

Louisiana Rehabilitation Council
General Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 9:00 AM CT
Louisiana State Office Complex
825 Kaliste Saloom Road
Brandywine, Building VI
Lafayette, LA 70508

Present Melissa Bayham, Stephen Carrier, Rikki David, Elizabeth Fussell, Patrick Holmes, Laura Nata, Nicole Poiencot, Laura Stazio, Lynn Stevens, Megan Thompson, Roszella Viltz, Lauren Womack

Absent Warren Chauvin, Michelle Ned, Brian Patchett, Cody Rabalais, Donna Reno

Guests Patricia Andrus, Dee Budgewater, Hope Day, Jeannie Doiron, Lynsey Hebert (captionist), Kelly Monroe, Audra Muslow, Bianca Pointer, Bambi Polotzola, Germaine Simpson

Liaison Courtney Ryland

Call to Order Roll call taken with quorum established at 9:11am. Lauren motions to accept the October 2024 minutes and Megan seconds the motion.

Old Business The Consumer Survey will be done in-house through Survey Monkey.

The 2024 WIOA State Plan should be read by all and offer feedback until 4/26 at midnight.

Vendor Coalition has discussed concerns about supported employment. They'd like to improve short-term job supports. It is suggested that all materials be shared in one place on the web for vendors to access. They hope for uniform policy across the state. Their group is willing to support LRS in getting more TOs, positions.

LRS Director Report LRS conducted a statewide training to review changes implemented in January. They updated the Technical Assistance Manual and LRS Fee Schedule. They are working to clarify things to make things easier to understand. The new secretary wants services to be consistent statewide. They are planning to train leadership at the same time. Build America Buy America Act-targeted home modifications. It is not easy to make updates/changes in the policy manual. This is why the technical assistance manuals have been updated. LRS wants staff to work more with customers. They are training staff to pay invoices. RCAs are to be working with the customers and providing client services. LRS has increased the number of third-party cooperative agreements. LRS received a 5-year, \$10M grant for transition. It is

hoped to lead to an online support library and increase the partnerships with school systems. LRS has begun using Aware for electronic payments. LRS staff will get Dashlets soon, which will make managing caseloads easier. LRS is continuing to look for better locations for Randolph Shepard. Melissa would like feedback regarding cost containment measure. Advocates want to help LRS pull down all of the funds, so that services can support the clients. LRS now has a new HR Director. LRS now has more people applying to jobs, but LRS only has so many spots to fill. During the Federal Audit, LRS was not found to need to return funds. Work schedules have become more flexible and that has led to happier staff. LRS now has a training platform.

Chair Report Lynn and Courtney attended a conference for State Rehabilitation Councils and realized other states are having the same struggles. Lynn may look into ordering a book from NCSRC for guidance and ideas. They saw presentations about APSE. People at the conference were impressed that our LRC had a flyer to recruit members. There has been a 25% reduction of CRP since the pandemic. Nationally, it has been a trend according to RSA.

New Business Many members received letters about their terms ending. Those who got letters were asked to reapply. Applications were reviewed this morning. Ashley Volion had to leave the Council, and Jeannie Doiron was nominated by the Executive Committee to replace her as the representative from CAP. Sherry Houin was nominated for the seat of a person in Business, Industry, and Labor that was vacated by Suzanne Lentz.

The Ad-hoc Committee met and nominated the people to the positions below:

Chairperson- Lynn Stevens
Vice Chair- Laura Nata
Secretary- Elizabeth Fussell
Member at Large- Brian Patchett
Eligibility Committee Chair- Lauren Womack
Transition Committee Chair- Donna Reno
Employment Committee Chair- Laura Stazio

Megan moved to approve the nominations. Laura Nata seconded the motion. Elizabeth declined her nomination. After volunteering, Megan moved to have Roszella Viltz be the Secretary. Lauren seconded the motion.

Lauren motions to change the October meeting date to November 7, 2024. Laura seconds the motion.

Laura motions that in the future meetings will be the fourth Thursday of every quarter (January, April, July, and October). Rikki seconds the motion.

Standing Committee Reports

Eligibility and Planning: They worked on the RS-14 for financial means testing. They agree with Melissa. Exceptions should go to the Director. Melissa wants to know what the rule should look like. The thought is to omit the word “assets” in the rule (Section 115 of LRS Policy page 32).

Employment: They liked the idea of an outreach committee to grow LRS and the Council. LWC has Instagram. It would be great to put ODEP information and post it on Instagram. They should share information that Lafayette is having a Diversity Job Fair.

Transition: Sent the transition document created to add as a hyperlink in the IEP to the SPED Department at the LDOE for a second time. The orientation video has not been updated at this time.

Agency Reports

CAP: Jeannie, the Program Manager. They have a new Executive Director. They now have a full-time person due to their numbers going up. The highest numbers are coming from Region 1. Counselors are busy and have been struggling to respond as soon as clients expect.

IDEA: The Executive Director of Special Education for the LDOE will be attending the National Transition Conference with the Director of LRS this year. A vendor list by region is something that is desired by all. School Choice for Students with Disabilities (SCP) Award Notifications go out to families via email and mail this month. The LDOE is still offering \$1K digital vouchers for tutoring services, for eligible students. Check out Steve Carter Literacy Tutoring Program for more information. Check out the LDOE’s Education Progress and Investment Charts to see how our investments are impacting students statewide. You can see outcomes by system and student group. This year’s Teacher Leader Summit will be in New Orleans May 28-30.

Public Comment

None

Adjourn

The General Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:15pm by unanimous decision.