



**Leslie Liles**  
***Job Seeker of the Month***

Leslie Liles began her career as a bookkeeper for her father's business while still in high school. She eventually went to work in the construction and manufacturing industry, where she would spend the majority of her 30-year career. When the economic climate changed, both the construction industry and the manufacturing of construction-related goods were deeply impacted. After suffering the impact of two layoffs within a three-year period, Leslie found herself unemployed, in need of new opportunities and an income.

"Thanks to a strong financial education from my parents, I was able to rely on my savings for the majority of my unemployment, but eventually needed some help," said Leslie. "Although there should be no stigma associated with drawing unemployment after working for 30-odd years, it was a severe blow to both my self-esteem and self-confidence."

Leslie made finding a job her full-time job. She went to the local Georgia Department of Labor office in Hall County and signed up for their re-employment workshops. While attending class, Leslie found out about Georgia Work Ready. She scheduled an appointment and took the assessment. Leslie earned a gold certificate, scoring only one point too low to qualify for a platinum certificate.

"Taking the Work Ready assessment was one of the best things I could have done for my self-esteem," said Leslie. "Earning a high score helped me regain confidence that I had lost while being unemployed. I realized how much I knew and had picked up over the decades spent in the workforce. Becoming certified reinforced my intelligence, my skills and gave me the confidence to broaden my job search."

Armed with the knowledge she was qualified to do a greater number of jobs, Leslie expanded her job search to fields she had never previously considered. Wearing her Work Ready pin, Leslie interviewed for and was offered a position at Genco Distribution System, Inc. in McDonough. Leslie serves as a pricing analyst on their Kimberly Clark account and manages raw material inventory.

"I would never have thought I would be changing careers and finding new professional challenges at this point in my career, but earning the Work Ready Certificate showed me I had far more opportunities available to me because of my skills," said Leslie. "I now look forward to a new career in a different field and doing things I've never done before. Due to the certification requirements of Kimberly Clark, I have had the opportunity to travel to their Wisconsin Headquarters which would not have been possible in previous positions. The learning experience has been very enjoyable"

(more)



Leslie took the online skills gap training and intends to take the assessment again in hopes of earning a platinum score. She encourages anyone who has experienced a job loss to take the Work Ready assessment.

“Unemployment takes a toll on your self-esteem. When you find yourself in that position – you question is it something I did or didn’t do? But it was a result of economic downturn. It’s not something you can prevent, but you can prepare for it,” said Leslie. “Knowing what resources are out there will make all the difference in ensuring your success and future employment. Work Ready opened doors to me I never thought possible by validating my skills and professional value and giving me the confidence to seek a better future.”