



PRESS RELEASE

Hiring Well, Doing Good expands in Columbus, now accepting partnership requests

PEACHTREE CORNERS—The [Georgia Center for Opportunity \(GCO\)](#) announced today that its [Hiring Well, Doing Good initiative \(HWDG\)](#) in Columbus is now open to forming partnerships with businesses and nonprofits in the region. The news comes as Columbus faces [a rising unemployment rate](#) (4.8% as of March) as the region is impacted by economic shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

HWDG brings together community resources and technology to help un- and under-employed individuals achieve economic independence. Its online platform offers several advantages and options:

Support: Individuals can easily search for local service providers who can help them overcome barriers to employment.

Strengths: Job seekers can identify their strengths and opportunities for employment through a soft skills assessment, library of training programs, and a career pathway generator.

Job opportunities: Job seekers can then connect with jobs relevant to their skill sets and personal preferences and geographic area.

[Click here to view a demo of the program.](#)

HWDG helps people like Marshayla Walker, who grew up in poverty in the greater Columbus region and struggled for years as an unemployed single mom. Marshayla heard about HWDG and attended training offered at Troy University, where she is currently majoring in psychology with a minor in global business. She's grateful for the support, encouragement, and resources HWDG offers and feels that she is now equipped to break into the competitive HR field upon graduation—with a new-found confidence that she can work her way up the career ladder and give her son opportunities she did not have growing up.

"We are honored to launch the next phase of our programs in Columbus, but this is only the start," said Eric Cochling, chief program officer for HWDG and general counsel for GCO. "We continue to expand Hiring Well, Doing Good into new communities to help our neighbors and strengthen civil society. This initiative is highly scalable to other states and communities. Our broader goal is to see it replicated not only across Georgia, but the Southeast and even the U.S. so that more families are able to bounce back from the economic devastation caused by COVID-19 and move into employment quickly."

"One theme I see consistently throughout our experience with Hiring Well, Doing Good in Columbus is a picture of hope generated by opportunity," said Kristin Barker, HWDG program manager in Columbus. "It is hope that brings with it the capacity for growth, change, and healing. Just a small spark of hope can ignite a desire for learning as well as the belief that life can improve. And with this hope, what seems impossible may not be so far out of reach after all."

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Georgia Center for Opportunity (GCO) is independent, non-partisan, and solutions-focused. Our team is dedicated to creating opportunities for a quality education, fulfilling work, and a healthy family life for all Georgians. To achieve our mission, we research ways to help remove barriers to opportunity in each of these pathways, promote our solutions to policymakers and the public, and help effective and innovative social enterprises deliver results in their communities.