**Governor’s Advisory Council on Disability Affairs**

**September 16, 2020**

**Minutes**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **GACDA MEMBER** | | **PRESENT** | **PROXY** | **PROXY NAME** | **ABSENT** |
| Kathy | Allen | √ |  |  |  |
| Amber | Boykin | √ |  |  |  |
| Mary | Breaud | √ |  |  |  |
| Walter | Carpenter | √ |  |  |  |
| Karen | Collins | √ |  |  |  |
| Katie | Corkern | √ |  |  |  |
| Timothy | Delaney |  |  |  | X |
| Sharon | Delvisco |  |  |  | X |
| Liam | Doyle |  |  |  | X |
| Beau | Ellerbee | √ |  |  |  |
| Lynette | Fontenot | √ |  |  |  |
| Robert | Garcia | √ |  |  |  |
| Kirsten | Gladen | √ |  |  |  |
| Tarj | Hamilton |  |  |  | X |
| Elaine | Harmon | √ |  |  |  |
| Sharon | Hennessey | √ |  |  |  |
| Linda | Kocher | √ |  |  |  |
| Andrew | Kuyoro | √ |  |  |  |
| Andrea | Lowe |  |  |  | X |
| Jessica | Michot | √ |  |  |  |
| Kelly | Monroe | √ |  |  |  |
| John | Moran | √ |  |  |  |
| Mark | Raymond, Jr. | √ |  |  |  |
| Christopher | Rodriguez | √ |  |  |  |
| Karen | Scallan | √ |  |  |  |
| Tabatha | Taylor |  |  |  | X |
| Erica | Wallace | √ |  |  |  |
| Jerrie | Williams | √ |  |  |  |
| Nicole | Williams |  |  |  | X |
| Gerald | Boudreaux | √ |  |  |  |
| Malinda | White | √ |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **ROLE** | **STAFF** |  |  |  |  |
| Exec Director | Bambi Polotzola | √ |  |  |  |
| Asst. Director | Jamar Ennis | √ |  |  |  |
| SICC Director | Melanie Washington | √ |  |  |  |
| SILC Director | Jessica Lewis | √ |  |  |  |
| Intern | Lillian Dejean | √ |  |  |  |

**Call to Order**

The GACDA meeting was called to order at 12:03pm on September 16, 2020. Council members and guest were formally recognized. Quorum was established. Chairperson Lynette Fontenot provided opening remarks to members of the GACDA Council and the guest in attendance. Due to social distancing requirements, the September 16, 2020 meeting was held via the Zoom Conferencing Platform.

Ellaine Harmon made a motion to approve the June 17, 2020 minutes and Sharon Collins made a motion to second the motion. The motion to approve the June 17, 2020 GACDA minutes was approved by the Council without any abstentions or discussion.

**Committee Reports and Discussions**

**Legislative:** Christopher Rodriguez provided an overview of items discussed during GACDA’s Legislative Committee which took place on September 16, 2020. Please see the meeting minutes relative to this committee below.

The action items of the Legislative Committee are as follows:

* The Committee will circulate a survey to the members of GACDA to gain information relative to the Council’s legislative priorities.
* The Committee will work to create legislative priorities for GACDA.

**Education**: Amber Boykin provided an overview of items discussed during GACDA’s Education Committee which took place on September 16, 2020. Please see the meeting minutes relative to this committee below.

The action items of the Education Committee are as follows

* The members of the Education Committee will sign-up to participate in the goals they feel compelled to work on pursuant to the goals and objectives document shared during the meeting.
* The Education Committee will write a letter to Dr. Brumley in response to a letter sent to Chairperson Lynette Fontenot.
* The Education Committee will create a survey to determine how many teachers are interested in Deaf/VI certification.

**Transportation:** Mark Raymond provided an overview of items discussed during GACDA’s Education Committee which took place on September 16, 2020. Please see the meeting minutes relative to this committee below.

