:

- **Planning:** Think about what you will need and want in the future, from home and community-based services to community activities that interest you.
- **Engagement:** Remain involved and contribute to your community through work, volunteer, and/or civic participation opportunities.
- **Access:** Make home improvements and modifications, use assistive technologies, and customize supports to help you better age in place.
- **Connection:** Maintain social activities and relationships to combat social isolation and stay connected to your community.

This year, the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission’s (NEGRC) Area Agency on Aging is excited to celebrate OAM with our partners in the aging community. Follow along throughout the month to find resources on aging in place, Transportation, and Assistive Technology by calling **Northeast Georgia Regional Commission AAA at (706)583-2546**.

Diverse communities are strong communities. Ensuring that older adults remain involved and included in our communities for as long as possible benefits everyone. Please join Northeast Georgia Regional Commission and the 12 Senior Centers of Northeast Georgia Planning and Service Area in strengthening our community.

For more information, visit the official **OAM website**, follow ACL on Twitter and Facebook, and join the conversation using **#OlderAmericansMonth**.

UGA’S TERRY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS PROVIDES ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR GEORGIA

In February, the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business presented key economic trends and risk forecasts at the Georgia Economic Outlook 2022 at the Classic Center in Athens. This annual series provides expert predictions from the Selig Center for Economic Growth for national, state, and metro-area economies.



Georgia Economic Outlook 2022 held at the Classic Center in Athens

The Outlook anticipates that, during 2022, the total U.S. labor market jobs lost due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic are expected to be recovered. Full labor market recovery is expected by mid-2025. Consumer spending is predicted to be the economy’s primary strength this year, powered by job growth and an increase in consumer credit. The integration of automated, labor-saving technologies and equipment during the pandemic will moderate job growth to a certain extent, since it resulted in a number of job skills and positions being made obsolete. However, the Outlook predicts that low unemployment rates (due to increased job creation and the potential for labor force participation to remain down) will result in upward pressure on wages. In addition, employers across industries will face continued hiring difficulties. The good news for local governments is that sales tax collections are expected to increase due to a consumer spending shift from services towards goods.

The State of Georgia is expected to maintain rapid economic growth throughout 2022. None of the state’s major sectors are expected to experience job loss. The Outlook identifies eight “state-specific forces” supporting this continued growth: “(1) the build-out of many economic development projects; (2) competitive economic

development incentives; (3) more foreign direct investment; (4) the housing boom; (5) higher vehicle sales; (6) strong performance of the transportation and logistics industry, especially Georgia's ports; (7) good prospects for Georgia's military bases; and (8) demographic trends."

The Outlook provides valuable information for the Northeast Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update, which is currently underway. The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission maintains the CEDS document. It is intended as a guide for regional economic development and economic resilience-building. For more information, contact **Eva Kennedy, NEGRC Director of Planning & Government Services**, at ekennedy@negrc.org or **706-369-5650**.

For more information and to purchase this year's Economic Outlook, visit: <https://events.terry.uga.edu/eo/about/>

THE NORTHEAST GEORGIA SENIOR HUNGER COALITION IS OFFERING GRANTS TO END SENIOR HUNGER IN THE NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGION

The Northeast Georgia Senior Hunger Coalition was formed in 2018 as a result of the Georgia State Plan and efforts to end senior hunger. The Georgia State Plan addresses senior hunger in five focus areas: Today's Senior's, Impact of Senior Hunger on Health, Food Access, Food Waste and Reclamation, and Meeting the Needs of the Community.

All focus areas are essential to successfully combat senior hunger; however, some counties have chosen to focus on 1 or 2 focus areas while building capacity for the remaining areas. Currently, the focus area in Oglethorpe, Madison, and Elbert counties is Food Access due to the counties having a large radius and several 'food deserts.' The senior hunger coalition produces literature to educate the community on senior hunger and provides resources to assist clients with accessing food.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Senior Hunger Coalition provided increased access to food in all Northeast Georgia counties. The Senior Hunger Coalition dispersed 630 shelf stable meals to seniors, identified by senior centers, who were food insecure and received limited

income. Additionally, 50 senior citizens from Oglethorpe County, referred by local churches and Oglethorpe County Senior Center, were selected to participate in a Farmer's Market that offered fresh fruits and vegetables. Then \$100 gift cards and transportation were provided to Oglethorpe County seniors for grocery shopping at the local Bell's Grocery store. Lastly, seniors in Madison and Elbert counties participated in farmer's markets and received fresh fruits and vegetables through grant funds received from a partnership with Humana.

In continued efforts to spread awareness and support, local businesses and organizations are combatting senior hunger utilizing funds from the Division of Aging Services' Senior Hunger program. Several mini grants were offered in 2021 with plans to continue the provision of grant funds in 2022. Northeast Georgia is offering two Senior Hunger Coalition grants that will be awarded to community recipients in the amount of \$2,500 to implement or enhance sustainable projects that address 1 of the 5 focus areas. Proposals are being accepted through April 1, 2022, and the grantees will be required to submit quarterly reports providing updates on the progress of the project to the Senior Hunger Coalition.

To learn more about the Northeast Georgia Senior Hunger Coalition grants or Georgia State Plan, please contact **Toshia Lewis** or **Katurah Patterson at 1-800-474-7540**.





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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS MARCH

8 th	8:15 a.m.	NEGRC/WIOA Workforce Board	Virtual
10 th	10:00 a.m.	CEDS Committee Meeting	NEGRC Atrium
17 th	Noon	NEGRC Council Meeting	Trumps Catering
23 rd	9:00 a.m.	UOBWA Meeting	NEGRC Atrium