

LOUISIANA REHABILITATION SERVICES
LOUISIANA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES REPORT
September, 2008

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

- The agency currently has 11 Counselors who are enrolled in a Master's Degree program in an effort to meet the CSPD requirements. LRS currently has 61% of our professional staff who meet the CSPD requirements.
- Training is currently underway to provide AWARE Case Management training to staff in preparation for an AWARE upgrade which is tentatively scheduled for early November, 2008.
- Training is currently underway to provide field staff in the use of digital recorders to increase their efficiency.
- The LRS/LRA conference has been rescheduled for November 12 – 14, 2008 at the Holiday Inn Select in Baton Rouge.

BLIND SERVICES/RANDOLPH SHEPPARD

- The Randolph-Sheppard has a new location at the Department of Agriculture in Baton Rouge. The grand opening and ribbon cutting was held on Thursday, August 21, 2008.
- The program has several new staff in blind services--a potential of eight employees with less than a year of experience. Specialized training in dealing with blindness will be held for them in the near future.

TRANSITION

- Program Coordinator continues to participate on the Transition State Core Team.
- 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 are in the process of being updated.
- Program Coordinator continues to monitor the referral process between LRS, OCS and DOL through conference calls.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Program Coordinator for Work Force Development continues to participate in the quarterly Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Advisory Council Meetings. The meeting which was to be held in September, 2008, in Lake Charles, La. was cancelled due to the hurricanes. The next meeting will be in December, 2008, and will be held 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 job fairs that will be held in each region around the state during the month of October.

LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF

- The National Association of the Deaf conference was held in New Orleans, La. in July, 2008. This national organization brought a positive spotlight to the issues pertaining to individuals with hearing loss and/or speech impairment; and was attended by many individuals from throughout Louisiana.
- The State of Louisiana contract for telecommunication equipment was approved. Amplified and adaptive telecommunication equipment continues to be made available to each of the Regional Service Centers to be loaned to Louisiana residents who are Deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing or have speech impairment.
- Site reviews were performed with each of the LCD contractors. Contracts with the Regional Service Centers for interpreting services and telecommunication equipment have been approved and these services are arranged by contacting the Regional Service Centers.
- The Hearing Aid program for seniors (50+) who meet the income criteria remains in great demand. This program provides hearing aids to a maximum of 400 individuals per year.
- The pilot program for Support Service Providers (SSP) which was developed with Affiliated Blind of Louisiana was extended for Fiscal Year 2009. This program remains available to deaf-blind persons in the regions of Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and Lake Charles, La. Provision of services is limited to an average of 7 hours per month.
- Brandi Berkeley, executive director of Hands & Voices, and parent of a child with hearing loss is the new chairperson of the Commission.
- The Louisiana Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf will hold their Fall conference November 13 – 15, 2008 in New Orleans, La. Additional information is available on the LRID website at <http://www.lrid.org>

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS (CRPS)

- This program has a new program coordinator, Stacey Marbs. Stacey began her new job on September 22, 2008.
- LRS is no longer requiring that supported employment vendors obtain a DHH license; Vendorship policy has been changed to reflect this information.
- OCDD is no longer utilizing LRS vendorship approval for providers that do not service LRS consumers. They have placed an OCDD approval process in place for those consumers.
- The Program Coordinator is in the process of reviewing and updating all of the CRP vendorship information.
- Program coordinator will attend the National Employment Conference 9/15/08 through 9/17/08 in Arlington, Va., and participate in a panel discussion presentation regarding multi-state VR relationships.

MINORITY OUTREACH

- This program has a new program coordinator, Stacey Marbs. Stacey began her new job on September 22, 2008.
- The National Rehabilitation Association of Multicultural Concerns conference will be held October 23-25, 2008 in St. Louis, Mo.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

- The areas of job retention, job development and providing additional supports for those consumers who are determined most severe will be focused on this year.

TBI/SCI TRUST FUND

- There are 9 contracts with vendors who provide Case Management services to the TBI/Spinal Cord Injury consumers.
- The program is currently serving 612 consumers and has a waiting list of 172 consumers.
- The program is in the process of hiring a 3rd staff member.
- Spent a record amount of \$1,816,732 on client services for fiscal year 07/08.
- Program Manager traveled to Lafayette and spoke to a group of professionals (occupational therapists, physical therapists, other rehab specialists, and social workers) to promote the TBI program.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

- The annual site visit held May 1-2, 2008 revealed that over 300 consumers have been provided rehabilitation engineering and/or assistive technology services through the LA Tech CyBERS program and the regional Rehabilitation Engineers housed at each of the regional LRS offices.
- New procedures were implemented in May to monitor, track and standardize the processing of Exception requests for Assistive Technology from the field offices.
- The program coordinator continues to serve on the RampUp Louisiana 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 main components of Ramp Up La include an online survey, and a “decision tree” tool for notifying potential funding sources for home modifications. The software development was done by the New Orleans RTA IT division: <http://www.rampupla.org/> The U.S. Dept of Agriculture offices are tooling up for the influx of applications.
- The program coordinator also serves on the CMS Systems Transformation Grant (affordable accessible housing). This project hosts the searchable website www.Louisianahousingsearch.org. This will be a service to our consumers and counselors who are looking for accessible housing and other services.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Emergency Preparedness/Disaster Planning and Response
Hurricanes Gustav and Ike offered challenges in the midst of Emergency Response for citizens with disabilities specifically in the evacuation of individuals in motorized wheelchairs. Although the contract for wheelchair accessible buses was not fully realized, LRS staff working the evacuation in New Orleans provided technical assistance and problem solving skills to remedy this challenge. LRS staff was instrumental in responding to the needs of citizens with disabilities in the medical needs shelters and general population shelters. They also assisted in the transport of patients for dialysis treatments.
- The emergency preparedness response contract for individuals who are deaf-blind was also activated in the event that these individuals were in need of sheltering at the state run shelter in Shreveport. In addition, it was activated for Hurricane Ike for search and rescue. However, there were no individuals who are deaf-blind that utilized the shelter option nor were there any that had to be rescued.

INDEPENDENT LIVING

- Supported Living Contract with Resources for Independent Living, Center (RIL) currently provides services to 65 consumers.
- Program Coordinator will monitor the approval of additional consumers being served as a result of increased funding in contract.
- Annual Site Reviews for all Independent Living Centers have been completed for this fiscal year.

LOUISIANA REHABILITATION COUNCIL

- Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC) met in Shreveport, Louisiana for the July 8-9, 2008 meeting. The meeting was held at the New Horizon's Independent Living Center. The Council members were able to gain knowledge and resources through collaboration activities planned by the Center employees.
- The September 11-12, 2008 meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana was cancelled due to Hurricane Gustav.
- LRC Membership:
 - Six vacancies – four applications pending approval at Boards and Commissions.
 - Council members continue to recruit applications for membership.

OPERATIONAL PLAN

- The year-end report for the 2008 Operational Plan was completed.
- The first quarter reporting for the 2009 Operational Plan will be after September 30, 2008.
- The development of the 2010 Operational Plan is due in October, 2008.