**Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs**

**State As a Model Employer (SAME) Task Force**

**February 12, 2020 9:00 – 10:00**

**MINUTES**

Call to Order

Presentation on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS)

One of the recommendations of the SAME report was to provide a more focused approach relative to Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Sigmund Morel provided a presentation on behalf of LRS to discuss the department’s Pre-ETS program. It was designed for students to prepare for permanent employment. Morel shared all of the necessary qualifications for a student/consumer to become eligible.

Services are determined based on: what is the best fit for the consumer, and what jobs are available in the area.

The five core elements of the Pre-ETS program are:

1) Job exploration counseling,

2) Counseling on post-secondary opportunities,

3) Workforce readiness training,

4) Training self-advocacy, and

5) Work based learning experiences (paid or non-paid).

Work based learning experiences (WBLEs) is the most important core element of the Pre-ETS system. It is temporary employment, up to 240 hours. The individual with a disability must earn the same salary as those similarly situated in the same job description. The temporary employment may turn into a permanent position; however, a new plan of employment must be drafted.

In regards to work based learning experiences, LRS will reimburse the consumer salary up to 40 hours per week to the employer, and 9.3% above wages to cover other cost. There are situations that trainers can be reimbursed if the consumer requires it.

LRS must set up employers to become vendors, and they must complete a W-9 and a direct deposit form.

LRS suggested that state agencies are a great place for individuals with disabilities to gain employment experiences. It was suggested that the SAME Taskforce help provide avenues for student employment. Information will be provided to the SAME Taskforce members to get in touch with the LRS regional offices and to contact Mr. Morel.

Practical solutions should be created to Pre-ETS eligible consumers to state departments.

SAME taskforce members should provide suggestions and appropriate information (via a statewide plan) to LRS, their state agency heads, and their regional directors that will help provide this linkage. There should be a plan to work with vendors/employers on the local level; things happen better on a regional level. A comprehensive plan may not work in all areas/regions.

It is important to have a methodology or plan to reach out to state agencies and help them identify potential room for employment opportunities for students/consumers.

In the past, a roadblock has occurred as it relates to pre-defined employment positions.

All vendors and state agencies contact the LRS regional offices to facilitate more job opportunities.

LRS has a one-page plan relative to the Pre-ETS program, and it will be shared to participants of the SAME Taskforce. Mr. Morel will be available to all SAME Taskforce members should they need guidance or their questions answered relative to the Pre-ETS program. SAME taskforce members should volunteer the different strategies of what is effective and what is not from their agency’s employment plan.

Cheryl S. suggested that a presentation be made to HR directors at the Division of Administration’s upcoming HR meeting.

**Review Assignments for Review of SAME Report Recommendations**

* Bambi provided a presentation via screen share to discuss the previously agreed upon SAME objectives and recommendations.
* DOTD has greatly benefited from being a point of contact with LRS. DOTD is working through its SAME agency plan.
* The Department of Corrections uses the WAE’s and it has been very helpful.
* Connie Nelson with Office of the Governor provided that students under WAE program working hours are kept under 30 hours.
* Not much has been done with targeting recruitment, SAME Summit, and attending job fairs. The taskforce needs to consider how to address these topics.
* Lauren provided that the Disability Diversity Job Fair in Lafayette could be a good model due to the fact that all participating parties must agree to hire job seekers on the spot. Additionally, the job fair offered pre-employment opportunities for job seekers, interpreting services on-site etc.

**Adjournment**

Disability Employment Webpage:

<https://gov.louisiana.gov/page/disability-employment-initiative>