



Disability Rights Louisiana Report to the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council for July 2025

Program Updates

DRLA's Client Assistance Program (CAP) helps people with disabilities who are receiving or applying for services from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and American Indian Rehabilitation Services (AIRS) to understand all their benefits and rights under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. CAP may assist consumers and applicants in pursuing legal, administrative or other appropriate avenues to protect their rights. The CAP program is currently assisting 30 people regarding problems receiving and maintaining vocational rehabilitation services. CAP is working with statewide partners in organizing a statewide virtual "Empowerment Through Employment" conference to be held on August 13, 2025. LRS and CAP staff have been collaborating successfully, with the CAP Program Manager having participated in the recent LRS regional managers conference.

In DRLA's Community Living Ombudsmen Program (CLOP), trained advocates, who are known as ombudsmen, advocate for the people with developmental disabilities who live in state-licensed, privately-run group homes (ICFs/DD) across the state, in order to ensure their rights are protected and they are free from abuse or neglect. Currently there are 481 publicly-funded, privately-run ICF/DD facilities housing 3,921 individuals with developmental disabilities across the state. In May 2025 alone, CLOP Ombudsmen visited 132 of these facilities, received 56 requests for assistance, and took action on all of the 56 requests. As a result of these actions, during May 2025 ICF/DD residents had contaminated food thrown out and replaced, started the assessment process for waiver services, were able to attend a concert, received improvements to their physical environment, received information on their rights, obtained necessary medical care, and had appropriate treatment plans written.



DRLA's Supported Independent Living Advocacy Program (SILAP) serves individuals with developmental disabilities who are receiving OCDD waiver services and supports in order to live in their homes in the community. SILAP provides free services to persons residing in supported independent living environments in the State of Louisiana Human Services Districts I, II, and X, which encompass the greater New Orleans and Baton Rouge areas. The SILAP program is currently assisting 32 people with obtaining and maintaining appropriate and necessary supports so that they can remain in the community on their waivers. In April of 2025, two clients of DRLA's CLOP program, who are friends and who were living in a residential facility, were able to move out of long-term group home placements into a home of their own with waiver services. The two gentlemen are now clients of DRLA's SILAP program, and they have their in-home services securely in place and are enjoying their life in the community.

DRLA's Representative Payee Program strengthens protections for social security beneficiaries. The program provides oversight to representative payees regarding their services to beneficiaries, as well as giving them support to better understand their role and responsibilities. Since the beginning of the Rep Payee year (August 1, 2024), we have finished 43 cases, which is 82% of the target number of 52 cases for the year. We currently have 13 other cases in progress. We anticipate we will meet or exceed our targeted number of cases by the end of the grant year (7/31/2025).

DRLA's Financial Access Inclusion and Resources program (FAIR) provides financial coaching and case management services to assist formerly incarcerated people with disabilities in overcoming employment and resource barriers, in order to achieve long term financial security. Our services are holistic and are centered around the individual needs of people with disabilities, who may require additional supports and services to successfully reenter their communities after incarceration.

FAIR recently completed its report to the City of New Orleans regarding the work done during the first five quarters (January 2024-March 2025) of its current, 2-year grant. During this period, the FAIR program has provided financial coaching and case management services to a



total of 39 active clients who were Orleans Parish residents. We were able to report that, just over halfway through this 2-year grant, we were 87% of the way to reaching our goal of providing financial coaching and case management services to 45 formerly incarcerated Orleans Parish residents with disabilities. 26 or 67% of the 39 active clients achieved or maintained employment during this period. 17 or 65% of the employed, active clients maintained their jobs for over 90 days. 24 or 62% of the 39 active clients increased their income while in the FAIR program, increasing their income by a collective total of \$26,262 per month. 7 of the 39 active clients served entered the program with debt. Of the clients who reported existing debts on entering the program, 5 have reduced their debt by a collective total of \$20,026 since they entered the FAIR program.

These results are significant because about 22% of people with disabilities nationally, regardless of criminal records, are employed. The people with disabilities that the FAIR program serves face compounded employment and economic barriers related to both their disabilities and their experience in incarceration. People with criminal records, regardless of disabilities, are 50% less likely to receive a job offer.