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| **APPROVED** | | |  |
| Members Present | Melissa Bayham, Yakima Black, Glyn Butler, Stephen Carrier, Warren Chauvin, Paul Genco, Mary Hornsby, Suzanne Lentz, Laura Nata, Dina Perkins, Karen Roy, Marvin Rush, Laura Stazio, Lynn Stevens, Brian Wood, Alexis Young, Gay Young | |  |
| Members Absent | Tarj Hamilton, Jessica Lewis, Cliff Owens | |  |
| Liaison | Nicole Miller | |  |
| Guests Present | Ashley Augustine, Lynsey Hebert, Jamar Ennis, Lynn Blanchard, Stacy Marbs | |  |
| Call to Order | The general meeting was called to order by Chair Gay Young at 9:03 a.m. with a quorum. | |  |
| Motivational Minute | None | |  |
| Minutes | Motion to approve minutes from January and April general meetings and May special meeting was made by Paul Genco and seconded by Warren Chauvin. Motion passed without abstention or objection. | |  |
| Old  Business  Public Comment  Presentation | LRC Annual Goals and Objectives – Continuation of Transition Committee report from April meeting where Laura recapped project funded by Department of Education Office of Special Education grant. The five-year project, “Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) / Parent Training Information Center (PTI) Independent Futures that Work,” is intended to meet the information and training needs of individuals with disabilities and their families. The project is in collaboration with PTO centers in Region B2 which includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama. The primary focus is to build the competence and confidence of young adults with disabilities to access independent living and employment services so they can successfully transition from high school youth entitlement system to the adult eligibility system. Additionally, the project will disseminate trainings and information that contain resources for youth and young adults with disabilities, family members and professionals in order to improve the capacity to support the young adults with disabilities. The Louisiana State Advisory Committee, comprised of 10 professionals and 4 youth, will serve in an advisory role to support the project. Laura Nata is the project lead for Louisiana. Others on the committee are Chair Young, Melissa, Gale Dean and Bambi Polotzola. So far the group has finished compiling a list of existing state resources to address the seven priority areas for the project, rated the resources and added them to the project website which will be a single source for access to materials and information 24/7. Once the website redesign is complete, Laura will demo it for LRC.  **APPROVED**    Adult Work Apprenticeships/Job Shadowing/Mentorship – plan to continue discussion from January within the Planning and Eligibility Committee chaired by Alexis Young and the Employment Committees (Chair Young will stand in for former committee chair Courtney Ryland). Check with VA Commonwealth for best practices based on initiatives already implemented.  Membership – Chair’s goal is to fill the vacant positions on council. We are looking for a counselor from the 121 Project. All members are encouraged to talk to friends and business owners to find more members. If you think of someone who may be interested, please inform Chair Young and Vice-Chair Marvin Rush. We need to fill Cathy Lazarus and Warren Chauvin’s positions.  Ashley Augustine from the Department of Education is in the process of applying for membership. Jamar Ennis is the interim SILC Coordinator and will present the report.  No public comment  Consumer story was to be provided by Craig James but he was not present. | |  |
| LRS Director’s Report | Program year 2020 ended on June 30th with 1,205 successful closures which was lower than anticipated. Looking at active cases from the same point in time last year, they are up so cases are trending in the right direction. LRS continues to see clients virtually as needed so working to enhance and redesign virtual and electronic processes to improve efficiencies. One of which is an electronic vendor portal in the Aware system. DocuSign will allow for electronic vendor renewal and application process. AwareSign allows clients to sign documents electronically.  **APPROVED**  Working to hire Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS) in every region as they are in-house job developers who also engage with the business community, to make them aware of services, and employers for competitive, integrative employment opportunities. Hiring REDS in Houma and Alexandria has been difficult.  A new bureau administrator, Courtney Ryland, has been hired to replace Teresa Milliner who is retiring in January 2022. Since this role oversees the state plan and comprehensive needs assessment, it was important to ensure Teresa was able to cross-train before she retires.  LRS is in the process of revamping technical assistance and guidance manuals. The plan is to reformat it so it’s easier for counselors to understand and use.  LWC has initiated a Back to Work Louisiana campaign since unemployment benefits end 7/30 and the state wants to ensure individuals have access to employers and jobs. There will be job fairs in every region of the state on August 4th. See website at www.laworks.net/backtoworkla for more information.  Chair Young requested that pre-employment transition Services (pre-ETS) be discussed today. Director Melissa Bayham explained the differences between pre-ETS, VR, community rehabilitation program (CRP) and third-party cooperatives arrangements. She also discussed the challenges that school districts face with providing pre-ETS, successes from the past year and facilitated Q&A. Previously an application would be taken for high school students to initiate services in a seamless fashion. LRS also provides workplace readiness training, work-based learning experiences, counseling activities, and self-advocacy training while still in high school to all students with disabilities ages 16 - 21. As of age 22 the individual but be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and have an impediment to employment to receive services.  **APPROVED**  Three personnel are directly assigned to pre-ETS: Program Manager Stacy Marbs and two Program Coordinators, Nicole Miller and Sigmund Morrel.  Program goal for next year is to increase number of students receiving services. If students are not getting what they need from school, Director recommended they contact the Regional Manager.  Nicole will send out the flyer for pre-ETS. | |  |
