

Overview of Activities to Achieve Desired Outcomes in Employment

Goal Statement:

To achieve the full inclusion and meaningful participation of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life:

- Changes in public policy and practice will result in more people with developmental disabilities in integrated individualized employment.

<p>Desired Outcome 1: Individuals with developmental disabilities will have access to individualized services and funding that support their employment, career, and financial goals.</p> <p><u>Identified Gaps/Barriers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate state appropriation to draw down full federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) grant and serve those waiting for waiver services • Providers lack capacity to provide quality services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide appropriate job placements ○ Serve individuals with the most significant disabilities • Too few supported employment providers in most regions of the state • Belief among certain support coordinators, providers, agency personnel, and even individuals with disabilities and their families that people with substantial employment support needs are not employable 		
Agency	Agency Activities Addressing Gaps/Barriers to Achieve Desired Outcome	What additional action steps are needed to address the gaps/barriers and achieve the desired outcome?
LRS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The La Rehabilitation Council advocates for increased funds in addition to consumer advocates and providers, such as Affiliated Blind of Lafayette (ABL), Louisiana Association for the Blinds (LAB), and others. • LRS is actively pursuing Third Party Cooperative Arrangements with school systems as a way to maximize the use of federal funds that are not matched by state general funds. • Vendor scorecard through the Aware Records Management system is being examined (Alliance Enterprise will host Aware). • All placement is individualized and consumers should be matched with job. • Category 1 consumers have been consistently served by LRS. Only since July 2014 has Category 2 and 3 been opened. • As of November 2014, there are 95 vendors providing either supported employment (SE) or Job placement services as follows: 25 in New Orleans; 25 in Baton Rouge; 8 in Thibodeaux; 13 in Lafayette; 6 in Lake Charles; 7 in Alexandria; 9 in Shreveport; and 2 in Monroe (2 are being developed). 	<p>Changes in SE and other employment initiatives are being developed as a result of WIOA. Training will be presented to the vendors.</p>

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OCDD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing training and education to OCDD providers, Local Governing Entities staff, Support Coordinators and families about employment and the changes to employment services. • Including employment as a required topic of conversation by the Support Coordinator with participants on a monthly basis as well as completing an Employment Form in a quarterly face-to-face conversation. [This information is entered into the Case Management Information System (CMIS) on a quarterly basis.] • Making changes to service definitions (such as <i>career planning</i>) in prevocational services and time limiting prevocational services to four years in the Supports Waiver. • Working with providers to get them qualified to provide Supported Employment (SE) services through Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and thereby OCDD qualified. (This will allow for a continuous support from one provider even though funding will shift.) • Working with LRS to identify providers of supported employment (SE) services that are not OCDD providers and vice versa. (This will also increase the number of qualified providers statewide.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot of Employment Form to take place during July-September, 2015. • Service definitions to be amended in the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) and Residential Options Waiver (ROW). • Continued conversations to occur with LRS on SE providers/process.
MEDICAID	<p>Medicaid provides funding for waiver services which are available to provide employment, career and financial services which enable Medicaid members to reach their goals.</p>	<p>Legislative appropriation for additional funding is needed in order to provide for additional waiver services.</p>
AC	<p>In collaboration with the Human Development Center, offer Work Incentives counseling to beneficiaries of social security about how work incentives and maintaining benefits.</p> <p>Assist clients of LRS to complain about providers and find providers that can meet their needs.</p>	<p>Develop quality standards and hold providers accountable to meet those standards.</p> <p>Develop a complaint process to empower clients to complain about poor service from providers and hold providers accountable.</p>

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HDC

HDC staff member sits on the LRC and is an officer in Louisiana APSE. In this capacity, she is actively advocating for the following:

