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| **Thursday, January 29, 2015** | |
| Members Present | Tommy Carnline, Jean Hanson (non-voting), Ronald Key, Sue Killam, Bob Lobos, Nan Magness, Patrick Mascarella, Nicole Walker,  Derek White, and Kay Wilson |
| Members Absent | Pam Allen, Cassidy Byles, Pranab Choudhury, Lanor Curole,  Nan Magness, Mark Martin (non-voting), Libby Murphy, and Laura Nata |
| Liaison | Kandy Baker |
| Guests Present | David Gallegos (CAP), Sara Spencer (SILC), Rosemary Yesso (LRS) |
| Committees | **The following met at 8:30 a.m. to discuss committee business:** Eligibility and Planning Committee and Employment Committee. |
| Call to Order | The general meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. with a quorum established. |
| Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report | David Gallegos, CAP Director, Advocacy Center   1. Issues voiced by clients include that LRS counselors are telling them that LRS does not pay for small business enterprise at all. According to the policy manual this is available based on certain criteria. This has come from more than 5 clients in the last quarter and multiple regions.  * Ensuing discussion revealed several points of clarification that not all consumers may realize: it can depend on the feasibility, the plan, acquisition of a line of credit, $5,000 to put up, etc. Also, since the UNO small business program is no more and counselors may not be as proficient in it. Training counselors and clarifying the process with consumers may help.  1. The second concern is clients saying that they continue to have disagreements with what's requested and recommended on the IPE. One example the CAP recently got was recommended by a client's doctor she get a specialized mirror. She's visually impaired and could benefit from the specialized mirror to help her put her makeup on and prepare for job interviews. The individual’s counselor stated that LRS will not pay for that. 2. The third is an issue of whether LRS pays for computers or not - this is something that continues to come up. On this issue, it is solely the Director who may makes the exception to purchase a computer. Gallegos isn’t aware what criteria is used for making that exception. Gallegos made a recommendation that LRS look at making, setting some criteria so that clients know what is being used for that exception or not.  * LRS staff discussed that every case is so individualized and perhaps specific criteria might actually be harmful. Generally, computers are purchased for someone going to school, etc. The computer itself is not an accommodation for the disability as all students need a computer for school. LRS does purchase all of the necessary software and AT that would go on the computer that are considered accommodations for the disability. Further that there are very few examples of such exemptions and may often be based on things such a financial hardship.  1. Clients satisfaction with job placements based on skills and interests. Jobs don't match skills or interest and then the consumer loses the job quickly. Looking at the IEP and the goal does it relate at all to the job placement, or is it just a job?  * LRS staff generally discussed some changes being considered: incentives for high quality indicators – CRPs may have the opportunity for additional funds if have better placements; the provider report card – will allow consumers to make better choices for a providers and if a provider doesn’t typically make job placements or they place at the same place or the low wages, consumers will be able to see that.  1. The CAP has an administrative review currently going on regarding the purchase of a van and modifications. It appears the vendor made some errors and the regional staff is working to correct them. 2. Lastly, Gallegos again noted concern regarding the location of the Metairie LRS office. He described a picture of the map that shows where people get off the bus and have to travel over a cat walk to enter the office.  * LRS staff indicated they are negotiating to regain a lease with UNO to have at least a couple of offices available there. In addition to that the New Orleans regional office lease is up in February. This coming February so we are going to go out on bid again. Talking about the Metairie office. Kind of on the boarder I guess. * Derek White further inquired that since Curt Eysenk talked about co-locating with BCSCs; was this ruled out with the downtown office? * LRS staff indicated this has not been ruled out but there are complexities including current leases of LRS offices and BCSCs, availability of space, and local governance of BCSCs. Also that WIOA deals with this issue and will be a focus of LWC in the near future. |