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| Chair’s Report | Chair Young has started a new role as Business and Product Development Manager for Alabama Industries for the Blind. She will continue to be based in New Orleans and is able to continue as a member of LRC since she joined as a past consumer. As Chair she would like to focus on the council becoming more active and to maximize opportunities for the people LRS serves. | |  |
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| New Business | CSAVR Conference is upcoming. State Rehabilitation Council Conference will be virtual with remote learning over the next couple of months. As we receive information Nicole will disseminate.  Starting with the next meeting Chair Young will introduce portions of the bylaws so we’re all aware of why we’re here and what they should be doing. Bylaws were last revised in 2018/  Ethics Training is due each calendar year so plan to complete by December 31st. Chair Young would like 1/3 of the council to have it complete by next meeting in October. | |  |
| Standing Committee Reports | **APPROVED**  Discussion followed a question in follow-up to Director’s Report regarding how pre-ETS is handled in charter schools.  Discussion followed a question if schools are releasing student information to LRS so counselors can participate in IEP meetings.  Discussion followed question regarding how 504 students are being contacted by LRS. Per Nicole, they rely on the schools to complete the transition plan. Laura Nata would like to discuss this further in committee because students may or may not need a plan depending on if they need an accommodation but haven’t been evaluated and/or qualified for one of the IDEA exceptionalities.  Discussion followed question regarding how many individuals qualify for pre-ETS across the state versus how many are being served. Ashley Augustine wasn’t sure if this statistic is collected but confirmed the state collects data on transition services. Warren says rough estimate of 1/3 receive special education and 2/3 receive 504. There is currently nowhere on the IEP to note student receiving 504 and/or needs pre-ETS but would be good for this to be reviewed with parents during 10th, 11th and 12th grade years. Chair Young asked Committee Chair Laura Nata to review and address this with Transition Committee.  Committees met consecutively and were allowed 30 minutes each to discuss goals and plans. Chair Young wants each committee to establish action items and make some progress in between the quarterly meetings so each committee chair should reach out to committee members as needed.  Transition – Committee Chair would like to see pre-ETS included in the transition page of the IEP and also to the 504 Plan with details regarding if they want student’s information shared with LRS. Discussed items for the committee to work on and address:   1. Including pre-ETS on transition page of the IEP to prevent it from being overlooked. 2. Making the outreach flyer available in other languages so it can be distributed to parents and they can inquire about services if the schools don’t make them aware.   **APPROVED**   1. Creating a video address what is pre-ETS. 2. Spotlighting individuals who have successfully completed the pre-ETS program. 3. Other options for providing services to students so it doesn’t conflict with the school day; potentially holidays, summer, evenings, weekends.   The committee agreed to work on these three tactics:   1. Make brochures accessible in other languages – Committee Chair will discuss with Warren Chauvin and ask him to work LRS and/or LWC. 2. Get pre-ETS written into transition plan – Committee Chair will work with DOE representative Ashley Augustine. 3. Options for delivery of services – Committee Chair will review with Stacy Marbs.   Eligibility & Planning – Discussed how to create more awareness of LRS and services available and the need to have information available beyond flyers, particularly for those who are visually impaired and to appeal to the younger generations who rely on social media to obtain information.  Discussion followed question regarding if LRS has Facebook and/or Instagram social media accounts. Per Melissa Bayham, all communications flow through Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and must be approved by them. LRS can request specific things to be posted on LWC social media pages. Some noted that it’s difficult to search for and find resources on the LWC website. It also may not be 508 compliant. Laura shared Families Helping Families website [www.fhfofgno.org](http://www.fhfofgno.org/) as an example of website that is compliant.  LRS has been reluctant to perform mass marketing and outreach due to the lack of available staff to provide services. Currently there are 29 vacancies in VR with 17 of them being for counselors. Retaining counselors has been difficult and compensation is a factor, the entry pay rate is being reviewed by civil service. There are different levels for counselors to have career progression with an increase in salary but they are not having many who will stay to do this.  The committee agreed to work on these three tactics:   1. Can LWC support dedicated LRS social media pages – Director will follow-up with LWC. 2. Having LWC website updated so it is 508 compliant current Dedicated – Director will follow-up with LWC. 3. Job Sampling – Chair will look for information and resources so committee can propose solutions and bring back to the body for review.   Employment – Connection to employers is through the REDS position for each region or Brenda Bohrer at the state level. Glyn Butler is willing to take over as committee chair which will leave the Member-at-Large position open.  The committee agreed to work on preparing written materials to use with engaging employers. Something that explains the financial benefits of employers hiring someone with a disability would help expand employment opportunities. Gay will request someone from LRS to present on the benefits at our next meeting. | |  |
| Member Reports | CAP report - attached    IDEA report – member not present  SILC report – member not present  WIC report – No report as they still do not have a representative to replace Bob Lobos. | |  |
| Future Meeting  Dates | | General Board Meetings will be October 28, 2021 and January 20, 2022. |  |
| Adjourn | | Marvin Rush motioned to adjourn, seconded by Warren Chauvin and the Council adjourned at 1:39pm without objection. |  |

**APPROVED**