

LOUISIANA REHABILITATION SERVICES

LOUISIANA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES REPORT

March 2009

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

- LRS continues to work towards its goals set in the CSPD Initiative, having all professional staff not within three years of retirement complete a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling Program or related field within five years of becoming a permanent employee. Annual recruiting efforts were begun in January; however they were suspended while other agency initiatives were given priority. When appropriate, recruiting visits to the remaining offices will be completed. LRS continues to pursue all possible avenues to support staff in the pursuit of obtaining their Masters. Two more staff were recognized as having completed their degrees and three more staff may complete the program before the end of the year.
- Annual Counselor Training Academy was postponed due to other initiatives taking priority. Agency staff and resources were believed to be better utilized in a concentrated effort to assist and place consumers during the last quarter of the state fiscal year. The Academy will be rescheduled as appropriate.
- The 20 new LRS/VR Counselors hired over the past year attended training on the UNO-TRAC Excel Program (self-employment) held in New Orleans on February 5-6, 2009. This training is to familiarize counselors with basics of small business operation, provided them with the means to recognize viable business ideas and sound business plans, and help them to screen consumers for entrepreneurial potential and appropriate referrals to other services.
- Approximately 25 VR staff attended the Southern University Department of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies annual Ethics Symposium, titled, "Icon to I Can: Ethics in Assistive Technology Use by People with Disabilities" held February 20, 2009. A total of 6 hours of continuing education credit was provided in Ethics.
- A total of 20 VR Counselors attended the LA Tech University, Center for Biomedical Engineering and Rehabilitation 2009 Assistive Technology (AT) Conference, "Spring into AT" on March 4-5, 2009, in Ruston, LA. A total of 15 hours of continuing education could be obtained.

PROGRAM SERVICES

BLIND SERVICES/RANDOLPH SHEPPARD

- From November 5-7, training for all blind services staff was held at the Affiliated Blind of Louisiana Training Center in Lafayette. This training included the counselors who work the blind caseloads, their supervisors, as well as the staff of the Randolph-Sheppard program. As we have many new staff in blind services,

- this training was intended to expose them to issues they will encounter when dealing with their blind consumers. Presentations included the following topics:
- Orientation and Mobility—*What is it and Who needs it?*
Demonstration of the KNFB reader mobile unit, along with other cutting edge technology
How to read an eye report
 - We are working to develop a new Randolph-Sheppard location at NASA's Michoud Assembly facility in New Orleans. This location could possibly be large enough to warrant two managers.
 - In December, 2008, we will award our first vending route for the Randolph-Sheppard program. This route was previously a pilot program; however, as it was found to be a viable location, it will be awarded to a manager as a permanent location. This route services locations between Metairie and LaPlace.

TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM AND DEAF SERVICES

- The Program Coordinator for Ticket to Work is Avis Kado.
- Deaf Services position is currently vacant.
- Revisions to Ticket-to-Work procedures for LRS to comply with the new regulations issued this year are in process. There are a number of Employee Networks looking forward to participating in Partnership Plus throughout the State. This should assist consumers with much needed support after the LRS case has been closed.

TRANSITION

- The Program Coordinator continues to participate in monthly conference call as a member of Transition Learning Collaborative. The TACE Kick Off Meeting and Logic Model Training was attended on February 9-11, 2009, in San Antonio, Tex.
- Program Coordinator continues to participate on the State Transition Core Team. The Louisiana Transition Summit was held Wednesday, January 28, 2008, in Lafayette.
- Program Coordinator continues to work with the Department of Education in developing Regional Core Teams in each of the regions.
- Program Coordinator continues to serve as member of the Special Education Advisory Council. The last meeting was Monday, January 5, 2009.
- The Program Coordinator attended the SPP/APR Stakeholders Meeting on March 17, 2009. The State Performance Plan is Louisiana's map for improving outcomes for students with disabilities. It addresses 20 indicators as mandated by OSEP.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Program Coordinator for Work Force Development continues to serve as a member Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Advisory Council. The last quarterly meeting was held on March 5-6, 2009, in Opelousas, La. Program Coordinator was unable to attend but obtained notes from the meeting. The next scheduled meeting will be held in June 2009

LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF

- **Equipment/Services:** LCD continues to purchase telecommunication items for loan throughout Louisiana to individuals with hearing loss and/or speech impairment. Several Deaf-Blind Communicators were recently purchased. LCD staff are coordinating a workshop for the Regional Service Centers' staff to educate them on the functions and operations of the DBC so they may educate LCD consumers as part of the equipment distribution process.
- Deaf Services Center staff recently conducted a demonstration of WordFly, a remote captioning service.
- LCD staff are reviewing availability of services (both medical and non-medical) for persons with cochlear implants and will issue a letter of recommendation at the next LCD board meeting.
- **Board Membership:** Two individuals were recently appointed to the LCD Board by the Governor: Carolyn Jarrels from EBR, who represents the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and Deanna Hardy, from Bossier Parish, who is serving as a parent representative. Both individuals have familiarity with and understanding of hearing loss and are eager to represent their respective groups on the LCD.
- **Relay Services:** Intrastate CapTel services in Louisiana will be initiated in July 2009 which will allow individuals with hearing loss who can speak for themselves to use CapTel Relay services to expedite a phone call.
- Also available is "Hometown number," a new service which allows a regular local number to be assigned without the 1-800 or 1-866 prefix. This will allow Deaf and Hard of hearing consumers ease of sharing their phone number as everyone else without having to explain Relay services. For additional information, visit <http://www.hamiltonrelay.com>
- **Deaf-Blind Awareness Outreach:** LCD is collaborating with Louisiana Acadiana Deaf-Blind Citizens and Affiliated Blind of Louisiana in recognition of Louisiana Deaf-Blind Awareness Week. On June 13, the LADBC is holding a luncheon in Lafayette with presenters to include Keller Johnson Thompson, great-niece of Helen Keller, and C.C. Davis, regional representative, of HKNC. For more information, contact Dan Arabie at DantheLSU@yahoo.com
- **Deaf-Blind Emergency Preparedness:** EP training in tactile ASL continues to be provided to deaf-blind persons. Upon completion of training, ID badges with the individual's picture are given to them identifying them as deaf-blind. This ID is required for persons who are driven to the State Critical Transportation Needs shelters by family (as opposed to riding with the DOTD evacuation/pickup transports). LCD is also providing FEMA brochures "Preparing for Disaster" and "Preparing for Disaster for Persons with Disabilities" for distribution to the deaf-blind individuals' emergency contacts.

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS (CRP)

MINORITY OUTREACH

- LRS monitors community rehabilitation programs (CRP's) at the state level through programmatic and fiscal reviews. CRP's are monitored annually using promulgated standards to evaluate the quality of services, accessibility, and outcomes. The annual renewal process is completed via a site visit or a review of files. The Program Coordinator provides technical assistance as areas of remediation are identified.
- The Drug Court and their Work Release programs continue to be monitored for their effectiveness.
- Communication continues with CARF on possible CRP certification.
- Program Coordinator continues to maintain a relationship with the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation agency's in Louisiana to ensure that the consumers are provided services. There has been no new activity since the last report.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

- Through the VR Business Network, various web sites have been identified which focus on the hiring of persons with disabilities. This information has been conveyed to LRS personnel throughout the state. In addition, companies such as Walgreens and CVS pharmacy have been identified as businesses which work closely in hiring persons with disabilities.
- Job Fairs for individuals with disabilities were held in nine cities throughout the State in October 2008. Approximately 172 businesses were present and 1414 individuals with disabilities attended. Of the 67 interviewed, 21 were hired immediately.
- Supported Employment Program Coordinator attended a workshop in Jefferson, La. on February 11, 2009 which was sponsored by The Advocacy Center out of New Orleans. The workshop featured Federal Government Disability Program Managers and a Human Resources Manager who provided great information in getting people with disabilities hired with the Federal Government. This information was immediately passed on to LRS field personnel.

TBI/SCI TRUST FUND

- Jan D'Spain is the Program Manager for TBI/SCI Trust Fund.
- There are 9 contracts with vendors who provide case management services to the TBI/Spinal Cord Injury consumers.
- Currently serving 609 consumers in the program.
- Waiting list of 241.
- Program Manager continues with site reviews and monitoring of the 11 case managers.
- Spent a record amount on client services for fiscal year 07/08 - \$1,816,732.
- Have already spent \$1,872,454 for this fiscal year, since 7-08.

- Unsure of funds for next year; however, it is hoped we will receive the same amount of funds we received this year.
- Currently the trust fund is not opening new cases and anticipates not being able to open new cases for at least 6 months, as current client needs are consuming most of the funds allowed for the year.

