

**Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS)
LRS Director's Quarterly Report
March 2017**

PROGRAM SERVICES

- Social Security/Ticket to Work: Social Security is now in the last phase of shutting down the system currently used to process VR cost reimbursement payments and a more efficient paperless system has been developed to replace it. In order to transition to this new system and transfer and convert all of the existing data from the old system, there will be a two-week period where no VR claims will be processed. This will also cause a delay in the mailing of the February end of month reports.
- Employment Initiative: Meeting employers through SHRMS and the LA Diversity Council continues. We will also be giving a presentation on LRS to the employers that are participating in the Job fair in Houma, LA on March 23, 2017.
- CRPs- Vendors in the New Orleans region began submitting renewal documentation. Program Coordinator has been reviewing regional recommendations and verification documentation for vendorship renewals. To date 21 vendor compliance certifications have been approved.
- Supported Employment-Bureau has been working on developing procedures for documentation and transmittal of Pre-Employment Transition Services and Transition actions and activities for youth with disabilities who are known to be seeking subminimum wage employment as well as for individuals with disabilities who are currently employed at subminimum wage (Section 511 of WIOA). Program Coordinator has been reviewing federal regulations and developing forms to be used in this process. Program Manager is in the process of developing manual changes for Pre-ETS for the next school year in anticipation of a reduction of funds next fiscal year.
- Section 511- LRS Regional Staff are meeting with all individuals referred to LRS by 14 (c) certificate holders whose employees need the required counseling to engage in or continue in subminimum wage employment.
- Employment First-LRS attended the first Employment First meeting and is participating in a committee on benchmarks for the Employment First initiative.

- LRS continues to collaborate with Louisiana Assistive Technology Network (LATAN) on an expanded program, funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) under the AT Partnership Act to provide state-wide demonstration-learning, lending, and purchasing assistance of assistive technology. LATAN is an approved vendor for providing a device-rental service so consumers may have a more realistic trial use of an AT device before requesting that LRS provide them with the device.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Second Injury Fund:

- Since July, 2011, Louisiana law provides for up to 1% of the Second Injury Funds (SIF) to be spent by LRS counselors on VR consumers.
- The annual allocation from the SIF Board this year was again capped at \$500,000. This plus the RSA match totaled \$2,347,000. Thus far in 2017 (7/1/2016-3/1/2017) \$1,625,078.79 has been authorized and spent on four hundred seventy-two (472) successful closures (employed), with one-hundred-sixty-seven (167) cases in service status.
- In the past five years this program, with matching funds from RSA, has generated over \$12 million dollars in direct services money with no additional overhead or costs allocation. This has contributed to thousands of successful closures during the five-year program.

State/Strategic Plans:

- LRS is working with the WINTAC to obtain guidance on the implementation of WIOA. This guidance will drive some of our strategic planning activities.
- Program Manager has received feedback from WINTAC on the state-level Memorandum of Understanding between LRS and the Department of Education. LRS is awaiting LDE's responses to this feedback. One of the primary areas of TA will be Pre-ETS.

Legislation:

- 2017 Special Session ended Feb. 23 and LWC did not take a cut. House Concurrent Resolution 1 (HCR 1) passed and affects our Randolph Sheppard Blind Vendors Trust Fund because it is a statutory dedicated fund. HCR 1 allows for approximately \$96 million that would otherwise be deposited into statutorily dedicated funds that pass through the Bond Security and Redemption Fund to be allocated for debt service payments on credit obligations.
- 2017 Regular Session begins April 10, 2017. Currently, in the 2018 Executive Budget OWD takes a 2% (\$130,609) SGF cut. With the federal match loss computed, it is a total cut of (\$613,187.79)

Career Solution Centers:

- There are currently 58 Career Solution Centers (now known as American Job Centers) in Louisiana. The state is also divided into 16 Workforce Development Areas (WDA) which are overseen by 16 Workforce Development Boards (WDB). LRS has a representative on each WDB. As a result of WIOA legislation, MOUs, including cost allocation to run the American Job Centers (AJC), are currently being developed and reviewed. LRS is looking into new ways to integrate service for individuals with disabilities into the AJCs including co-location of staff where possible and practicable.

Minority Outreach:

- The Program Coordinator for Employment Initiatives presented a power point presentation to the New Orleans chapter of the Diversity Council on 2/16/2017 at the U.S. Attorney General's office. There were about 30 entities and organizations represented including Entergy, U.S. Attorney General, U.S. Customs and Border patrol and several contractors from the New Orleans area. The presentation was well received.

Randolph Sheppard:

- Randolph-Sheppard program has announced three vacancies in the past 2 weeks. The vacancies are located at the Capitol and Capitol Annex, the Department of Agriculture, and Fort Polk. We anticipate that all vacancies will be filled within the next two weeks.
- The RS program through its on-site manager/s will be assuming the operation of all vending machines on the Delgado campus in New Orleans. This is a huge

win for the program, as it is a location where the program does not have priority, and we are there by invitation only.

- The RS program lost a location which was formerly known as the Shreveport Vo-Tech location. We did not have priority there, and the campus informed us in January, 2016 that they “wished to go a different direction.”

Contracts:

- Franklin Parish School Board TPCA was approved. We will have a total of 6 TPCA’s providing Pre-ETS.

Independent Living:

- LRS assisted the SILC to complete their annual 704 Report to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) on the progress made on their State Plan for Independent Living goals.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Council:

- Meeting on April 27, 2017 at Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge from 8am to 4pm
- LRC is preparing to conduct a consumer satisfaction survey in March