

**LOUISIANA REHABILITATION SERVICES
LOUISIANA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES REPORT
March, 2010**

PROGRAM PLANNING/RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

DEAF SERVICES

- No new updates in this area.

STATE PLAN

- LRS is compiling the information for the 2011 State Plan which is due to our federal partners on July 1, 2010. It will be available to stakeholders, upon approval, this fall.

IN SERVICE & CSPD INITIATIVES

- Beginning in January, a new cycle of on-line courses began at Southern University. Four counselors began the program taking advantage of scholarships provided by Southern. These four counselors will be assisting the agency to comply with it's CSPD Initiative to have all counselors complete a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Currently there are 14 employees enrolled in the two universities.

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS (CRP's/EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

MINORITY OUTREACH

- Program Coordinator continues to maintain a relationship with the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation agency's in Louisiana to ensure that the consumers are provided services.
- LRS and the Tribal programs have presented cross-training opportunities to facilitate the development of staff persons who are culturally sensitive and competent. The annual LRS Counselor Academy has proven to be an effective venue for sharing between the different cultures.
- A module that addresses multi-cultural counseling issues and outreach has been developed and incorporated into all training academies for newly hired rehabilitation counselors. LRS employees are provided

opportunities to attend cultural diversity workshops/training provided by outside entities to include conferences and university degree programs.

CRPs

- LRS continues to annually monitor all CRP's. This process is initiated at the regional level by requiring providers to meet certain quality indicators and submit documentation to verify the accuracy of reports. The CRP's are monitored at the state level through programmatic and fiscal reviews. Promulgated standards are used to evaluate the quality of services, accessibility and outcomes. The annual renewal process is completed via a facility site visit or a review of files. The Program Coordinator provides technical assistance as areas of remediation are identified.

DRUG COURTS

- The Drug Court and their Work Release programs continue to be monitored for their effectiveness.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE

- LRS is a participating partner in the development of Neighborhood Place (NP). The concept of NP is to state agencies and local organizations housed in one facility for better accessibility by consumers. Currently there are two locations in Sabine Parish (Zwolle & Many). The next NP is located in Central City New Orleans (Mahalia Jackson Early Childhood & Learning Center). The anticipated opening date is May 3, 2010.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

- LRS has renewed our contract with UNO TRAC ExCEL Program for the training of consumers to open their own businesses. The contract has been altered to match the State of Louisiana fiscal year which runs from July 1 to June 30th of the following year. The UNO contract is a three (3) year contract which runs from July 2010 through June 2013. The LRS – UNO TRAC collaboration has been most successful in assisting consumers with opening their own businesses. LRS referred a total of **55** new referrals to the UNO TRAC ExCEL Program for contract year '08 – '09. **50** clients attended UNO TRAC's Introductory Workshop. The UNO TRAC ExCEL Program successfully helped **18** consumers open businesses.
- LRS is working with the Louisiana Workforce Commission/Disability Program Navigators on the 2010 Job Fair. LRS has met with the LA

Workforce Commission regarding event documentation and planning, as well as being a consultant to the Disability Program Navigators who have the Job Fair Lead for 2010. LRS Rehabilitation Development Specialist (REDS) are active in meeting with various Disability program Navigators throughout the state. Further, LRS is participating on the Job fair Planning Committee and lending expertise in assisting in bringing Job Fair 2010 to fruition.

- LRS State Office has been working closely with the VR Business Network in disseminating information to the agencies REDS concerning positions being offered by such companies as Walgreen's, J. Lodge, Convergys, Harrah's, and the U.S. Federal Government to get consumers hired.

