**State As a Model Employer (SAME) Taskforce**

**April 9, 2020 9:00 – 10:00**

Taskforce Members:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| √ | Doug Bordelon | DEQ | √ | Shelley Johnson | DCFS | √ | Jim Mitchell | OTS |
|  | Burgundy Cummings | SOS | √ | Sue Killam | HDC | √ | Bambi Polotzola | GODA |
|  | Lauren Guttzeit | LDH |  | Joe Lewis | CRP |  | Cheryl Schilling | DOA |
| √ | Julie Hagan | OCDD | √ | Tanisha Matthews | DOC | √ | Lauren Womack | LCG |
|  | Samantha Harris | SCS |  |  |  | √ | Kenneth York | LRS |

Others in attendance:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| √ | Amy Dawson | GOHSEP | √ | Daphne Stewart | LWC | √ | Rikki David | DNR |
| √ | Ashley Young | LDH | √ | Gena Doucet | LCTCS | √ | Rosemary Morales | LDH |
| √ | Becky Palmer | LDH | √ | Glyn Butler | DRLA | √ | Sharon Hebert | Pen |
| √ | Brandon Blanchard | DOA | √ | Johnny Manela | BRCC | √ | Stephenie Fontenot | DOA |
| √ | Brenda Bohrer | LRS | √ | Marcella Jones | LDH | √ | Tracy Barker | LDH |
| √ | Connie Nelson | Gov | √ | Michelle Sanders | DOTD | √ |  |  |

GODA Staff: Jamar Ennis, Lillian Dejean, Jessica Lewis, Melanie Washington

***Call to Order and Introduction of SAME Taskforce Members***

*Recording can be found at* [*https://youtu.be/8Iqu9ZmEBks*](https://youtu.be/8Iqu9ZmEBks)

***Consideration of chronically ill/dynamically disabled individuals in employment initiatives - Lillian Dejean, Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs (GODA)***

Lillian Dejean led a conversation regarding employment-based accommodations of individuals who are chronically ill. Lillian referenced a news article which highlighted the barriers of individuals who are chronically ill in the workforce. Lillian discussed the importance of employers understanding the needs of employees, creating better civil service policy, awareness, and implementing appropriate workplace accommodations for individuals who are chronically ill. It was mentioned that establishing trust between the employer and employee to find an appropriate balance and environment is important. It was suggested that employers expand their outreach, and provide creative and innovative ways to find solutions for appropriate accommodations.

Lauren Womack suggested that “Job Carving” be implemented to accommodate individuals who are chronically ill. Ken York mentioned that Job Carving is an effective tool for rehabilitation. Tanisha Matthews provided an overview of the civil service policy for absences, FMLA, and supports implementing a policy to better accommodate individuals who are chronically ill.

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

For the May 14 SAME Taskforce meeting we have scheduled review of Section 3.7 of the SAME Report (Call for Early Adopter Agencies to Pilot Best Practices to Provide Concrete Guidance for All State Agencies). Although we no longer have the technical assistance grant Rachel Pollock has agreed to participate in this presentation with the three agencies who were involved in the pilot project (DOA, DOTD, LDH). Basically each agency can share original goals, process, progress, challenges, next steps, etc. with Rachel framing and adding context and details.

***Employment Supports and Services***

Melisa- LRS is working with the Office of OBH to improve processes. LRS is working on an application for Workforce Grant Opportunity through the Disability Innovation Fund (non-matching). It was mentioned that this is a five- year grant. If LRS is selected for the grant, there will be a target in STEM Occupations, especially in minority groups.

***Update on Office of State ADA Coordinator legislation:*** [***HB 446***](https://legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?i=240400)

Bambi Polotzola provided a brief overview of HB 446 Rep. Ronda Butler, and provided that this legislation is included in Governor John Bel Edward’s package. It was mentioned that if this legislation passes, it will create a Statewide ADA Coordinator position that will assist in the implementation of the ADA, training, and assist state agencies when they are faced with technical issues regarding the ADA.

Bambi requested volunteer(s) to serve as Chair of the Taskforce.

The next meeting will take place on May 14, 2021 from 11:00am to Noon.

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