

# Governor's Office of Disability Affairs

## Report to the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council

September 30, 2018

### **Employment Initiatives**

Governor John Bel Edwards and Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Coordinator April Dunn promoted Louisiana's state government initiative to serve as a model employer for business through improved hiring, recruitment, and retention of people with disabilities in this [video](#). The [State As a Model Employer Task Force Report](#) also includes recommendations and policies that will support the State in expanding the diversity of its workforce. The Employment First Vision Quest Team, coordinated by the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs with assistance from a federal grant, developed the Employment Resource Guide which can be found at [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net). This guide will be useful for people with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who support them, in exploring employment and career possibilities. It includes six sections that summarize resources to meet a variety of employment related questions and concerns.

### **Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Conference**

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Conference was held at the Claiborne Building on July 26, 2018, which was the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of when the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) was signed into law. The GODA Conference was free to attend and featured national accessibility expert Kristi Avalos, CEO/President of [Accessology](#). Over 250 people attended the ADA Symposium and were able to participate in one of the breakout sessions for ADA Accessibility; K-12 Education: ACT 833 and graduation pathways; Emergency Preparedness; Early Childhood and Inclusive Care; Independent Living; Higher Education; OCDD Wavier System Transformation; and Increasing Employment Opportunities. [Governor John Bel Edwards spoke at the conference to express that accessibility and the needs of individuals with disabilities are important for his administration](#) and the state of Louisiana.

### **Statewide REVUP / SILC Tour during September Recap**

During the month of September, The [Statewide Independent Living Council](#) (SILC) promoted the REV UP Campaign at various events across the state. The REV UP Campaign is a national initiative implemented to increase the political participation of the disability community. REV UP stands for: Register Educate Vote and Use your Power. The SILC used the REV UP Campaign as a platform to discuss: eliminating barriers to voting, promoting accessibility of voting technology and polling places, and to promote turnout of voters with disabilities in future elections.

In addition to promoting the REV UP Campaign, SILC also educated the community about the Core Services that are offered at the Centers for Independent Living. SILC educated interested parties about the Centers for Independent Living located throughout the state, and how they are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, non-residential, private, non-profit agencies that are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provide an array of independent living services.

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### **Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs**

GACDA met on September 18. There were presentations made by DOTD as well as the Louisiana Housing Corporation regarding programs for people with disabilities.

GACDA approved the following:

- 1) Dissolve its employment committee and establish a housing committee.
- 2) Ask the Governor to support any legislation that will allow cameras and microphones in any self-contained special education class rooms.
- 3) Ask the Governor to support continued discussions and efforts to monitor LRE in Louisiana's public schools.
- 4) Request the governor's communications department to assist with contacting local media in regards to including ASL interpreters in their broadcast during emergency situations.

A Legislative Committee was established and will meet in October. The next GACDA meeting will be December 18, 2018.

### **Changing Roles and Continued Progress**

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Assistant Director Jolan Jolivet is transitioning to a role as a Community Specialist for the Governor's Office of Programs and Planning. We appreciate his contribution to the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs and look forward to collaborating with him in his new role. Our new Assistant Director will be Jamar Ennis, who has years of experience in regard to helping and advocating for the disability community. We are extremely excited to have Mr. Ennis return to the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs. He will be a great addition to our team to continuously help us move forward to serve the disability community.

### **Website: Newsletters, Statewide Events Calendar, & Resource List**

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs publishes a monthly newsletter, has a statewide events calendar, and a resource list which is posted on the Governor's webpage at <http://gov.louisiana.gov/page/disability-affairs>.