TBI/SCI TRUST FUND

- There are 9 Contracts with vendors who provide Case Management services to the TBI/Spinal Cord Injury consumers
- Served 594 consumers from 7-1-09 to present
- Waiting list of 336
- Currently serving 570
- Program Manager continues with Site Reviews and monitoring of the Case Managers of which there are 9.
- 09/10 Budget for client services (excluding contract budgets) is \$2,540,724.
- As of 12-31-09, \$2,261,641 has been spent.
- Preparations are underway for the TH/SCI Trust Fund move to the Department of Health and Hospitals effective 7-1-10. Not final until legislative passes. Will go under the Office of Aging Adult Services under Hugh Ealy.
- The average annual income from the dedicated funds is \$1.8 million
- Less money will likely be budgeted for fiscal year 2010/2011 for the program because the balance of the Trust Fund is less than in previous years because we have used it.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

➤ **Contracts:**

The professional staff of the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering, Science and Technology (CREST) at LA Tech continues to exceed the goals for the final year of a 36-month contract. Contract services include: ***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. *The AT Coordinator is negotiating a new, multi-year contract for AT service delivery with Louisiana Tech University.*

➤ **Training/Professional Education:**

The AT Program Coordinator co-presented a workshop on standards and best-practices for wheelchairs, adaptive driving and other assistive technology (IE: augmentative and alternative communication AAC devices) at “Spring Into AT” a two day conference held at La Tech University, March 3-4th, 2010. He attended the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Association of North America (RESNA) held in New Orleans, June 3-5, 2009.

➤ **AT Partnerships:**

LRS continues to coordinate with Louisiana Assistive Technology Network (LATAN) on an expanded program, funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to provide state-wide 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

The AT Program Coordinator received The Agency Championship Award for LRS at the LATAN annual award banquet in December.

LRS and LATAN are coordinating efforts to make affordable loans available to LRS consumers for purposes of Home Modifications and other Assistive Technology as appropriate.

Board LRS is partnering with the Louisiana Workforce Commission, 2nd Injury

In their re-authoring legislation providing reimbursement for rehabilitation services provided to participants in the 2nd Injury employee insurance program.

PERFORMANCE PLANNING AND PROGRAM SERVICES

INDEPENDENT LIVING

- The Community and Family Support Program services have been contracted out and transferred to the Department of Health and Hospitals/Office of Aging and Adult Services effective March 1, 2010. The contract between LRS and DHH/OAAS providing the funding for this transfer is in the process of getting approval. Nineteen consumers continue receiving on-going services. The transition has gone smoothly and services with consumers were not interrupted.
- Effective July 1, 2010 this program will be permanently moved to the Department of Health and Hospitals/Office of Aging and Adult Services pending legislative approval which has been submitted for the upcoming Legislative Session beginning March 2010.

LOUISIANA REHABILITATION COUNCIL

- Louisiana Rehabilitation Council held a meeting January 28-29, 2010 in Baton Rouge at the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services Regional Office. In SFY 2010, the council also held meetings in Lake Charles, Lafayette, and Alexandria.
- The next scheduled meeting is March 25-26, 2010 in Thibodaux, LA at the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services Regional Office. The LRC meeting dates for SFY 2011 will be decided at the March meeting.
- The Council has 21 members to date. There are 4 vacancies.

OPERATIONAL PLAN

- State Fiscal Year 2010 Second Quarter Performance Indicators were reported in February 2010.
- LRS Performance Indicators for State Fiscal Year 2010 were redeveloped to best reflect strong outcome based performance measures in conjunction with the Department of Social Services and Division of Administration initiative.

LEGISLATION

- Legislation will be introduced that proposes to transfer regulatory authority for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) from the Department of Social Service (DSS) to the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH).

Programs under LRS proposed for transfer from DSS to LWC include:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Randolph-Sheppard Program
- Independent Living Part B Program
- Independent Living for Older Blind Program.

Programs under LRS proposed for transfer from DSS to DHH Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS) and the Office of the Secretary include:

- Traumatic Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Program (OAAS)
- State Personal Assistance Services Program (OAAS)
- Community and Family Support Program (OAAS)
- Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (OS)

- DSS made the recommendation to the Streamlining Commission to transfer these programs to LWC and DHH. The purpose was twofold; (1) to realign DSS' resources around children and families, and (2) to create efficiencies and improvements to service delivery by transferring programs to agencies that better align with their core competencies.

TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM AND DEAF SERVICES

- Deaf Services Program Coordinator is currently vacant.
- Revisions to Ticket to Work procedures for LRS to comply with the new regulations issued this year are in process.
- Program Coordinator and Bureau Administrator participated in phone conference on 2/19/10 with Social Security Administration's VRA Operations Team to discuss Social Security Reimbursement Process.
- Program Coordinator participated in webinars on March 10, 2010 facilitated by CESSI which discussed Increasing Employment Network Participation.

TRANSITION

- The Program Coordinator is a member of the Transition Learning Collaborative team. Regular conference calls are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Educational information and webinars are also available via internet for the exchange of information between the Region VI states.
- Transition Coordinator moderated a panel discussion of LRS Staff at the Transition Summit held February 2, 2010 at the Baton Rouge Marriott. The panel consisted of two Regional Managers and three Transition VR Counselors. The discussion focused on best practices for agencies to work together to assist Transition students reach their goals.
- Program Coordinator continues to work with the Department of Education in developing Regional Core Teams in each of the regions.

- D.O.E. has proposed a program which will fund Transition VR Counselors to be directly housed at certain schools. Discussion and approved are still in progress but this effort is aimed at making services more accessible for better employment outcomes.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Program Coordinator attended Shared Vision for Youth training on January 26, 2010 as a member of the Louisiana State Team held at Louisiana Workforce Commission. It was entitled "A Collaborative Approach to Prepare Our Louisiana Youth for Success in a Global, Demand-Driven". A planning meeting was held February 22, 2010 to determine focus area, define target population, and identify specific goals.

BLIND SERVICES/RANDOLPH SHEPPARD

RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD

- LRS filed for federal arbitration against the National Aeronautical and Space Administration's Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans. This is due to the fact that the MAF failed to recognize the Randolph-Sheppard priority for their New Orleans property.
- As per the recommendation of the U.S. Department of Education, LRS is attempting to negotiate with NASA, and the arbitration process has been temporarily paused for these negotiations.
- LRS is in the final stages of preparing a new Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual for our Randolph-Sheppard program. It is scheduled to be completed and in full use by the end of May, 2010.
- The Randolph-Sheppard program is investigating the possibility of establishing locations at several new sites around the state, including:
 - The new Federal City in New Orleans
 - The Lafayette Regional Airport

LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF (LCD)

- **Telecommunication Access Program:** Amplified and adaptive phone equipment has been purchased for the telecommunication access program; and delivered by LCD staff to the Regional Service Centers for their distribution to consumers for their personal use in their homes. These technologies allow persons who are D/deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing or have speech impairment, to access direct telecommunication and/or relay services.
- **CapTel:** LCD staff has delivered over three hundred CapTel phones to the Regional Service Centers for distribution to consumers for their personal use. CapTel is a new telecommunication technology designed for persons who are hard of hearing but who can use their voice for speech. Two models of CapTel phones have been purchased – one may be used with either one or two phone lines (the second line expedites the phone call) and the other may be used in conjunction with a computer monitor (via high-speed Internet service) so that when the other person speaks, the printed words show up on the computer screen.
- **Interpreting:** LCD staff continues to work with public and private agencies explaining their responsibilities of providing accommodations to persons whom are Deaf and/or hard of hearing. Interpreting services are an accommodation to communication access for Deaf and hard of hearing persons which is comparable to a wheelchair ramp as an accommodation to physical accessibility for a person in a wheelchair.

Each month, LCD staff provides advocacy and education to those organizations that refuse to provide interpreting services. LCD staff educates these organizations on their responsibilities as set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act; and advises that there are only two justified reasons for non-compliance with this legislation:

The first is if the provision of the accommodation/access to service would substantially change the very nature of the business and what it does; or if provision of the accommodation/access to service would create an 'undue financial burden' which is then determined through an audit of that institution's financial ability.

- **Interpreter Certification:** LCD continues to promote state certification of community interpreters which requires they must: be at least 18 years of age; possess a high school diploma/GED; complete application form with documentation of valid national certification; possess no felony or misdemeanor convictions for offenses which directly relate to the duties and responsibilities of an interpreter/transliterater; abide by state laws, rules and regulations; and abide by the adopted Code of Professional Conduct.