The action items of the Transportation Committee are as follows:

* + Make contact with Uber and Lyft
  + Gather contact info for all paratransit systems in the state and invite them to participate in the committee moving forward- **It was mentioned that it may be best to have a meeting between the paratransit companies before participating with the GACDA Transportation Committee.**
  + Invite Representatives from all appropriate state agencies relative to transportation
  + Statewide training program for paratransit providers

**Accessibility:** Andrea provided an overview of items discussed during GACDA’s Education Committee which took place on September 16, 2020. Please see the meeting minutes relative to this committee below.

The action items of the Accessibility Committee are as follows

ADA Enforcement Project:

* The Civil Rights Division of the State be contacted participate in this endeavor.
* Identify ADA Coordinators from around the country
* Monitor areas of improvement in regards to ADA compliance.
* Create a Subcommittee relative to the ADA Enforcement project to assist Keiara Beverly.

Digital Accessibility:

* Michael Ausburn provided a presentation in regards to Digital Accessibility in Louisiana.
* It was recommended that a subcommittee be created within the Accessibility Committee
* It was also recommended that there be a needs assessment/audit on digital assets
* It was also recommended that committee meet with IT coordinators to discuss Accessibility Committee concerns
* It was also recommended that a strategic plan be discussed with stakeholders for input.

**Housing:** Sharon Hennessey provided an overview of items discussed during GACDA’s Education Committee which took place on September 16, 2020. Please see the meeting minutes relative to this committee below.

The action items of the Housing Committee are as follows:

The members of the Housing Committee will participate in one or more of the following subcommittees:

* Vouchers, Waiting list, Affordable Housing, Public Housing Authority
* Housing Programs
* Permanent Supportive Housing and Accommodations/Modifications
* Homeless—Housing

**Update on Employment Initiatives (LRS, GODA)**

**Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS):**

Melissa Bayham provided an update regarding employment initiatives on behalf of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. It was mentioned that Tavares Walker is the new Assistant Secretary. The Lake Charles office remains closed due to the most recent hurricane. LRS continues to meet with clients virtually due to the ongoing concerns of COVID-19. Pursuant to a rule change, LRS is in the midst of changing to three orders of categories in regards to prioritizing services for individuals with disabilities. It was mentioned that LRS is in the midst of expanding Pre-employment services.

**Office of Behavioral Health (OBH):**

Ashley Jefferson provided an update on behalf of OBH. The department is partnering with LRS to implement pilot programs one in Houma

**Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs (GODA):**

Bambi Polotzola provided an update on behalf of GODA. Polotzola provided that GODA continues to facilitate training for state agencies through the technical assistance grant as they have done for the past three years pursuant to the State as A Model Employer (SAME) taskforce Executive Order signed by Governor Edwards in 2018. A survey was sent to state agency employers to gain information from employees with disabilities. A webpage was shared to provide more information and data regarding the SAME employment initiatives.

**Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD):**

Julie Foster Hagan provided a report on behalf of OCDD. The department has been focusing on opening back up while in the midst of COVID-19 and phase III.

**La Department of Health Updates (OAAS, OBH, OCDD, OPH)**

**Office for Behavioral Health (OBH):**

The department has created a resource guide, and has created a “Keep Calm Line” for individuals to call who would like to speak with a mental health care professional. It was mentioned that the OBH website has additional links to gain access to resources. It was mentioned that the tele-health flexibilities are still available. The Department is also ensuring that individuals continue to receive needed services.

**OCDD:**

Julie Foster Hagan provided a report of behalf of OCDD. It was mentioned that the department is focused on the COVID-19 response. It was mentioned that there are weekly publications of data in regards to individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals receiving waiver services on the OCDD webpage. It was mentioned that OCDD is continuing to receive guidance in regards to the various waivers and appendix K. The department has been in talks with support coordinators and other important parties to keep them updated on all of the guidelines and changes. The department will work on rolling out plans for phase III for in-person interactions. The department is monitoring the home and community based clients as it relates to the most recent Hurricanes. It was mentioned that are many guides and resources on the OCDD webpage.

It was mentioned that the Act 421 (TEFRA) workgroup will meet on September 29th. Public forums will also be held to obtain public feedback.

**Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS)**

Sherlyn Sullivan provided an update on behalf of the Office of Adult and Aging Services. Fernando Lopez is the new Assistant Secretary of OAAS, who provided a brief overview of his background.

**Office of Public Health (OPH):**

No update provided.

**State Agency/ Member Updates**:

**LATAN**

Yakima Black is working with Early Steps to provide telecommunication aids for case management and access to telehealth. The opportunity is available for other agencies who needs to gain access to technology. The department has included the Expanded Quality of Life Program, Stand Up Louisiana Project, has received funding to serve 40 individuals standing frames and training.

**People First of Louisiana**

Sharon Hennessey reported that PFLA held their virtual conference in September.

**TRACH MOMMAS**

Jessica Michot provided an update. The agency has provided equipment, supplies, and formula to individuals in need who have been affected by the recent hurricanes.

**Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs**

Michelle Guillory provided an update on behalf of GOEA.

Senior Centers and Meal Sites remain closed. The Aging and Disability Resources Centers remain open and are taking face-to-face appointments in regions of low COVID-19 cases. Others remain teleconference only.

It was mentioned that the SenioRx/ADRC has assisted 24,501 clients at close of fiscal year and assisted with over $9.9 million in medication assistance.

The Aging Network provided

284 Hosted Medicare events,

Participated in 230 Community Events,

Assisted with 4328 Low Income Subsidy/Medicare Savings Plan Applications,

Conducted 2139 Follow-up Calls

Conducted 3329 Medicare Part D Counseling Sessions

1860 Medicare Part D Enrollment/De-Enrollment Assistance

GOEA received new MIPPA Grant Award for $417,869 to continue the Medicare outreach, education and enrollment assistance.

GOEA also received COVID ADRC Grant: $788,454 to provide enrollment assistance for economic stability programs such as SNAP, Utility Assistance, Commodities, Local Assistance Programs and now DSNAP/PSNAP.

It was mentioned that the Ombudsman Program continues to visit via teleconference with residents of facilities.

GOEA provided the following updates in regards to Hurricane Laura:

It was mentioned EPS Program is now conducting face-to-face interviews for High Priority and Medium Priority cases. Other cases/investigations are conducted via teleconference.

The Councils on Aging are operating back to pre-Laura status except Calcasieu and Cameron. Calcasieu will begin limited services next week, which includes the ADRC.

GOEA has been participating in Feeding Task Force calls and EMDAC. GOEA has activated the toll free number for the Evacuees to call for assistance who are aged or have medical needs. For the first 2 weeks, GOEA triaged 109 calls for assistance. Calls continue and are soft transferred to the local ADRC, appropriate partner agency or assisted in-house at GOEA.

**Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition (EMDAC)**

Amy Dawson provided an update on behalf of EMDAC. It was mentioned that the weekly EMDAC calls have shifted from COVID-19 to emergency hurricane response. It was mentioned that a 1-800 number has been created for consumers to determine unmet needs. It was mentioned that partners have conducted several assessments at the shelters and hotels to determine the unmet needs of constituents. EMDAC and its partners have been continuing to participate on weekly phone calls to focus on disaster response (COVID-19 and Hurricanes). The Coalition has created an information flyer to provide to the general public if assistance is needed. The Coalition has also participated in several assessments of shelters, hotels, and other venues where constituents are receiving assistance.

**GOLD Awards and Inclusive Art Contest**

The GOLD Awards Ceremony will be held on December 8, 2020 in Baton Rouge. The Inclusive Art Contest theme for 2020 is: “Better Together Celebrating the 30th Year Anniversary of the ADA.” GODA will accept written entries that align with this year’s contest theme. It was also mentioned that individuals of all ages are encouraged to participate. The applications for the GOLD Awards and Inclusive Art Contest are available on the Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs website. Submissions for both programs are due on October 31, 2020.

**Public Comment**

No public comment was provided.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Linda Kocher, Jessica Michot seconded the motion to adjourn the September 16, 2020 meeting. The motion to adjourn the September 16, 2020 GACDA meeting passed, without any objections, abstentions, or discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm