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Jeff Landry, Governor
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Office of Workforce Development
Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

Program Year 2024

(July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)

Year End Report

Vocational Rehabilitation

Legislative and Budget

During the 2025 legislative session, LRS received an additional \$4 million in State General Fund appropriation through an amendment to House Bill 1. This funding will allow LRS to access an additional \$14.7 million in Federal funds, for a total of \$18.7 million in additional funds for vocational rehabilitation.

Expenditures for Vocational Rehabilitation participant purchased services for Program Year (PY) 2024 will total approximately \$30 million. This is an increase (11%) as compared to PY 2023 where total expenditures were \$27 million. PY 2024 was the highest year-end participant expenditure (\$30 million) total since PY 2007, which incurred \$33.7 million in expenditures. We project this expenditure trend to continue in PY 2025, and we anticipate that it will be one of the highest years on record. The highest percentage of payments this year were for training services. Pre-ETS expenditures are at approximately \$4.65 million (increased 13% over the prior year). The amount of Social Security collections LRS received in PY 2024 was \$1.9 million. Changes have been made to the Social Security Administration system which will reduce collections.

Also during the 2025 legislative session, House Bill 624, known as the One Door to Work legislation, was approved (Act 478). There are several organizational changes resulting from this legislation. Louisiana Workforce Commission will be renamed Louisiana Works this fall, and the newly formed agency will absorb the workforce development programs from the Department of Children and Family Services effective October 1, 2025. Over the course of the next 3 years, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program will also be moved under the governance of Louisiana Works, and once this move takes place, there will be full integration of workforce and family support services under Louisiana Works. These efforts are intended to streamline access to self-sufficiency programs and create a “One Door” approach for Louisiana citizens in need of various economic stability services to ensure that they have better access to employment services in order for them to achieve independence.

Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP)

The new LRSVendor@lwc.la.gov email address used by CRPs for submitting vendor applications and renewal paperwork is successfully meeting the goal of enhancing efficiency to communicate with our vendors and subsequently better serve our customers. The LRS database system, AWARE, will also soon be upgraded to include Vendor Portal upgrades.

Effective July 1, 2025, the following rate increases were approved and a new High Quality Indicator for participants residing in rural areas was implemented.

- Orientation & Mobility Training
The hourly rate increased from \$65 to \$80 per hour.
The assessment rate increased from \$325 to \$400.
- Disability Related Augmentative Skills Training
Non-residential rate increased from \$3,880 to \$4,400
Residential rate increased from \$4,770 to \$5,300
Deaf Blind Non-residential rate increased from \$5,820 to \$6,600
Deaf Blind Residential rate increased from \$7,155 to \$7,950
- Randolph Sheppard Training
Assessment and monthly rate increased from \$3,660 to \$4,770.
- Vendor Travel Rate
The vendor travel rate increased from \$25 per hour to \$35 per hour.
- Trial Work Experiences
Trial Work Experiences increased from \$317 per site to \$600 per site.
- Job Search Assistance
The maximum number of hours allowed increased from 20 to 40.
- Supported Employment
Milestone 1 increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 due to the increase in hours allowed for Job Search Assistance.
- New High Quality Indicator: Participant Resides in Rural Area
A new HQI was created for participants that reside in a rural area at \$350 per successful employment placement.

CRP Focus Groups

To enhance service delivery and strengthen collaboration with vendors, LRS has invited Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to participate in Focus Groups on July 22 and 23, 2025. These sessions, led by the LRS Director, will provide an opportunity to discuss ways to improve LRS's relationship with its vendors and to explore joint strategies for delivering seamless, high quality services to our customers.

Sara

LRS has begun the procurement process to purchase a new digital assistant technology platform called Sara. Sara will perform automated communications with LRS customers keeping them engaged throughout their case and streamline case management processes. This will allow staff to be alleviated of administrative duties, allowing them more time to provide quality guidance and counseling and serve more customers.

Strategic Plan

Using the LRS 2025 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment created by LSU-Shreveport's Institute for Non-profit Administration and Research, updates to the LRS Strategic Plan were discussed and drafted, with input also provided by several Louisiana Rehabilitation Council members. Once finalized, the goals, priorities, and strategies contained in the Strategic Plan will be reflected in the update to Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan for 2026.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC):

The LRC will conduct their next quarterly business meeting on July 24, 2025, at the Hampton Inn & Suites located at 11271 Reiger Road, in Baton Rouge, LA. Information regarding LRC business meetings, and about the Council, can be found on the Boards & Commissions and LWC websites.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

LRS provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students between the ages of 16 and 21 with disabilities documented on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 accommodation plan (IAP), or other medical documentation from an appropriate medical professional. Pre-ETS include Job Exploration Counseling, Work-Based Learning Experiences, Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities, Workplace Readiness Training and Training on Self Advocacy. LRS provided services to approximately 5,408 students statewide this PY 2024. LRS currently has 19 active Third Party Cooperative Arrangements (TPCA) with local or state education providers to provide Pre-ETS and is continuing to pursue additional TPCA's with local and state education providers. The TPCA with Livingston Collegiate will end July 31, 2025 due to low enrollment.

The LRS Director conducted a statewide ZOOM meeting with all Pre-ETS vendors on June 26, 2025, to discuss a potential reduction in the number of units allowed per student for the 26/27 school year due to funding.

Blind Services & Randolph-Sheppard

Since February 2025, three individuals completed training to become licensed Randolph-Sheppard vendors. At this point, all three have been awarded a facility and are now tax paying citizens and proud entrepreneurs. One individual remains in training

but is on track to complete it in September 2025. We anticipate this individual will be awarded a facility soon after completion.

In an effort to promote the Randolph-Sheppard program and provide updates to stakeholders, when invited, LRS staff present to the blind customer groups including the National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana, the Affiliated Blind of Louisiana, and others. On May 31, 2025, the Randolph-Sheppard Program Manager gave the address at the annual state convention of the Louisiana Council of the Blind held in Lafayette.

LRS staff, along with the active participation of the Blind Vendors Elected Committee, revised and updated both the Business Enterprise Program Rule and accompanying Technical Assistance and Guidance manual. These proposed changes were forwarded to federal authorities at the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to assure that they do not conflict with the federal Randolph-Sheppard Act and regulations. The documents have been submitted to RSA three times, with RSA making suggestions for edits/changes, and LRS making the required changes. The latest changes to these documents were re-submitted to RSA on May 16th. LRS will be promulgation needed to the State Rule to reflect the final approved changes.

Independent Living

Independent Living

LRS has received the third Independent Living Services Part B Grant Award Notice from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) which brings the total grant award to \$348,060.00 for Federal Fiscal Year 2025. LRS contracts these funds to three (3) Centers for Independent Living: New Horizons Independent Living Center, Southwest Louisiana Independence Center, and Resources for Independent Living, to provide Independent Living services as outlined in the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).

Independent Living – Older Blind

LRS has received the third Independent Living – Older Blind Grant Award Notification from the US Department of Education which brings the total grant award to \$405,597.00 for Federal Fiscal Year 2025. LRS provides these funds to four (4) contractors: Affiliated Blind of Louisiana, Lighthouse Louisiana, Louisiana Association for the Blind, and Louisiana Center for the Blind to coordinate statewide services. As we are in the final year of our current three (3) year contracts for the provision of Independent Living Older Blind services, LRS staff have completed and submitted proposed new contracts for the continued provision of these services. Current contracts end on September 30, 2025. Once approved, our new contracts will be effective on October 1, 2025 and will cover the provision of services to Louisiana's citizens who qualify as being older blind through September 30, 2028.

Vocational Rehabilitation Statistics

All Order of Selection Groups have been open since August 15, 2022. For the entirety of PY 2024, there were no individuals placed in delayed status for any of our 3 Order of Selection Groups.

The number of LRS cases closed successfully (Closed Rehabilitated) for PY 2024 is 1,179. This averaged 98 closures per month and was 273 shy of the annual goal of 1,452.

LRS served 19,705 individuals with disabilities in PY 2024, which is the highest total served since PY 2016.

Vocational Rehabilitation Customer Statistics		
	4 th Quarter	PY 2024
Number of Applications	1,386	4,606
Number of Eligibility/Delayed	1,099	4,130
Number of New IPEs	740	2,958
Number of Closed Rehab (Successful Closures)	433	1,179
Total Open VR cases as of June 30, 2025	8,329	8,329
Total Open Pre-ETS cases as of June 30, 2025	3,730	3,730

Statewide 60 and 90 day Performance Measure*	
% of Eligibilities determined within 60 days	83.7%
% of New IPE's approved within 90 days	89.1%
* Data is from the 3 rd Quarter (January through March of 2025) RSA Data Dashboard	

Open VR Cases by Disability Type*	
Disability Type	Primary
Blindness	275
Other Visual Impairments	205
Deafness, Primary Communication Visual	73
Deafness, Primary Communication Auditory	115
Hearing Loss, Primary Communication Visual	23
Hearing Loss, Primary Communication Auditory	555

Other Hearing Impairments	19
Deaf-Blindness	17
Communicative Impairments (expressive/receptive)	69
Mobility Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments	362
Manipulation/Dexterity Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments	137
Both Mobility and Manipulation/Dexterity Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments	250
Other Orthopedic Impairments	113
Respiratory Impairments	39
General Physical Debilitation	198
Other Physical Impairments (not listed above)	626
Cognitive Impairments	2,104
Psychosocial Impairments	2,702
Other Mental Impairments	273
<i>* Data is from the 3rd Quarter (January through March of 2025) RSA Data Dashboard</i>	

LOUISIANA REHABILITATION SERVICES

Clients Served from July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025