| Member Reports | American Indian VR program  No report submitted.  Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Kay Wilson   1. The Louisiana Department of Education has been participating with VR in discussing WIOA. 2. This summer the state department is hosting its teacher leader summit June 4th and 5th. June 3rd is the superintendent summit. The DOE will start “at the top” by presenting information on WIOA to superintendents from across the state. Then move to the special education directors and teachers. This will provide superintendents insight on what is needed from a transition prospective in their districts. 3. Also, Wilson requested special education data from the DOE so LRS will know how many students they need to serve with the changes to pre-employment transition services (PETS). Because it is for an agency outside of education, Wilson had to provide justification but she did get a confirmation they are pulling it.   Louisiana Parent Training and Information Center  No report submitted.  State Independent Living Council – report delivered by Sara Spencer   1. SILC met in the beginning of April and discussed our current state plan and talking about a new state plan. The SILC is still looking for members so if you want to come talk to me or know anyone who would be interested. 2. Our next meeting is July 9th in Baton Rouge at the Claiborne building. Love to have each and every one of y'all there if y'all could make it.  * Derek White suggested to have the SILC and LRC executive committees or just certain members to meet to find an actual avenue to find a collaborative strategy to work on   Workforce Investment Council   1. Bob Lobos expressed concern that the amount of outreach regarding employment of people with disabilities to mid-sized businesses is inadequate. The word isn’t getting out to businesses about the abilities of the people with disabilities that come help them in the workforce and be part of that workforce. And that effort has been minimized and he asked for more feedback as to what efforts that are going on in LRS to that particular point.  * Rosemary Yesso discussed the work of the Disability Employment Initiative under LWC and we have been asked to assist them in the regions on having a variety of activities (job fairs, symposiums, etc.) with Brenda’s involvement. * Ron Key asked if we could get another report from the DEI. Gallegos agreed as long as they focus on outcomes of the activities instead of describing the activities themselves. |
| Louisiana Senator Dan Claitor | Claitor discussed the current legislative session and the budget challenges the state faces. |
| Liaison Report | 1. LRC annual report - Emailed out to all council members on March 24th, 2015, and 60 copies were printed this year at a cost of $720. The report was distributed to the appropriate individuals, the governor, the LWC Director Curt Eysink, Deputy Director Brian Moore, all eight VR regional offices, the state library, the legislative research library, Christopher Pope with rehabilitation services administration, and boards and commissions. Members were offered a hard copy if desired. 2. Travel expense report reminders 3. Members should not fill out any expenses, this is done by the office. 4. Members should complete the travel sheet with the beginning and ending date/time of travel with corresponding odometer readings and the beginning and ending date/time of the return trip with corresponding odometer readings. The meal reimbursement is based on the dates and times provided. 5. The original travel expense report must be provided to the liaisob before leaving the meeting in order to insure timely reimbursement. 6. Budget – Total for state fiscal year 2015: $27,000. Expended to date: $21,173.52. This was used for three council meetings, out-of-state expenses for CSAVR the chairperson attended, and printing the annual report ($720). Balance: $5,826.48. This will be used to pay for this meeting. The budget for SFY 2016 will begin July 1st. 7. Membership - We have fifteen voting members and two non-voting members. Sara Spencer will be, hopefully, in a short time, appointed to the SILC seat in place of Laura Meaux who resigned her position. Vacancies include the CAP representative, openings for a current or former recipients of VR, advocates and individuals with disabilities three openings in business, industry, and labor. We have no members from Monroe, Lafayette, and Lake Charles.  * Derek White requested an update on purchasing equipment, including a laptop computer and projector for the purpose of projecting LRC business, motions, etc. Baker reported that it was her understanding this would be appropriate. * White also asked if member reports were received by the liaison as planned and again reminded members of responsibilities related to the vote which approved that process in July of 2014. * White also thanked and congratulated Baker on filling in as liaison for the LRC in Paige Kelly’s absence. |
| Chair Report | Presented by Vice-chair Bob Lobos  Future meeting dates were confirmed/established: July 23 and 24, 2015, October 29 and 30, 2015, and January 28 and 29. 2016. Liaison and Chair will work together on the most cost-effective to meet the needs of the Council meeting and its members.  Lobos pointed out the Chair’s written report on the budget testimony. Pat Mascarella added that, though there remain hurdles for the session, it appears LRS will maintain level-funding. |