- Recent changes to LRS Technical Guidance Manual provide new services, service definitions and reimbursement as well as an “incentive” reimbursement paid to Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) when certain quality criteria are met. Here are the three new areas that should be considered in terms of how this will impact services, access and outcomes.
- **Job Readiness**-Job Readiness services introduce or reintroduce the consumer to work habits, work-related skills and the attitudes/values that are conducive to successful job performance. Job/Work readiness is designed to develop a positive attitude by the consumer regarding their ability to obtain and maintain employment. Job Readiness training is provided to consumers who are not “job ready”. These consumers require guidance, support to prepare for employment, and would benefit in developing strength in regards to appropriate work behaviors, attitudes and work skills. Training is designed to improve or develop the skills necessary for the individual to obtain and retain employment. Job Readiness training focuses on life skills, such as, stress management, personal care, confidence building, and daily work related behaviors, to include: punctuality, dependability, motivation, and the ability to follow instructions.
- **Time Limited Job Coaching** is for individuals with significant disabilities who do not require extended follow-along services but need short-term job training and support(s). In addition, Time Limited Job Coaching does not require the same length of job training as supported employment. Time Limited Job Coaching is viewed as a level of training slightly more intensive than on-the-job training and less intensive than supported employment training.
 1. Must not meet eligibility requirements for supported employment
 2. Must meet vocational rehabilitation (VR) criteria for the most significantly disabled or significantly disabled and have functional limitations of such severity that traditional, competitive employment has been difficult to achieve, interrupted, or intermittent as a result of substantial impediments to employment.
- **Incentive payment** – “High Quality Indicators” – a payment for high quality indicators is available to a CRP if two of the following conditions are met:
 1. The consumer is employed 25 or more hours per week; and/or
 2. The consumer is compensated at or above \$10/hour; and/or
 3. Health Insurance benefits are made available to the consumer through the employer

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<p>HDC (cont'd)</p>	<p>“Other” Agency activities to address “gaps”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Met with employment-focused team (AC and HDC) to discuss issues and strategies related to on-going and recent complaints and issues with current vendors, lack of vendors, being turned away from LRS• Attended Collaborative Conversation meeting at Advocacy Center with a variety of partners and stakeholders to discuss the gaps in service delivery for individuals with disabilities in general and for individuals with Autism in particular.• Continue to sit on the national APSE Public Policy Committee which developed comments for WIOA, sub-minimum wage certificates and Pre-Employment Transition Services.• Quality Indicators and the table for Supported Employment Community-based Assessment and Narrative Report are great additions to the technical guidance and focuses on necessary and quality information.• New “transitional Employment model” for individuals with chronic behavioral health issues. Under ‘group’ models in Supported Employment, payment is \$500 for each transitional placement and is limited to a maximum of three placements.	
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<p>Desired Outcome 2: Supported employment providers will have access to financial incentives to support people with the most substantial employment support needs in community-based competitive jobs.</p> <p><u>Identified Gaps/Barriers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate funding • VR reimbursement rate • Waiver rate structure 		
Agency	Agency Activities Addressing Gaps/Barriers to Achieve Desired Outcome	What additional action steps are needed to address the gaps/barriers and achieve the desired outcome?
LRS	<p>Through consultants from the University of Massachusetts, it has been determined that LRS rates for supported employment (SE) are equitable with other states.</p> <p>LRS has implemented a \$1,000 incentive to vendors for placements that achieve specific quality outcomes related to hours worked, wages earned, and the availability of insurance benefits.</p>	
OCDD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with OCDD providers to get them to become qualified LRS SE providers. • Upon going into the 1115i waiver, having one-rate structure per service. 	
MEDICAID	<p>Medicaid in collaboration with the Program Offices, continues to explore new delivery that may allow for provider rate restructuring.</p>	<p>Funding from the legislature is needed in order to allow DHH to increase provider rates within the current delivery system.</p>
AC	<p>Advocate for residents of group homes to move to competitive employment by accessing LRS services and supports.</p>	<p>Develop a payment structure to create incentives for employment providers of LRS to serve people with the most significant needs.</p> <p>Develop a realistic payment structure for group homes to support competitive employment including a system for ongoing support of group home residents in supported employment.</p>

