

**Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS)
Quarterly Report to the DD Council
September, 2014**

Update/progress on agency initiatives

Training or Conferences:

- The LRS' 2015 State Plan updates were approved.
- In the past quarter, the third session of the Leadership Academy was conducted. Twenty staff members are participating in the Academy conducted by the TACE Center from Hot Springs, Arkansas. A contract is currently being developed to cover the final two sessions of this Academy as it was learned that in the recent reauthorization of the law the TACE Centers will not be funded through RSA as in the past. The last two sessions will take place in October and December. This Academy is for the development of higher management and supervisory skills by staff in order to prepare staff for opportunities of upward mobility in the agency. Also during this quarter, projected training needs of staff are being researched and plans made for conducting training in the coming year.

Supported Employment:

- LRS has received a grant from RTAC to participate in a Research Project on Improving VR Program Management. LRS' project will focus on the most effective structure for provision of Supported Employment services to consumers and assessing vendor performance.

Employment Initiative:

- The Employment Specialist attended the LWC Office of Workforce Development in Lake Charles, LA. The mission focused on providing higher quality business services and outreach.
- Participated in numerous calls with the Employment Coalition discussing promoting employment for people with disabilities. This coalition wanted to increase awareness of employment opportunities for people with disabilities among the general public and to develop and promote commitments of businesses to hire people with disabilities. LRS State Office has communicated with numerous businesses that have a multi-footprint in the state of Louisiana in an effort to inform them of our impending job fairs across the state.

- LRS's Regional Employment Development Specialists are currently involved in the planning of the LWC Diversity job fairs in the following areas, New Orleans, Slidell, Lake Charles, Shreveport, and Monroe. Lafayette will also be having a disability job fair but it is independent from LWC's Diversity Job Fairs
- LRS State office was invited to both the Walgreens District Managerial meeting as well as the Regional Baton Rouge Team Leaders meeting where the benefit of employing individuals with disabilities was discussed. LRS State Office also enjoyed another opportunity in speaking to a Lions Club meeting.
- LRS REDS participated in 2 day training in Lafayette. Using the Staff HIRE account, working with blind/low vision consumers, working with criminal backgrounds, working with veterans and using social media to enhance business contacts were among some of the topics that were discussed.
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Blind Services:

- LRS just opened a new Randolph-Sheppard facility at Baton Rouge Community College. This is a cafeteria facility, and will feed the students at BRCC. This is a true "win" for the program, as we do not have priority on college campuses around the state. This is the 2nd campus we have obtained in as many years, as we developed a location at Delgado in New Orleans last year.
- LRS is in the process of developing policies for the Randolph-Sheppard program/Blind Services based on changes to the state's Randolph-Sheppard program brought about through Act 761 of this year's legislative session. A workshop was held to discuss this on September 19, 2014 in Lafayette.

LRS Second Injury Program Partnership Results:

- In the first three years of the SIF Partnership, from July 1, 2011 through August 1, 2014 1,955 LRS customers were successfully employed; 247 are in active service programs with the expectation of success in the coming year; and 2,693 customers were served to date. This partnership between LRS and Second Injury Fund has spent \$2,196,779 (SIF+LRS match). The program continues to reflect positively on the quality of vocational rehabilitation efforts by the professional staff of LRS.

Status of agency's activities/participation on DDC plan initiatives and impact (if applicable)

Transition:

Transition Coordinator participated in the Grant Parish Special Education In-Service, "Safari for Success", Monday, August 4, 2014 along with the VR Counselor for Grant Parish and the Transition Specialist to discuss services under the Third Party Cooperative Arrangement.

Transition Coordinator accompanied the Employment Specialist to provide outreach at the Baton Rouge Community College/North Baton Rouge Education for Careers Fair held on August 14, 2014.

Status of Council recommendations to agency (if applicable)