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| **Thursday, January 29, 2015** | | | |
| Members Present | | Cassidy Byles, Tommy Carmine, Pranab Choudury, Lanor Curole, Jean Hanson (ex-officio), Ronald Key, Sue Killam, Bob Lobos, Mark Martin (ex-officio), Nan Magness, Patrick Mascarella, Laura Meaux, Libby Murphy, Laura Nata, Nicole Walker, Derek White, Kay Wilson | |
| Members Absent | | Pam Allen, Karla Cummings, Gayla Guidry, Billie Ruth Kvaternick | |
| Liaison | | Paige Kelly | |
| Guests Present | | Kandy Baker (LRS), David Gallegos (CAP), Sara Spencer (SILC), Judy Trahan (LRS), Rosemary Yesso (LRS) | |
| Call to Order | | The meeting was called to order at 12:40 p.m., and a quorum established. | |
| Minutes | | **Motion Passed**. To approve October 30/31, 2014, meeting minutes with revisions (provided by Derek White) was made by Tommy Carnline, seconded by Pranab Choudhury, and approved without abstention or objection.  White’s revisions included the following.  Liaison Report- numbers 5-8 are not part of the liaison report. Rather they appear to be a misplaced portion of the Director's Report.  Chair Report- number 5, “commission of administration” should be capitalized. Director's Report- write out “RCA.”  Member’s Reports- Laura Meaux gave a brief update on the SILC, not the LRC.  Related to the October Minutes, Director Martin requested clarity on what the LRC is looking for regarding LRC’s request from LRS to aggregate data by zip code to research and identify services to communities with disabilities. Martin stated this would be a difficult task and Bob Lobos clarified that the goal was to identify the numbers of people per region who have a disability but are not being served by LRS. | |
| Liaison Report | | 1. Budget- Total allocated current year was $27,000. LRS has expended $13,890.14. Actual mileage is being paid to individuals now and that has been very beneficial for members but is expending more than expected. We will need to move funds between line items in the budget but not request an increase on the total.   **Motion Passed**: To approve line item change per Paige’s report made by Sue Killam, seconded by Kay Wilson. No abstentions nor opposition.   1. Membership- LRC consists of 25 members, 23 voting and two nonvoting (Jean and Mark). LRC currently has four vacancies (two in business and industry and two are in the category for individuals with disabilities/representatives. Pat Mascarella inquired regarding underrepresented areas of the state. Chair Murphy answered that is the case in Northeast Louisiana and she has made overtures to get applicants. 2. Kelly reminded members who are state employees that their own agency should reimburse their travel and to make sure hotel reception has their payment information. 3. Responding to a question last meeting- Post employment services the average cost and examples. There are 57 individuals statewide who received post-employment services whose cases closed in fiscal year 2014. Average cost $1,112. Total $63,434. Examples of post-employment services include psychological evaluation, vehicle repairs, lift repairs, scooter battery replacement, purchase of walker and eye glasses. 4. Kelly sent a certified letter to Gayla Guidry as requested by the LRC as she has had several absences. There has yet been a response. 5. Kelly also presented a membership attendance chart for member reference. 6. Finally, Kelly reminded everyone to complete ethic training and offered to provide assistance and information. 7. White reminded members of the deadline to submit reports to the Liaison for distribution to the LRC. | |
| Chair Report | | 1. Chair Murphy extended appreciation to Bob Lobos for assisting with a meeting with LWC CEO Curt Eysink. Murphy expressed with Eysink the need for the LRC and people with disabilities being included in decision making processes alongside LRS especially as we move forward with WIOA. 2. Murphy reiterated LRC’s budget goal in light of the state’s facing 1.4 billion loss in the budget. Right now we want to focus on just maintaining level funding. 3. On membership we are going through the list to see whose appointment is expired. And of those whose appointments are expired, who would like to be reappointed/not reappointed. Concurrently, it was discovered to our disappointment that because of a transition that took place some time ago in Boards and Commissions office some things in process that were left undone. There are people who have been participating in a number of boards and commissions across the state under the assumption they are duly appointed to that council when indeed they have not been. Our council has felt the effects of that in that David Gallegos falls into this same situation. David will continue to attend and provide CAP reports until a representative from the CAP is appointed by the Governor. 4. Murphy named members of two ad hoc committees to meet Friday morning: Officers Nominations Committee will be Derek White (chair), Pam Allen (absent), Pranab Choudury, and Nan Magness; and the 2016 Planning Committee will be Bob Lobos (Chair), Sue Killam, Mark Martin, and Libby Murphy. 5. Murphy congratulated Ken York of LRS for winning the Dunbar Award, the highest distinction that a Louisiana civil service employee can achieve. | |