| Executive Committee Recommen-dations (EC) | Presented by Vice-chair Bob Lobos   1. In the July 2014 meeting the council approved the expenditure of up to $2,500 to have a study completed that would reveal the number by parish of local residents with disabilities. A proposal from Michael Henderson, Director of the Public Policy Research Lab at LSU, indicates he can gather that information using secondary research. Doing primary research would be cost-prohibitive. Secondary research would supply enough data to provide meaningful numbers to work with. Lobos asked if after reviewing the proposal the LRC is in favor of proceeding. Some concerns were noted regarding the use of secondary data, namely the age of data, validity of data on measuring what we want to address, and clarification on how they would capture mental illness and developmental disabilities. The Council asked Belinda Davis of the research lab be invited back to address those issues of concern. 2. In its January meeting, the Council discussed having all its meetings in Baton Rouge on recommendation of the Executive Committee (EC). The Council voted to request the liaison prepare an analysis of meeting expenditures and sent the issue was sent back to executive committee for further review. The analysis was emailed to members prior to the meeting and provided in packets. It was reported that the EC didn’t have a quorum and was unable to make recommendations.   **Motion Passed**: For LRC to hold its quarterly meetings in Baton Rouge. Motion made by Derek White and seconded by Nicole Walker.  Motion Passed 6 to 1 with one abstention. |
| Minutes | **Motion Passed**. To approve January 29 & 30, 2015, General Meeting Minutes was made by Derek White, seconded by Tommy Carnline, and approved without abstention or objection. |

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| LRS Director’s Report | Ken York, LRS Assistant Director, presented the Director’s report  York began by congratulating the Council on its advocacy efforts and reiterated that nothing should be significantly impacting VR. One of the things that LWC is doing is response to WIOA is change (through legislation) the composition of the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). LRS is on target to fully expend its allocated funds. In terms of performance, Ken reported, “thing are going extremely well and that's been the case for the past couple of years or so.” For the first time in many years LRS met all of its federal performance indicators. Work on meeting WIOA’s mandates will continue to be a focus of LRS.   * Derek White inquired about when LRC and other advocates will be able to weigh-in on the efforts to implement on WIOA and other initiatives, such as PETS, supported employment, vendor monitoring system, etc. * LRS staff answered that some items are not ready to be discussed at this time. There is a committee currently working on WIOA. Also, LRS is working on how it will address the PETS mandate in WIOA and revisions to the supported employment program. Planned changes to the supported employment program will be shared with the Council after planning is completed. A meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 27, in which plans should be finalized. * White also requested update on the office's response to the council's recommendation that a mandate be made with respect to certification of employment support professionals made October 31. * York’s response was, “We decided against that … because of WIOA.” A conversation ensued regarding WIOA’s moving away from a focus on certification of counselors. Council members reminded him again that the recommendation was in regard to job coaches, etc., and not counselors. * Members also reiterated a request to provide input and for LRS to gain input from other stakeholders to changes to program administered by LRS early enough to impact their implementation. * Bob Lobos reminded the council that it requested from the director to have dedicated staff person attached to each of the Council’s standing committees. * Lobos also inquired on the tasks that Brenda Bohrer had been working on regarding developing relationship with businesses and requested an update going forward. | |
|  | **RECESSED until Friday morning at 4:48 p.m.** | |
| **Friday, January 30, 2015** | | |
| Members Present | | Tommy Carmine, Jean Hanson (non-voting), Ronald Key,  Bob Lobos, Patrick Mascarella, Nicole Walker, Derek White, Kay Wilson |
| Members Absent | | Pam Allen, Gayla Guidry, Pranab Choudury, Lanor Curole,  Sue Killam, Mark Martin (non-voting), Nan Magness,  Libby Murphy, Laura Nata |
| Liaison | | Paige Kelly |
| Guests Present | | Rosemary Yesso (LRS) |
| Call to Order | | The general meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. A quorum was not established; therefore, no votes/decisions were made. |
| Standing Committee Reports | | Eligibility and Planning, Lanor Curole, chair  David Gallegos reported   1. The committee reviewed requested data from LRS on transition both open and closed cases. Data reviewed revealed Monroe had the most open transition cases with 449. New Orleans and Jefferson Parish combined had 424. The committee attributed the high transition numbers in Monroe to their strong transition focus from new Regional Manager, Eddie Givens. Perhaps this focus is something that could be helpful to other regions and shared with the Council. The committee also reviewed the total number of closed transition cases between October 2014 and April 2015. 