

LOUISIANA DEAFBLIND PROJECT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Proposal: Transition Institute

Need: The Louisiana Deafblind Project for children and youth (LA-DBP) provides technical assistance and support to children and youth (birth to twenty- two years) in Louisiana with varying degrees of hearing and vision losses. Currently the LA-DBP registry of eligible students indicates that 55% or 54 of the 98 registered students, are between the ages of 14-22. These students will, within the next year(s), experience transition from Part B educational services provided under IDEA, to post-secondary life. Young adults who are deafblind experience significant challenges when transitioning from school to desired post-school outcomes such as community inclusion and college and career readiness.

State deaf-blind projects in the southeast region, including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, U.S. Virgin Islands, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas have a long history of collaboration and effective teaming. These state deaf-blind projects work together in a variety of activities including an annual Transition Institutes (two will be held in summer 2015, Kentucky and Alabama). Any teen or young adult with dual sensory loss (deafblindness) ages 16 through 22 who is on a career path to work, technical school, or college is invited to participate. Participants must have both vision and hearing loss and a formal communication system.

The Transition Institute, *an action-focused* training event, with roots in Georgia partnering with South Carolina and Florida, has been a shared initiative targeting the needs of those young adults (16 – 21) with deaf-blindness who are able to participate in a schedule of rigorous activities along with their families in order to address transition, advocacy and self-determination. These Transition Institutes support the young adults and their attending family members in developing individualized action plans, new connections with agencies and resources, increased self-confidence and self-motivation. This model is unique in that mentors with deaf-blindness participate in the planning and presentation of each Institute providing authentic role-models for the young adults and members of their families.

Goal: The LA-DBP will **actively participate** in the annual Transition Institute in the remaining three years of the current five year grant cycle.

Plan: Active participation in the annual institute will include;

- Invitation to LEAs to participate in annual Institute
- Coordination with LEAs to identify students eligible for the transition institute,
- Support LEAs in developing plan to provide eligible student(s) and their families necessary pre-institute skill training,
- Guide and support eligible students and their families in accomplishing the logistical requirements (travel, lodging, etc.) for participation in the institute,
- Support a “Family Scholarship” for student(s) to attend Institute,
- Support annual Institute with monetary and in-kind contributions, and
- Host annual Institute in Louisiana during the fifth year of LA-DBP grant cycle (2017-18).

Expected Outcome: The LA-DBP’s **active participation** in the annual Transition Institute will result in increased opportunities for young adults with deafblindness to learn new skills for self-determination and to develop an action plan to guide their transition to their desired post school outcomes. The Louisiana Deafblind Project for Children and Youth will become a partner with the other states that make up the Southeast Deaf-Blind Projects Teaming for Improved Outcomes for Students with Deafblindness, Families and Professionals.

Estimated Funding: \$ 60,000