

# Governor's Office of Disability Affairs

## Report to the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council

December 31, 2018

### Employment First Grant

Through the leadership of the Governor's office, Louisiana has been working on employment initiatives for people with disabilities. Last year, Louisiana was granted technical assistance through [US DOL ODEP EFSLMP](#). The [Louisiana Employment First Report](#), the [Louisiana Employment Resource Guide](#), and the [State As a Model Employer Task Force Report](#) was drafted through the collaboration and engagement with a broad network of stakeholders. Louisiana once again has been selected to receive Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) as a Vision Quest (VQ) State as well as a Core State for the 2019 fiscal year under the United States Department of Labor's, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) Provider Visionary Opportunities to Increase Competitive Employment (VOICE). Louisiana will receive up to 100 hours of T/TA to support the state in achieving its goals within the area is Mental Health and Employment. Louisiana will also receive up to 200 hours of T/TA to support the state in achieving its goals within the area of Provider Transformation and/or Capacity Building.

### Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disability Awards & Inclusive Arts Contest

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs hosted the GOLD Awards ceremony on November 28, 2018 at the Old State Capitol. Governor Edwards served as the keynote speaker at the ceremony and acknowledge the recent loss of two incredible advocates, Duane Ebarb and David Gallegos. Governor Edwards took pictures with each award recipient and congratulated them on their achievement. The recipients were:

Distinguished Merit	Tabatha H. Taylor	Shreveport
Patsy Barrett Memorial	Mattie Wilson	Shreveport
Ken Vince Memorial	Harlon Cowsar II	Lafayette
Educator of the Year	Mary Breaud	Thibodaux
Youth of the Year	Hannah LaCour	Kenner
Family of the Year	The Hamilton Family	Baton Rouge
Volunteers of the Year	Ainsley's Angels	Lake Charles
Employer of the Year	Hand Up Thrift	Lafayette
Direct Support Prof of Year	Roger Wells	Metairie
Veterans of the Year	Barry Guidry	Lafayette
Service Animal of the Year	Dementor "Moose" Finley	Baton Rouge
Elected Official of the Year	Mayor Joel Robideaux	Lafayette
Public Servant of the Year	Gina Rossi	Baton Rouge
Service Provider of the Year	Katrina Labouliere	Baton Rouge

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs also recognized award recipients of the Inclusive Art Show Competition during the ceremony. Twenty-six (26) award recipients of the Inclusive Art Show Contest were presented with award medals for submitting winning artwork that embodied this year's theme: "Working Together." GACDA Chairperson Lynette Fontenot was the keynote speaker of the Inclusive Art Show Contest. Lynette presented the "Lynette Fontenot Excellence in Inclusion Award" to the recipient earning best overall honors, Ms. Patrice Parks.

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### **Statewide Independent Living Council**

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.

In recognition of Disability Employment Awareness Month, the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) hosted its Inclusion Job and Resource Fair on October 30, 2018 at the Cortana Mall in Baton Rouge, LA. More than 40 vendors participated in this event to provide resources and employment opportunities to individuals with and without disabilities. Almost 200 job seekers participated in the SILC Job and Resource Fair. This event was created in partnership with Healthy Blue, an initiative of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana to celebrate and create awareness of the importance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).

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

GACDA met on December 18. They approved the recommendations of the Legislative Committee which were

- Fully Funding of LRS: approximately additional \$5.5M SGF is needed to draw down the remaining \$20M+ of Federal allocation
- Increase EPSTD PCS rate, currently \$10.12/hr, to Children Choice IFS Rate of \$14/hr
- Restore all supports and services for individuals with disabilities by restoring the provider rates to the rates in effect in 2008. To restore the providers rates back to where they were 10 year ago could cost the state about \$43 million in SGF.
- Support using all but \$1 Million of the money currently in the New Opportunities Waiver Fund (approximately \$6.7 Million) to restore waiver provider and support coordination rates to 2008 levels for this fiscal year
- Funding of \$600,000 to expand the State Personal Assistance Services (SPAS) program to serve those on the waiting list
- Funding and Implementation of TEFRA
- Discontinue family cost participation (FCP) in EarlySteps for FY20 without changing eligibility criteria for the program

The next GACDA meeting will be March 19, 2019.