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HDC	<p>HDC staff have actively encouraged modifications in the LRS reimbursement structure for several years in public meetings, strategic planning and training events LRS appears to be ready to modify their rate structure as described below- and HDC is supportive of these changes:</p> <p>If two of the three high quality indicators are met, per official documentation from the employer, a payment of \$1,000.00 is made to the vendor at the time of Milestone 4 payment. Here is a description –</p> <p>“High Quality Indicators” – a payment for high quality indicators is available to a CRP if two of the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The consumer is employed 25 or more hours per week; and/or• The consumer is compensated at or above \$10/hour; and/or• Health Insurance benefits are made available to the consumer through the employer	
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<p>Desired Outcome 3: Individuals with developmental disabilities will have access to qualified providers who offer a stable workforce of supported employment professionals with recognized skills sets demonstrated to be effective in supporting people with disabilities getting and maintaining employment.</p> <p><u>Identified Gaps/Barriers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mandate for assuring quality services based on best practice from Employment Support Professionals (ESPs) • No licensure requirements or outcomes-based monitoring with due process procedures • Too few supported employment provider agencies with ESPs qualified to successfully support individuals with the most substantial disabilities 		
Agency	Agency Activities Addressing Gaps/Barriers to Achieve Desired Outcome	What additional action steps are needed to address the gaps/barriers and achieve the desired outcome?
LRS	<p>LRS has procedures in place in Chapter 5 of Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual, specifically 5.11.5, addressing aspects of vendor qualifications and training. Supported employment (SE) agencies work with only LRS consumers that have the most substantial disabilities (Categories 1 and 2).</p> <p>LRS procedures provide significant guidance to counselors concerning the provision of quality services, and also offer practical insight on what constitutes quality services</p>	
OCDD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning with Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) guidelines on employment. (CMS has issued guidance on vocational services.) • Working with providers to assess compliance with the new CMS rule. (Providers who are not in compliance will have Corrective Action Plans and milestones to meet along the way to fully comply by March 17, 2019.) • Working with providers to get them qualified/trained to provide Supported Employment services through LRS and thereby become OCDD qualified. (This will allow for a continuous support from one provider even though funding will shift.) • Working with LRS to identify providers of SE services that are not OCDD providers and vice versa. • Working with LRS to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reflect the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for self-assessments to take place in July. • Assessment due tentatively in September. • On-Site Monitoring to take place during September/October. • Work on the MOU Draft is in process.
AC	<p>Ensure employment agencies, particularly sheltered workshops, comply with federal labor laws via monitoring and filing Department of Labor or other appropriate agency complaints.</p>	<p>Review data collected to determine potential individual and systemic issues.</p> <p>Develop an action plan that leads to decreasing sheltered employment.</p>

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HDC	<p>Louisiana APSE and HDC Employment staff continues to promote and advocate for a skilled, professional employment workforce.</p> <p>There have been two national CESP exams in Louisiana and there will be another CESP exam on December 2nd at the REACH 2015 conference in New Orleans at the HDC.</p> <p>In October 2014, the LRC recommended LRS mandate that all CRP employment staff become certified within a year of hire. LRS does not want to make this mandatory.</p> <p>Students with disabilities are experiencing poor outcomes in the transition to school to employment and post-secondary. HDC is working with Louisiana APSE and staff from the Advocacy Center and the DD Council to plan and co-sponsor REACH 2015 conference focusing on the areas of employment, post-secondary education, and financial health. Several national speakers/experts will be presenting: Paul Wehman, Anthony Imperato, and David Hoff as well as a number of key individuals from Louisiana.</p> <p>HDC will be conducting 4 Supported Employment Core Competency trainings designed to meet LRS' training mandate for CRPs and twenty 5-hour trainings to CRPs/Employment Specialists training throughout the state over the next year. The training calendar and registration information is on the HDC website and is distributed electronically to providers, state agencies and self-advocates.</p> <p>HDC staff have collaborated with FHF and Louisiana Partners in Policymaking to provide face-to-face and online training sessions to families and self-advocates regarding employment services and choosing a quality vendor.</p>	
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<p>Desired Outcome 4: Individuals with and without disabilities will access employment services through an integrated system of intake and service provision that braids funding streams.</p> <p><u>Identified Gaps/Barriers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of co-located business and career solution centers (BCSCs) and local Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) offices • Challenges interfacing between LRS and the rest of Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and ensuring cross-trained skill-sets • Lack of web-based management system 		
Agency	Agency Activities Addressing Gaps/Barriers to Achieve Desired Outcome	What additional action steps are needed to address the gaps/barriers and achieve the desired outcome?
LRS	<p>LRS continues to look at ways to locally co-locate with La Workforce Commission (LWC) while maintaining confidentiality standards and LRS rehabilitation counselor integrity. LRS staff and staff from other programs in LWC are currently co-located in three offices in Lake Charles, Covington, and Hammond.</p> <p>LRS and LWC, most notably the other programs within the Office of Workforce Development (OWD), have engaged in cross-training activities since 2010. This has occurred at the OWD Statewide Meetings, Statewide Conferences, a recently presented Windmills Attitudinal and Sensitivity Training (delivered statewide). There are also plans to do more cross-training with all of the entities designated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as Core partners (Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth programs; adult Education and Literacy programs; Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program; and Vocational Rehabilitation) at the upcoming OWD Conference.</p> <p>LRS maintains a presence in Business and Career Solution Centers (BCSC) around the state. WIOA mandates that LRS and LWC have a closer relationship including participating in the development of unified state plan and reporting of common performance measurements.</p> <p>LRS has active representation on the following strategic working groups that have been constituted to oversee the implementation of WIOA: (1) State Leadership Governance and Compliance, (2) Local Leadership Governance and Compliance, (3) Performance and Data Management, (4) and Service Delivery and Infrastructure. All core programs (mentioned above) are represented in the working groups and are pursuing measures to integrate intake and service provision to the extent that resources and federal regulations allow.</p>	
OCDD	<p>Working collaboratively with LRS, Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), and Medicaid to draft a MOU to reflect the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which will put in place a plan to work cooperatively to get individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities employed and to provide those receiving waiver funding follow-along services through the waiver upon closure from LRS.</p>	<p>Work on MOU Draft is in process.</p>

