

**LOUISIANA REHABILITATION SERVICES**  
**LOUISIANA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES REPORT**  
September, 2009

**PROGRAM PLANNING/RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

➤ **State Plan Updates**

LRS recently completed its draft updates to the 2010 State Plan and submitted to RSA for review and approval process. Approval is anticipated in October.

➤ **In-Service & CSPD Initiatives**

In-Service:

The 2009 VR Counselor Academy was held August 31 – September 4<sup>th</sup> and September 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>. There were 30 participants and a variety of experts presented on pertinent topics regarding the rehabilitation process, resources, and services.

CSPD:

CSPD - The agency currently has 9 Counselors who are enrolled in a Master's Degree program in an effort to meet the CSPD requirements. LRS currently has 62% of our professional staff who meet the CSPD requirements.

➤ **LRS Press Releases**

The following press releases were disseminated to the media regarding LRS programs and services:

**1) DSS Employee Receives Randolph-Sheppard Honor-June 26, 2009**

The Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of LA recognized Paul Rabeaux, a DSS employee, for his outstanding service to individuals who are legally blind and visually impaired.

**2) DSS Collaboration Leads to Employment for Individuals with Disabilities-July 15, 2009**

More than two dozen disabled Louisianans have started new careers through a three-month collaboration between the DSS/LRS and PRIDE Industries to fill contract jobs at Fort Polk.

- 3) Blind Café Owner Triumphs in Light of Challenges-Sept 11, 2009**  
In less than two year, Janice Foster, a BR business owner who is legally blind went from being a cafeteria worker to achieving more than \$100,000 in grow sales at her restaurant Vittles Café, which is a Randolph-Sheppard food service facility.
- 4) DSS Employee Retires After 42 Years with Agency-Sept 17, 2009**  
After more than four decades of helping to assist individuals with disabilities on their path to employment, Stella Angelle Guidry retires today with more than 42 years service with DSS
- 5) Proclamation Celebrated Awareness of Rehabilitation Services for Citizens with Disabilities-Sept 18, 2009**  
People perceive disability in many ways, and some of their perceptions may be based on misinformation. Each year, thousand of rehabilitation providers and health and human service agencies join together during the third week in September to celebrate the powers of rehabilitation and share the message that there is hope, achievement, and success. Those sentiments were echoed when Gov. Bobby Jindal proclaimed the week of September 20-26 as Rehabilitation Week in LA
- 6) Multiple Agencies to Host 2009 Louisiana Job Fairs-Sept 17, 2009**  
Individuals with disabilities with expectations of employment coupled with local employers with job opportunities equals a winning combination at this year's upcoming statewide 2009 LA Job Fairs. Employers looking to fill positions are encouraged to participate in the free job fairs by registering for booth space before the Oct. 1 deadline. Citizens with disabilities who are job-ready and looking for work are urged to use this opportunity to join Louisiana's workforce.
- 7) October Recognized as Disability Employment Awareness Month-Oct 1, 2009**  
Recognizing the state's need for a strong and diverse workforce, that includes the valuable contributions of citizens with disabilities, Gov. Bobby Jindal proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in Louisiana.

## **COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS (CRPs)**

### **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.

### **Community Rehabilitation Programs:**

- LRS continues to monitor all (private, public, and LRS operated) community rehabilitation programs (CRPs). This process is initiated at the regional level and concluded at the state level through programmatic and fiscal reviews. CRPs are monitored annually using promulgated standards 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.
- The Drug Court and their Work Release programs continue to be monitored for their effectiveness.

### **Supported Employment:**

- Since February 2009, Supported Employment has been designing and planning Job Fair 2009 for people with disabilities which will cover nine regions in the State of Louisiana. Job Fairs are scheduled for the following dates in October: Northshore/Covington (October 1), Lake Charles and Shreveport (October 7), New Orleans/Metairie (October 20), Alexandria, Lafayette, and Monroe (October 21), Baton Rouge (October 22), and Houma (October 29). All Job Fairs will be from 9 am to 12 pm on the designated dates. To date, 142 businesses have signed up to participate in the Job Fairs across the state. Additionally, representatives from WIPA, SSA, Louisiana Economic Development, and the Louisiana Workforce Commission will be on hand to assist job seekers.
- An On-the-Job Training (OJT) committee has been formed to jump start the OJT initiative per the Directors directive. Target dates have been established with the body of work scheduled for completion by April 2010.
- On August 12, 2009, Supported Employment met with a recruiter, the HR manager, and the site manager from Air Products. Air Products was looking to hire the disabled workers. Air Products makes the ingredients that make products such as antifreeze, batteries, computer display screens, gasoline, etc., possible. Company representatives were put in touch with LRS employment specialists to find consumers for these positions.

