

**LOUISIANA REHABILITATION SERVICES**  
**LOUISIANA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES REPORT**  
**June, 2008**

**STATE PLAN**

- The 2008-2009 State Plan was reviewed and approved by the Workforce Commission on June 19, 2008 and will be submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) by the end of June, 2008.
- We are beginning rulemaking on aligning the 2008 State Plan to LRS Policy. We are proposing to change the definition of “extended period of time” for which a client receives services prior to closure from 6 months to 3 months. LRS is also proposing the removal of the Basic Living Requirements chart from policy. It will remain on the form RS-14 for application purposes.

**IN-SERVICE TRAINING/ COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT (CSPD)**

- The CSPD Initiative continues to work toward completion of its goal for 2010. In January & February of 2008, recruiting was conducted around the state to enroll staff members in Master's Programs. The agency has many new counselors who need to begin training and indicated that they would do so once they achieved permanent status with LRS.
- The 2008 Counselor Academy for new staff was held in March and April for 34 new staff to provide extensive training on agency processes, comparable resources and other timely rehabilitation topics.
- We are in the final stages of Rulemaking for placing hearing aids under Economic Need. The rule should be final this month.
- The Training Unit conducted a pilot project to analyze and confirm the use of digital recorders and transcription units to help counselor and their assistants perform their jobs more professionally & efficiently in the office and in the field. The pilot involved three teams in three field offices using equipment for dictation, recording and filing through the use of digital recording, transfer and storage devices. Accessibility was tested by one team using JAWS speech reading software. The project was a success and a full scale implementation of this technology is underway. This will involve state wide training of each counselor and RCA.
- The LRS/LRA conference is scheduled for October 1 – 3, 2008 at the Holiday Inn Select in Baton Rouge.

## **BLIND SERVICES/RANDOLPH SHEPPARD**

- Randolph-Sheppard program is in the process of opening a new location at the Department of Agriculture in Baton Rouge. This location will be opened in August, 2008.
- Mandatory training for all Randolph-Sheppard managers was held in June, 2008. Some of the training topics included payment of worker's compensation insurance and use of contract labor vs. employees.
- In regards to older blind services, current contracts are in place through June 30, 2009. To qualify for services you must be 55 years of age or older and have a severe visual impairment that precludes them from seeking employment.

## **TRANSITION**

- Program Coordinator continues to participate on the Transition State Core Team. The team attended the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Centers Summit, May 6-9, 2008 in Charlotte, NC and gained assistance in furthering implementing the state plan. The team continues to meet monthly.
- Program Coordinator continues to work with Department of Education in developing Regional Core Teams in each of the regions. This project will continue when school begins in August, 2008. MOUs with DOE and LRS will be updated at this time as well.
- Program Coordinator is working with the Transition State Core Team in coordinating the Department of Education's Transition Summit which will be held in September, 2008.
- Program Coordinator continues to monitor the referral process between LRS, OCS and DOL. LRS has begun receiving OCS referrals in each of the regions. The regions are working closely together to ensure the process is working.

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

- Program Coordinator for Work Force Development continues to participate in the quarterly Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Advisory Council Meetings. The last meeting was held June, 2008 in Bossier City, LA. The next meeting will be held in September, 2008 in Lake Charles, LA.
- Program Coordinator continues to meet monthly as a part of the Job Fair Steering Committee. Plans are being made for the October job fairs that will be held in each region around the state.

## **TICKET TO WORK/SOCIAL SECURITY**

- The Social Security Administration and Ticket To Work are both in the process of making changes to the way Rehabilitation Agencies and Employment Networks can submit claims for reimbursement and LRS is implementing these changes as they occur. The changes are designed to benefit both the consumers and the agencies working with the consumers.

## **DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING SERVICES**

- Videophones have been installed in LRS State Office and are currently being installed in LRS regional offices. They will enable deaf and hearing impaired consumers to better communicate with LRS counselors.
- Two LRS counselors are attending Western Oregon's Orientation to Deafness program to become better aware of deaf consumer's needs and how to ensure LRS most effectively can work with these consumers to overcome functional limitations and achieve independence and meaningful employment.