2. Ronald Key passed out copies of an assessment tool used in substance abuse. The committee will make specific recommendations in July regarding developing guidelines for counselors when working with individuals with substance abuse issues. Guidelines will focus on time sober prior to participation in VR, participation in a substance abuse treatment program or group program, abstinence and functional-use, etc. 3. Finally, the committee revisited the issue of expungements but are not at a point of making any recommendations at this time.   Employment Committee, Derek White, chair  The Employment Committee discussed issues and potential changes in the supported employment program and the report card issue.   1. One recommendation is to request the Director by May 15 to report to the members of the LRC the status of revision under development for the supported employment program to get public and stakeholder input prior to its implementation. On Thursday, the Council was assured a report on that would be released soon. 2. Secondly, we recommend the Council request the Director review and consider the following in including in LRS’s monitoring system for supported employment providers. All this information would be available to consumers. 3. General Provider Profile  * Location and contact information * Data on employment support professionals turnover rates, per cent certified, etc.  1. Demographic profile of individuals served  * Gender * Individuals in transition from school * Disability type   3. Performance Statistics   * People served total and successful closures * Average hours worked and average hourly pay * Consumer Satisfaction data, including but not limited to: * Likelihood a consumer would recommend the provider to others * Satisfaction with job matches * Rating the staff as caring, supportive and flexible * Costs: average total, average per successful closure, average per unsuccessful, * Pre-employment Transition Services: individuals served and funds expended. * Placement data: length of time prior to placement, placement occupations by occupation code and employer, and length of time at placement. * Derek White also suggested consumer satisfaction data could be collected by exit interview rather than by mailing our surveys. * Bob Lobos also requested from LRS the industry codes by region in comparing it to the high demand jobs to help get the support from business and industry from LRS to do that. Rosemary Yesso confirmed LRS has that information and can share it.   Outreach Committee, Laura Nata, chair  No report as only one committee member was present. |
| Ad Hoc Committee Reports | | Officer Nominations Committee, Derek White, chair  Slate of Nominees  White presented the slate but no vote was taken as there was no quorum. The vote will return to the agenda for July.  Chair – Libby Murphy  Vice Chair – Bob Lobos  Secretary – Derek White  Eligibility and Planning – Nan Magness  Employment – Nicole Walker  Outreach – Tommy Carnline  At Large – Lanor Curole  White then presented an individual proposal on revising the make-up of the Executive Committee (EC) to replace the Outreach Committee with a Transition Committee. White related that transition is an issue that has huge ramifications for the state and that will only increase under WIOA. Removing Outreach would maintain the EC at seven members.  Contingency Plan for adding a Transition Committee 1. Submission of bylaws revisions by June 23 for approval in July meeting 2. The revision would include provisions to,   * Replace Outreach Committee with Transition Committee with Laura Nata serving as chair * Replace Lanor Curole with Tommy Carnline to At Large position * Outreach duties would be handled by the Executive Committee, an ad hoc committee, or in general session.   Plan Committee, Bob Lobos, chair  The committee did not meet as only one member was present. The committee has a draft of goals and objectives that will need to be enhanced in July for review by the whole Council. |
| Consumer Presentation | | Scott Huffman related his experiences as a LRS consumer with the LRC. |
| New Business | | 1. No new business |
| Adjourn | | Laura Nata motioned to adjourn, seconded by Bob Lobos. The Council adjourned at 12:13 p.m. without objection. |
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| **Summary of Decisions Made**  \*Note that a quorum was not met Friday; therefore, limiting the number of decisions made. | |
| 1. | Motion for LRC to hold its quarterly meetings in Baton Rouge was made by Derek White and seconded by Nicole Walker. Motion passed 6 to 1 with one abstention. |
| Glossary of Abbreviations | |
| AIVRP | American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Program |
| CAP | Client Assistance Program |
| CSAVR | Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation |
| EC | Executive Committee of the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| LAPTIC | Louisiana Parent Training and Information Center |
| LRC | Louisiana Rehabilitation Council |
| LRS | Louisiana Rehabilitation Services |
| LWC | Louisiana Workforce Commission |
| NCSRC | National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils |
| RSA | Rehabilitation Services Administration |
| TACE | Technical Assistance and Continuing Education |
| VR | Vocational Rehabilitation |
| WIC | Workforce Investment Council |
| WIOA | Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 |