### **TBI/SCI Trust Fund:**

- There are 9 contracts with vendors who provide Case Management services to the TBI/Spinal Cord Injury consumers
- Served 646 consumers between 7-1-08 and 6-30-09
- Waiting list of 324
- Currently serving 601
- Program Manager continues with site reviews and monitoring of the 11 Case Managers.
- 09/10 Budget for client services (excluding contract budgets) is \$2,540,724. As of today's date, \$1,512,357.26 has been obligated for purchases, leaving a balance of \$1,028,366.74 for the fiscal year.
- Will not have enough money to open new cases this year, may open a few

### **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

#### **Contracts:**

- The professional staff of the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering, Science and Technology (CREST) conducted over 400 Rehabilitation Engineering and/or Assistive Technology Assessments as reported in the second quarterly report to the AT Program Coordinator. This exceeded 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.***  
*The AT Coordinator is now monitoring the third year of a 3-year contract for AT service delivery with Louisiana Tech University.*
- John Schweitzer is currently working with Counselors and Rehabilitation Engineers to develop assessment protocols for hi-cost/hi-tech prosthetics, such as high-performance, dynamic lower limbs and myo-electric hands. This protocol will be based on the vocational benefits of the performance features of suggested prosthetics, with an emphasis on cost-effectiveness without reduction in services.

### **Training/Professional Education:**

- Dr. Schweitzer attended the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) and was co-presenter of a workshop on Universal Design, June 23-27, 2009, in New Orleans. John was a member of the local host committee.
- John recently co-presented with Master Counselor, Jean Hansen, a training session on Assistive Technology for Vocational Rehabilitation at the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) professional Training Academy in Baton Rouge. He will conduct state-wide trainings with follow-up question and answer/problem solving sessions.

### **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.
- 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.

### **Modernization of DSS Enterprise:**

- The AT Program coordinator served 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 provided technical assistance to the ESF-6 Task Force of rewriting the Hurricane Emergency Response plan, statewide.
- 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Injury medical insurance settlements.

## **PERFORMANCE PLANNING AND PROGRAM SERVICES**

### **Independent Living:**

- The annual Fiscal Site Review with New Horizons Independent Living Center will be scheduled during the month of November, 2009.
- The annual Site Review with Southwest Louisiana Independent Center (SLIC) was completed on March 6, 2009 and the report completed and submitted. The overall compliance with policy and contract requirements was satisfactory. The annual site visit for Resources for Independent Living was completed on April 11, 2009 and the report was completed and submitted. There were some deficiencies noted.

### Supported Living Contract with Resources for Independent Living Center (RIL)

- Currently provides on-going services to 22 consumers (total consumers served as of December 2009 is 106)
- The Supportive Living contract with RIL was terminated
- LRS will begin managing the provision of services under the Supportive Living Program.
- Discussions are still underway with DHH/OAAS for the transition of this program to DHH.

### **Louisiana Rehabilitation Council:**

- Louisiana Rehabilitation Council held a meeting July 30-31, 2009, in Lake Charles at the Southwest LA Independent Living Center.
- The next scheduled meeting is September 24-26, 2009, in Baton Rouge at the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services Regional Office.

- Meeting dates for SFY 2010 include:
  - ◆ November 19-20, 2009, in Alexandria
  - ◆ January 28-29, 2009, in Baton Rouge
  - ◆ March 25-26, 2009, in Thibodaux
  - ◆ May 27-28, 2009, in Baton Rouge.

The Council has 15 members to date. Applications are pending with Boards and Commissions and there are 10 vacancies.

### **Operational Plan:**

State Fiscal Year 09 - Fourth Quarter Performance Indicators were reported in September 2009. 87% of the indicators reported met or exceeded performance targets for State Fiscal Year 09.

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.

