

**State As a Model Employer Task Force**

**Friday, September 27, 2019**

**SAME Task Force Members in Attendance: Absent:**

Aneatra Boykin Kaffia Arvie

Bambi Polotzola Lisa Vosper

Cheryl Schilling Nancy Watkins

Marcella Jones proxy for Cindy Rives Quintin Taylor

Joan Haase Sue Killam

Ken York

Rosemary Morales proxy for Julie F. Hagan

Tanisha Matthews

**SAME Designees in Attendance:**

Cheryl Schilling, DOA Shelly Johnson, DCFS Tanisha Matthews, DOC Dawn Thibodeaux, LED

Doug Bordelon, DEQ Marcella Jones, LDH

Beverly James, GOHSEP Casandra Washington, OJJ

Rikki Nicole David, DNR Sharon Hebert, Pennington

Ginger Krieg, DPS Brandi Conway, LDR

Terry Teekel proxy for Dustin Guy, LDVA Burgundy Cummings, SOS Aneatra Boykin for Susan Pellegrin, DOTD Samantha Harris, SCS

Bambi Polotzola called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Attendees introduced about themselves and the departments/organizations that they represent.

**9:40 Review/Update/Discuss Section III of** [**SAME Report**](http://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/Programs/GODA/SAME_Report.pdf) **(pages 13 – 20)**

**“Five-Year Plan with Recommended Statewide Policies and Strategies”**

1. Establish Statewide Annual Goals and Recommend Agency Specific Annual Goals Based on Data Collected through Survey of State Workforce

* Review 2019 survey data and discuss opportunities/challenges

Bambi Polotzola led the discussion regarding challenges relative the survey of the state workforce.

The participating departments and agencies discussed the following challenges with the survey:

* The facility workers do not have email addresses, and the survey did not truly reflected true number of the individuals that have disabilities. In addition, there are some that do not want to self-identify with having a disability.
* It was also shared that because some jobs are mobile, some individuals do not have workspace or an opportunity participate in the survey.
* In addition, some individuals have expressed that they have “completed the survey, why are we doing it again this year.”
* It was suggested that more awareness programs are needed throughout the year.
* The members of the task force also suggested that the sharing of positive news regarding disability employment throughout the year may compel individuals to participate in the survey. It was suggested that each agency share at least one positive story or accomplishment to help promote the survey and goals of the taskforce.
* It was also suggested that the survey be released in October, when it is disability employment awareness month. It was also suggested that Governor Edwards participate in a promotional video to announce the survey.
* It was advised that a pre-advertisement a plan to compel targeted individuals to prepare to take the survey be implemented. The pre-advertisement plan should explain why the survey is important, and that the survey is an ongoing project to collect yearly data. It was also mentioned that the taskforce should remind participants that the survey is anonymous.
* It was mentioned that a question regarding “Do you have or need an accommodation” should be asked on any future surveys.

**2. … Partnerships between State Agencies and Agencies that Provide Employment Services to Individuals with Disabilities**

LRS: Ten individuals with disabilities were hired this quarter. Job fairs will take place throughout state during the month of October in recognition of Disability Employment Awareness Month. These job fairs will be coordinated by various groups including the Statewide Independent Living Council.

OCDD: A huge nationwide initiative for individuals with developmental disabilities to gain employment, OCDD has created a partnership with State employment leadership network to gain access to resources such as job coaching. It was mentioned that OCDD is seeking partnerships with other agencies to help with their employment initiatives.

**4… Training for Employees, Hiring Managers, and HR Managers**

Taskforce members provide positive feedback regarding the Windmills Training the Trainer session from the members of the taskforce. The most recent session on September 17th-18th was shortened to two days. It was mentioned the training was very helpful in changing the attitudes of participants. It was also mentioned that the participants have a great deal of information to report back to their agencies. The two-day training was considered to be more favorable than the three-day trainings to the participants in attendance due to their busy work schedules.

It was mentioned that participating agencies would like to conduct practice training sessions to refine what was learned during the windmills training. It was advised that participants should review their materials and decide which modules they would like to simulate/practice. It was advised that all agencies keep track of any outcomes as a direct result from the training.

It was suggested that participating agencies utilize the LEO training as much as possible.

**8. Host a SAME Summit to Publicize the State as Model Employer and “rollout” SAME hiring initiatives.**

The SILC Job Fairs will take place throughout the month of October 2019 statewide.

**Discuss Annual Agency Reporting and Development of New Annual Plan**

Members of the taskforce discussed the importance of inclusion, and placing information relative to employment in newsletters was discussed. It was mentioned that there is a new provision that allows parents to use FMLA to attend IEP meetings. It was mentioned that agencies should compile and organize resources relative to employment.

It was mentioned that individuals are not self-identifying as having a disability because they do not believe they have one.

**Discussion of Next Steps**

It was suggested that state employees be required to participate in ADA training. It was mentioned that ADA training should be regarded as high as sexual harassment, ethics, and other important training of employees.

It was also mentioned that the cost savings and return on investment of having people return to work is approximately a 1 to 14 ratio.

It was also discussed how to track accountability, and how to include it in legislation. The taskforce discussed legislators who may be interested in authoring legislation in this regard.

It was suggested that Windmills practice training sessions be scheduled in December and January.

Agency Reports and Plans must be submitted by October 31, 2019 to Bambi Polotzola.