| Executive Committee Recommen-dations (EC) | | 1. We have been having great difficulty in working within the state guidelines and find appropriate meeting space and accommodations for members’ overnight stay across the state. We also see a benefit in meeting in Baton Rouge as the seat of state government, including LWC and LRS. The Executive Committee recommends the LRC hold its quarterly meetings in Baton Rouge to accommodate both issues. Forums would be held via electronic means. Following much discussion with members speaking in favor and in opposition to the recommendation.   **Motion Passed**: To send the issue back to the Executive Committee for further review regarding the expenditures of previous meetings and expected future costs made by Ron Key and seconded by Pranab Choudhury. There was opposition to the motion so a hand count was taken. The motion carried 8-3. The recommendation was tabled and sent back to the EC.   1. Murphy assigned to the Outreach Committee to further develop recommendations for how affective communications about the meetings and the desire for public participation to take place. | |
| Presentation on Rules Promulgation | | 1. Judy Trahan of LRS presented information related to the rule. The LRC requested the rule be sent out the members providing the “track changes.” | |
| LRS Director’s Report | | 1. Mark Martin discussed general challenges with the state budget. 2. Since going under LWC and losing several dedicated support departments/staff (HR, fiscal), LRS has sought to regain those functions/staff. Related to an RSA audit that showed LRS was insufficiently reviewing vendors, LRS was assigned a dedicated fiscal staff, Steven Johnson, to perform fiscal monitoring, oversee contracts and third party agreements, and rate-setting for vendors. 3. LRS is continuing to prepare for WIOA implementation, including transition changes. 4. Supported Employment:  * The current system of providing payments for assessments isn’t working * Using contracts may be a part of improving the payment system  1. White reminded Martin the LRC expressed support for LRS’s “report card” project and requested an update. Rosemary Yesso, LRS, responded with a brief update:  * The project began receiving quarterly reports starting in October 2014, so the first review might be due in January. LRS received a price quote from AWARE to develop a score card mechanism and this information needs to be reviewed by the director.  1. White asked for an update on re-opening an LRS office on the New Orleans east bank. Martin discussed one option is the new LSU Health Sciences Center Human Development Center (HDC) building (subject to approval of the Dean). 2. White requested follow-up on LRC’s recommendation that “LRS mandate that by January 1, 2016 all personnel hired by LRS approved supported employment provider at the time of employment or within 12 months must be certified by the CESP and that LRS will implement by March 1, 2015 a plan to assist providers to satisfy the new mandate.” Due to his absence, Martin was unable to provide an update. | |
| Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report | | David Gallegos provided an update on the CAP program – 25 new cases since October. Most of the issues are about counselor and client communication, as is typical. Some are related to dissatisfaction with progress of their case and appropriate job matching. | |
| Member Reports | | American Indian VR program   1. A third 121 program was funded, the Tunica Biloxi Tribe in Marksville, La, director Evelyn Cast. Funding for 121 programs is through Title 1 set asides. The RSA Commissioner can set the rate from .75 to 1.5% of the whole budget, currently it is 1.1%. A challenge stems from the addition of more programs. Some may not be funded. 2. Curole was elected Vice President for the Consortium of Administrators of Native American Rehabilitation Programs. This will give Louisiana tribal programs an opportunity to tell the story of what really goes on. 3. The United Houma Nation (UHN) VR Program is looking at creative ways to deal with a problem seen in many UHN consumers having mental health concerns and often lacking social skills to be successful in traditional job settings. The goal is to improve job readiness. UHM, in conjunction with a local community center, has started an artisan center (for things like American Indian basking weaving, kitchen skills, and machinist skills, etc.) while availing participants to business-related and interpersonal skills trainings from the community center. 4. The UHN 7th Annual Pow Wow is scheduled September 19th and 20th. Planning to use the theme of the importance of work and the part work plays in peoples’ lives.   Individuals with Disabilities Education Act   1. Schools are beginning to offer career counseling related to career credentialing program. Students will take three courses in career readiness: middle school, beginning of high school, and in the middle of HS. 2. White asked about the success of the third party transition programs and other programs in development or shown interest. Yesso responded that it may take two years after beginning the programs that before outcomes are realized. St. John the Baptist has expressed interest but no planning has begun. 3. A discussion ensued on dedicating specific rehabilitation counselors for transition-only cases. Several challenges around that was brought up including that the number of referrals and timing make it unmanageable.   State Independent Living Council – report delivered by Sara Spencer   1. The council is searching for other committed individuals to further independent living for all persons with disabilities in the State of Louisiana. If y'all are interested or if you know of someone please contact me. 2. The SILC has recently begun strategic planning for their next state plan to be completed by October 1, 2016. 3. SILCS’s next meeting- April 9 and 10 in Shreveport at the New Horizons Independent Living Center. | |