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AC	In collaboration with LSU-HDC, DD Council and Louisiana APSE host an employment conference on December 3rd and 4th, 2015 entitled REACH. The conference will focus on raising expectation, awareness and capacity in hiring people with disabilities.	Educate professionals, families and people with disabilities about employment and employment options/services that lead to equal pay for equal work and advancement in job opportunities and careers.
HDC	Develop paid apprenticeship service delivery models with collaborations between and among large employers, HDC, Delgado, LRS/La Workforce Commission, the Business and Careers Solutions Centers (BCSC) that are located throughout the state and combine and share resources. HDC is working with LRS, Louisiana APSE and writing grant and foundation applications to address these issues	

Desired Outcome 5: Students with developmental disabilities, including those with the most substantial employment support needs, will have transition plans that result in a community-based competitive job.

Identified Gaps/Barriers

- Insufficient funding through the vocational rehabilitation, education and waiver systems
- Ineffective transition planning that does not result in employment
- Challenges interfacing between local LRS offices and local education agencies
- Belief among certain support coordinators, providers, agency personnel, and even individuals with disabilities and their families that people with substantial employment support needs are not employable

Agency	Agency Activities Addressing Gaps/Barriers to Achieve Desired Outcome	What additional action steps are needed to address the gaps/barriers and achieve the desired outcome?
LRS	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that 15% of a vocational rehabilitation (VR) budget be committed to students with disabilities, ages 16-21, and that certain Pre-Employment Transition Services be provided. LRS is piloting a project with vendors statewide to provide these services and training LRS counselors to record these services.	

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OCDD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifty “School to Work Transition” Slots will be allocated for individuals exiting high school who want to work in the community and who will need on-going supports. • Through the MOU that is being drafted with LRS, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities will receive pre-employment transition counseling services and will benefit from having LRS participate in their person-centered plan of care meetings. This will allow a clear plan for going to work. • Training and educating will continue on employment at all levels, including families, support coordinators, providers and stakeholders. • Changes to employment service definitions will mandate career planning and employment goals, along with individualizing and integrating services/supports. • OCDD continues to support its position statement and employment definition which were released in 2011: Employment will be the primary outcome for ALL persons receiving OCDD services who are of working age. Employment is characterized by typical jobs with competitive compensation that are fully integrated in the workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMS approval of the Supports Waiver Amendment. • Work on MOU Draft is in process.
AC	<p>Advocate for transition planning and services for individual students with disabilities to ensure there is appropriate planning for employment outcomes in integrated settings.</p> <p>Develop and distribute flyers on transition planning and services in schools and on LRS’s responsibilities during the transition process.</p> <p>Advocate for LRS compliance with WIOA standards regarding transition.</p>	<p>Additional education for students with disabilities and family members regarding their rights to transition planning and services.</p> <p>Work with school officials to ensure appropriate transition planning and services are provided to students with disabilities.</p>