## **LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF**

- The pilot program for Support Service Providers (SSP), which was developed with Affiliated Blind of Louisiana, has been met with tremendous enthusiasm and satisfaction by Louisiana's deaf-blind. The project provided training to SSPs on how to use sighted-guide technique and how to facilitate communication for deaf-blind persons. SSP services were then made available to deaf-blind consumers in the regions of Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and Lake Charles. This pilot project provided our deaf-blind consumers the opportunity to have full inclusion in many activities of daily living. As the deaf-blind consumers are teamed up with various SSPs, LCD is also encouraging the SSPs to be a source of notification of any emergency situations for the deaf-blind individuals.
- LCD Director joined the Deaf Services Center in presenting at the Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Association annual conference. Information on how to communicate with deaf and deaf-blind individuals in the event of an emergency was shared with state emergency response officials. Additionally, information was provided regarding Americans with Disabilities Act and Emergency Preparedness as well as information regarding the LCD's Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Response projects for Deaf-Blind in Louisiana.

## **COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS (CRPS)**

- LRS is no longer requiring that supported employment vendors obtain a DHH license. Vendors have been notified and procedures were revised to reflect the change.

## **TBI/SCI TRUST FUND**

- There are 9 Contracts with vendors who provide Case Management services to the TBI/Spinal Cord Injury consumers
- Currently serving 595 consumers in the program
- Waiting list of 154, reduced by another 21 since March, 2008
- Program Manager continues with Site Reviews and monitoring of the Case Managers of which there are 11.
- Expect to add another staff member to the Program, to bring it up to 3. If remains in House Bill 1, will begin interviewing/hiring process.
- Will spend a record amount on client services this year, at close of business 6-17-08, \$1,725,143 has been spent on client services for this fiscal year.

## **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

- The annual site visit of Louisiana Tech University of the CyBers program, the statewide comprehensive Rehabilitation Technology Program, was held May 1-2, 2008. The review revealed that over 300 consumers have been provided rehabilitation engineering and/or assistive technology services through the CyBers program, either through the center or through the regional Rehabilitation Engineers at each regional LRS office.
- The AT Program Coordinator is the LRS representative member of the LATAN Advisory Committee. LATAN is funded and mandated by the Rehabilitation Services Administration in Washington, D.C. LATAN has been very active in planning for evacuation of persons with disabilities and users of assistive technology and durable medical equipment in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.
- The AT Program Coordinator is a member of a special project, Ramp Up Louisiana. The program is an inter-agency focus group on home modifications and accessibility. This program began as part of the hurricane recovery and mitigation process in September, 2006.
- The AT Program Coordinator has been a participant in the CMS Systems Transformation Grant. This project hosts the searchable website [www.Louisianahousingsearch.org](http://www.Louisianahousingsearch.org) which provides information to those who are looking for accessible housing and other services.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

- LRS has partnered with St. Francis de Sales Catholic Deaf Center to provide emergency preparedness/response assistance to deaf-blind citizens. The services include developing an evacuation plan for each individual, providing them with a backpack with necessary items and interpreting services and support services at the designated shelter.

## **INDEPENDENT LIVING**

- Supported Living Contract with Resources for Independent Living Center (RIL) currently provides services to twenty-four consumers.
- Southwest Louisiana Independence Center (SLIC), Resources for Independent Living (RIL) and New Horizon's Independent Living Center site reviews have been completed.

## **LOUISIANA REHABILITATION COUNCIL**

- The last council meeting was held in Baton Rouge, LA on May 22-23, 2008.
  - LRC elected new officers. They are as follows:
    - **Chair person** - Nellie Perry
    - **Vice Chair** – Diane Mirvis
    - **Secretary** – Ken Zangla
    - **Member at Large** – Pam Allen
    - **Member at Large** – Robert Wilson.
  - Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC) scheduled the meetings for 2008-2009. The dates and locations are as follows:
    - July 8-9, 2008, Shreveport
    - September 11-12, 2008, Baton Rouge
    - November 20-21, 2008, Lafayette
    - January 15-16, 2009, Baton Rouge
    - March 19-20, 2009, Monroe
- There are six (6) vacancies on the LRC; four applications pending approval are at Boards and Commissions.

## **OPERATIONAL PLAN/CONTRACTS**

- The 2008 Operational Plan will end June 30, 2008 and the 2009 Operational Plan begins July 1, 2008.
- In September, LRS will be developing the 2010 Operational Plan.
- DSS has implemented an internal contract processing system, Contract Management System (CMS). The system will aid in contracts getting quicker approval by DSS.