Number of Consumers in Program by Regions:

1. Baton Rouge -	186
2. Lafayette -	81
3. Lake Charles -	58
4. New Orleans/Gretna -	71
5. Houma/Thibodeaux -	38
6. Alexandria -	62
7. Monroe -	61
8. Shreveport -	52

TOTAL Currently Being Served: 609

Currently on Waiting List: 243

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

- John Schweitzer is the Program Coordinator.
- The professional staff of the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering, Science and Technology (CREST) has conducted 211 Rehabilitation Engineering and/or Assistive Technology Assessments as reported in the second quarterly report to the AT Program Coordinator. This represents 70% of the annual goals for this contract. Contract services included *computer assessment, activities-of-daily-living evaluations, home and job-modification evaluations, adaptive driving and transportation evaluations, vehicle modification reports, and seating and positioning assessments for wheelchairs and wheeled mobility systems*. John is currently reviewing comments by Regional Managers on ways to expedite scheduling and reporting of AT assessments. *The AT Coordinator has submitted a budget increase to the third year of a 3-year contract for AT service delivery with Louisiana Tech University.*
- Dr. Schweitzer was co-presenter at two workshops at the March 4-5, *Spring Into AT Conference* at La Tech University: *Navigating the Medicare/Medicaid Maze and Assistive Technology Assessments: A Comprehensive Approach.*
- LRS continues to coordinate with Louisiana Assistive Technology Network (LATAN) on an expanded program, funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to provide statewide demonstration-learning, lending, and purchasing assistance of assistive technology. LATAN has joined the Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters and has participated with LRS in planning for emergency response for persons with disabilities. LATAN is conducting training to assist individuals with their personal planning for evacuations. LATAN now has a vendor number and is providing a device-rental service so consumers may have a more realistic trial use of an AT device before requesting that LRS provide them with said device.

- LRS participates with the Department of Health and Hospital (DHH) task force to increase consumer awareness and access to “affordable/accessible” housing. The AT Program Coordinator is a member of the Capitol Area Consumer Housing Advocacy Network (CACHAN). The purpose of CACHAN is to assist persons with disabilities to exercise their rights under the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- LRS provides technical assistance to DHH in a “problem-solving” mode to better serve the needs of displaced persons with disabilities who have accessibility problems in single-family dwellings. The AT Program Coordinator works with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Disaster Housing Assistance Program, the Governors’ Offices of Disability Affairs and Elderly Affairs to assist persons to make their homes accessible under Uniforms Federal Accessibility Standards and ADA guidelines. “Ramp Up Louisiana” is an interagency referral model for assistance with home modifications for accessibility. This program is currently working on a pilot to determine more efficient and cost-effective ways to make basic accessible solutions to single-family dwellings throughout Louisiana.
- The AT Program coordinator serves on two “Business Modernization” committees; Electronic Case management, and Paperless processes to assist the DSS/IT Director in identifying actionable plans for re-vamping our IT-supported business applications. Moreover, he has been tasked with providing technical assistance to the ESF-6 Task Force of rewriting the Hurricane Emergency Response plan, statewide. Currently, he has been tasked with assisting the Secretary of DSS with a response to the Federal Department of Justice (DOJ) survey of eleven (11) of our Critical Transportation Needs Shelters (CTNS)
- The AT Program Coordinator continues to provide review of ADA Accessibility Guidelines for new construction of business and organizations serving the public, in coordination with the State Fire Marshall’s office.
- In addition, the AT Program Coordinator continues to provide review and serve as a voting board member on the Department of Labor (DOL) Second Injury Fund Board, which meets monthly. This is a program mandated by the State of Louisiana to control and reduce the costs of 2nd Injury medical insurance settlements.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Emergency Preparedness/Disaster Planning and Response – The Human Services Task Force is developing a plan to ensure that human services are available to evacuees in state shelters. Some of the services included in the planning phase are personal care attendants, assistive technology, and services for children, elderly and disabled.

INDEPENDENT LIVING

- Supported Living Contract with Resources for Independent Living, Center (RIL) - Currently provides on-going services to 23 consumers (total consumers served as of December, 2008 - 106).

- Mid-Year Cost Savings for the Community and Family Support Program – contract amendment is pending.
- Site Reviews:
 - Annual Site Review with RIL is scheduled for March 30 – April 3, 2009.
 - Annual Site Review with New Horizons Independent Living Center is scheduled for May 25-29, 2009.
 - Annual Site Review with Southwest Louisiana Independence Center (SLIC) was completed on March 6, 2009, and report will be completed by March 20, 2009.

Program Coordinator worked collaboratively with Statewide Independent Living Council in completing Louisiana's Annual 704 Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2007-2008. The report was sent to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in Washington, DC, December 2008.

LOUISIANA REHABILITATION COUNCIL

- Louisiana Rehabilitation Council held a meeting January 15-16, 2009, in Baton Rouge at the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Baton Rouge Regional Office and on a meeting on March 19-20, 2009, in Lafayette at the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services' Regional Office.
- There are two new members who joined the Council in March 2009, and five vacancies.

OPERATIONAL PLAN

- Operational Plan – The Division of Administration charged the Departments to develop outcome and performance based indicators for the 2010 budget/operational plan. The 2010 Executive Budget/Supporting Document includes revisions requested by LRS.