| Recess to Committees | | **Meeting recessed at 2:14 p.m. to committees.** | |
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| **Friday, January 30, 2015** | | | |
| Members Present | | | Tommy Carmine, Pranab Choudury, Lanor Curole, Larry Dale, Jean Hanson (ex-officio), Ronald Key, Sue Killam, Bob Lobos, Mark Martin (ex-officio), Nan Magness, Patrick Mascarella, Laura Meaux, Libby Murphy, Laura Nata, Nicole Walker, Derek White, Kay Wilson |
| Members Absent | | | Pam Allen, Karla Cummings, Gayla Guidry, Billie Ruth Kvaternick |
| Liaison | | | Paige Kelly |
| Guests Present | | | Rosemary Yesso (LRS) |
| Standing Committee Reports | | | Eligibility and Planning   1. Quarterly data- Committee began in July reviewing the data it gets: individuals served, closures, transition numbers, etc. Will continue to work on that. 2. Economic need requirements for certain services- The Committee supports proposed changes in the rule that remove the exact dollar figures so it will allow the agency to be a lot more responsive. If there are specific services LRS wants the Committee to review, it will. 3. Revisions to Order of Selection- The Committee previously recommended fine tuning of language in what is now level five to ensure clarity that the person has a disability, albeit not severe disability, while reducing the number of categories. 4. Guidance for rehabilitation counselors in the provision of services to consumers with substance abuse- Jean Hanson is developing a mock application to demonstrate what information is gathered: how is a substance abuse issue identified?, are counselors asking the right questions?, etc. The mock application and an eligibility form will be analyzed by the Committee. In addition to Guidance, Curole and Key will work on a recommendation for a training component for counselors.   Key asked if counselors request information regarding prior history of substance abuse and/or mental issues in the family or have you ever been treated or hospitalized. Hanson answered that if it is relevant to a specific diagnosis that is recorded and maintained.  Employment Committee   1. The Committee recommends LRS include in the prioritization process an assessment of the level of support an individual needs to acquire and maintain employment.   Much discussion ensued over whether the current Prioritization system already accomplished that. Hanson sees some possible improvement in looking at the LRS Manual Part 406, Order of Selection, that includes a chart used as a tool for counselors in identifying the presence of significant limitations and that has probably not been reworked in many years.  The recommendation was tabled and a request was made for LRS to provide to members Part 406 of the LRS Manual, including “Functional Capacity Areas, Examples of Functional Capacity Areas, and Examples of Significant Functional Limitation – Chart” and the process, including the documents and forms, that LRS uses in determining disability, significant disability and prioritization. |
| LWC Executive Director | | | Curt Eysink presented information on the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the workforce climate in Louisiana, the success of Louisiana’s vocational rehabilitation program, and upcoming changes under WIOA. |
| Cost Benefit Analysis on LRS | | | Belinda Davis presented a new-completed study on the cost benefit analysis performed by LSU public policy research. Results are overall positive. The final report will be completed soon. Over a five year period every dollar spent by LRS results in about $17 in wages. |
| 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** | | | |
| 1. | Motion to approve line item changes per Paige’s report to account for increased travel expenditures made by Sue Killam, seconded by Kay Wilson passed with no abstentions nor opposition. | | |
| 2. | The Executive Committee recommended the LRC hold its quarterly meetings in Baton Rouge to accommodate both issues. Forums would be held via electronic means. A motion to send the issue back to the Executive Committee for further review regarding the expenditures of previous meetings and expected future costs made by Ron Key and seconded by Pranab Choudhury passed 8-3. The recommendation was tabled and sent back to the EC. | | |
| 3. | The Employment Committee recommended LRS include in the prioritization process an assessment of the level of support an individual needs to acquire and maintain employment. This was tabled and a request was made for LRS to provide to members Part 406 of the LRS Manual, including “Functional Capacity Areas, Examples of Functional Capacity Areas, and Examples of Significant Functional Limitation – Chart” and the process, including the documents and forms, that LRS uses in determining disability, significant disability and prioritization. | | |
| 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 | | |