### **Blind Services/Randolph-Sheppard:**

- New three year service contracts for provision of independent living older blind services are approved, and started July 1, 2009. We are now working on amendments for the additional federal stimulus money of \$483,000 per year for the next two years.
- LRS filed for arbitration against the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for their denial of priority for the establishment of one or more vending sites at their Michoud Assembly facility in New Orleans.
- LRS staff have developed and began the process of approval for a new Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual for the Randolph-Sheppard program. Full approval and implementation is expected by June of 2010.

### **Ticket-to-Work Program and Deaf Services:**

- 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
- Program Coordinator participated in webinar July 10, 2009 facilitated by CESSI which discussed Ticket to Work process

### **Transition:**

- The Transition Program Coordinator is a member of the Transition Learning Collaborative team. Regular conference calls are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Educational information and webinars are also available via internet for the exchange of information between the Region VI states
- Program Coordinator participated in the Lafayette Parish Transition Team meeting held Monday, September 15, 2009, 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—last meeting was held September 2, 2009

### **Workforce Development:**

- Program Coordinator for Work Force Development continues to serve as member of Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Advisory Council. The last quarterly meeting was held on August 20-21 in Shreveport, La. Program Coordinator was absent for this meeting but obtained meeting notes and continues involvement with workgroup
- Each Region has October 2009 Job Fair scheduled. This is a collaborative effort involving various state agencies and community stakeholders
- LRS attended WIPA/Workpays meeting held in Bienville Bldg., Wednesday, September 9, 2009
- The Lafayette Career Solution Center is working in collaboration with LRS and other DSS agencies to assist in hiring consumer/clients. This pilot project will allow LRS to refer job ready consumers to the Career Solution Center for job placement. LRS anticipates that they will have about 50 consumers involve in this pilot
- LRS presented the State Plan for FY 2010 to the Workforce Investment Council on 8/19/09. The State Plan was approved.

### **Louisiana Commission for the Deaf:**

- **CapTel:** The LCD office is working to purchase several hundred CapTel phones to be available for consumer loan through the state telecommunication equipment distribution program. These phones, which will be used to access CapTel relay services, are expected to be available within the next several weeks.



- **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Picnic (outreach):** LCD board and staff were represented at a recent outreach event sponsored by Louisiana Relay. At this outreach, LCD staff provided demonstrations of equipment available to consumers through the LCD telecommunication equipment distribution program. The outreach was well attended.
- **Louisiana Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf conference:** The LRID annual conference was held September 17-19, 2009, in Lafayette, LA. This is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of service to Louisiana by this group.
- **Training:** LCD staff recently conducted a workshop for contractors on the newly revised LCD Technical Guidance manual. Staff provided training on the eligibility criteria for each program and processes for service delivery.
- **Board Membership:** The LCD staff and the LCD board recently said farewell to LCD Board member Floyd Roule who recently retired from LRS after many years of valued service. Mr. Roule served as the designee to the LCD for the DSS Secretary.
- **Hearing Aid program:** The LCD hearing aid program remains in huge demand throughout the state. The LCD office is preparing to increase availability of this service from 400 to 520 consumers statewide annually.

### **Emergency Preparedness/Disaster Planning and Response:**

LRS continues to work with DSS Emergency Preparedness in their ongoing efforts to anticipate the needs for this hurricane season.

- Louisiana residents can now pre-apply online or by phone for Disaster Food Stamps in order to prepare for hurricane season, save time, and avoid long waits in the event of a disaster
- Five states have agreed to shelter up to 26,000 Louisiana residents who do not have the resources to evacuate on their own before a storm. States offering shelter space for planning purposes are: Texas, Georgia, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Kentucky
- Louisiana has CTNS spaces in Shreveport (two shelters), Monroe, Bastrop, and Alexandria that can house 8,000 evacuees. Eight medical special needs shelters and three Federal Medical Stations. In addition, the American Red Cross, who historically has managed the majority of shelters within Louisiana and is partnering with the State in shelter planning and implementation, is working to identify an additional 11,000 CTNS spaces across the state

- Parish-run CTNS are located in Shreveport (two shelters) and Bossier City and can provide 3,400 beds. Officials in Caddo and Bossier parishes recently finalized an agreement that will bring in volunteers and state employees from Oklahoma to run one of those facilities
- Both DSS and GOHSEP believe that in the long term, the state must be able to house all critical transportation needs of evacuees in-state. Louisiana will continue to invest resources in state sheltering capabilities, including hardening and renovating existing state buildings and constructing new multi-purpose facilities