Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs
Report to the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
December 31, 2016

Governor’s Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA)

GACDA met on December 6, 2016, at the state capitol.

Accessibility Committee recommended
1) drafting a letter to FEMA to include questions in their interview assessment to survivors in regards to access and functional needs.
2) attending the State Bond Commission meetings and provide updates relative the accessible projects.
3) monitoring of the state fiscal accessibility issues, including good faith assessments in making sure that state facilities are accessible.

Education Committee recommended
1) sending a letter to the congressional delegation regarding language in the regulations of ESSA that could negatively affect diploma/graduation options for students with disabilities as well as potential disincentives to educate students with disabilities.
2) discussing with the Governor’s policy staff the elimination of corporal punishment in schools for students with disabilities.

Employment Committee recommended
1) establishing a workgroup to advance Employment First priorities
2) Louisiana state government becoming a model employer for people with disabilities, known as State As Model Employer (SAME).

Transportation Committee recommended
1) developing a statewide survey to help identify transportation needs and resources for people with disabilities by geographic location. The survey will be live for one year; quarterly reports will be made available. Strategic targeting will take place if participation is lacking in certain areas.

GACDA approved two other legislative recommendations:
1) funding LRS fully so that LWC/LRS can get the full federal matching funds
2) rebalancing the revenue source for the telecommunication fund from land lines to cellphones.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 21, 2017 from 9am to 3pm at Claiborne Building in the Thomas Jefferson Rooms.
Governor’s Office Leadership in Disabilities (GOLD) Awards
The Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs hosted the GOLD Awards ceremony on
November 16, 2016 at the Old State Capitol. Governor Edwards served as the keynote
speaker at the ceremony. Governor Edwards and First Lady Donna Edwards took
pictures with each award recipient and congratulated them on their achievement. The
award recipients are as follows:

- Distinguished Merit Award: Deborah Aymond
- Patsy Barrett Memorial Award: Jamie Duplechine
- Ken Vince Memorial Award: Rashad Bristo
- Educator of the Year: Melissa Chastant-Huval
- Youth of the Year: Lucas Dorion
- Family of the Year: Jim & Ann Sprinkle Family
- Volunteer of the Year: Deborah Banks
- Employer of the Year: Louisiana Praline Factory
- Service Provider of the Year: Paula Rodriguez
- Direct Support Professional of the Year: Bobbie Gillard
- Veteran Services of the Year: Operation Hero
- Service Animal of the Year: Frankie Grossnickle

The GOLD Awards can be viewed online at https://youtu.be/pgotb83oQhM and will be
televised on local access channels throughout the state.

Inclusive Arts Contest Ceremony
Also recognized prior to the GOLD Awards were the winners of the Inclusive Art Show
Competition, Inclusion Matters: A Better World for All. GACDA Chairperson Lynette
Fontenot was the keynote speaker of the Inclusive Art Show Contest. Lynette presented
the inaugural “Lynette Fontenot Excellence in Inclusion Award” to the recipient earning
best overall honors, Carter Byrd.

GOV Talks
The Governor’s Office of Programs and Planning hosted GOV Talks on Foster Care in
November, which can be viewed at https://youtu.be/5d8rNoQoPa0. The next GOV Talks
will be on the Opioid Epidemic and will be held on January 11, 2017 at 11am on the 4th
floor of the State Capitol. Those wanting to attend can RSVP to Jolan.jolivette@la.gov.

Website and Newsletters
The Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs publishes a monthly newsletter, which is