



# **Louisiana Rehabilitation Council**

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## **Bylaws**

**Revised April 24, 2025**

# **Louisiana Rehabilitation Council**

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### **ARTICLE I. Name**

The name of this body shall be The Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (hereafter "Council").

### **ARTICLE II. Authority**

The legal authority for establishment of the Council is Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C.A. §701, et seq., as amended by the Workforce Investment Act (Public Law 105-220), and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and subsequent amendments to 29 U.S.C.A. §725, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-128), and Louisiana Executive Order JML 24-58.

### **ARTICLE III. Purpose**

The duties of the Council shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Reviewing, analyzing, and advising the Louisiana Workforce Commission, Office of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (hereafter "Louisiana Rehabilitation Services"), regarding the performance of its responsibilities, particularly the responsibilities relating to:
  - 1. Eligibility (including order of selection);
  - 2. The extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and
  - 3. Functions performed by state agencies that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment under 29 U.S.C.A. §720 et seq.;
- B. In partnership with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services:
  - 1. Developing, agreeing to, and reviewing the state goals and priorities for rehabilitation services in accordance with 29 U.S.C.A. §721(a)(15)(E);
  - 2. Evaluating the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submitting progress reports to the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Service Administration Department of Education, Washington, D.C.;
- C. Advising Louisiana Rehabilitation Services regarding activities authorized to be carried out under the Rehabilitation Act, and assisting in the preparation of and amendments to the state plan, together with the necessary applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations as required by 29 U.S.C.A. §720 et seq.;
- D. To the extent feasible, conducting a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with:
  - 1. The functions performed by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services;
  - 2. The vocational rehabilitation services provided by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and other public and private entities responsible

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for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under 29 U.S.C.A. §701 et seq.; and

3. The employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under 29 U.S.C.A. §725, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes;
- E. Preparing and submitting an annual report to the governor and the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Service Administration, Washington, D.C., on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operating within the state, and making the report available to the public;
- F. To avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, by coordinating activities with the activities of other councils within the state, including the Statewide Independent Living Council, established under 29 U.S.C.A §796d; the advisory panel established under §612(a)(21) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (as amended by §101 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997; Public Law 105-17), [20 U.S.C.A. §1412 (a)(21)]; the State Developmental Disabilities Council described in §124 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (42 U.S.C.A. §6024); the State Mental Health Planning Council established under §1914(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.A. §300x-4[a]); the State Workforce Investment Council; and Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network.
- G. Coordinating its activities with the Office of Disability Affairs, Office of the Governor.
- H. Providing for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and the Statewide Independent Living Council and the Centers for Independent Living within the state;
- I. Preparing, in conjunction with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, a plan for the provision of such resources, including such staff and other personnel, as may be necessary and sufficient to carry out the functions of the Council under this section. The resource plan shall, to the maximum extent possible, rely on the use of resources in existence during the period of implementation of the plan;
- J. Supervising and evaluating such staff and other personnel as may be necessary to carry out its functions; and
- K. Performing such other functions as the Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to its other functions.

### **ARTICLE IV. Council Membership**

#### **Section 1. Council Composition**

- A. The Council will be composed of twenty-five (25) members appointed by the governor.

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- B. Twenty-three (23) voting members selected as follows:
1. One (1) representative from a parent training and information center established pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as amended;
  2. Chairperson, or their designee, from the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC);
  3. One (1) representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP);
  4. One (1) representative from a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP);
  5. Four (4) representatives of business, labor and industry;
  6. Twelve (12) members representing a cross-section of the following categories:
    - a. Individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities;
    - b. Representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves; and
    - c. Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services.
  7. One (1) representative of the State Workforce Investment Council.
  8. One (1) representative of the State educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under Section 720 and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and
  9. One (1) representative of the directors of a project carried out under Section 121 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended.
- C. Two (2) members will serve as non-voting members, selected as follows:
1. One (1) vocational rehabilitation counselor with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs; and
  2. The director of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services.

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### **Section 2. Eligibility for Membership**

Members of the Council will be selected from all areas of the state and will be knowledgeable of the vocational rehabilitation services offered to individuals with disabilities. The majority of the membership of the Council will be composed of Louisiana citizens with disabilities, representing a broad range of disabilities and who are not employed by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services or any state agency.

### **Section 3. Terms of Office**

- A. A full term of Council membership shall be a period of three (3) years. No member of the Council, other than the representative of the Client Assistance Program, the representative of the Section 121 project, the director of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- B. For members appointed to fill a vacant position, the term of membership shall correspond with the length of the original term. Vacancies will not prevent the Council from executing its duties as established in ARTICLE III.
- C. Nothing herein contained shall affect the term of the chairperson, vice-chairperson and other officers if said person or persons are elected or reelected for a term of office; subject to reappointment by the Governor and confirmation by the Senate.
- D. Vacancies shall be filled as they occur, from nominations obtained from the general public and Council members. Their terms shall be for the unexpired term of membership. If the unexpired term of membership is less than one-and-a-half years, the Council member is eligible to be reappointed for a consecutive term of membership.

### **Section 4. Termination of Membership**

- A. Members may be recommended for removal due to failure to carry out responsibilities assumed in accepting appointment to the Council. Any member with absences of fifty percent (50%) or more from General Council meetings and/or committee meetings in any twelve-month period is subject to recommendation of removal.
- B. The Executive Committee will discuss the reasons for the absence with the member and may ask for that member's resignation in writing. If the member declines to submit a resignation in writing, the Executive Committee may recommend removal to the Council. The Council Chairperson will report the Committee's action during the following Council meeting.
- C. Recommendations for removal must be supported by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council at a duly noticed meeting. Final termination may only be carried out by the Governor, the appointing authority.

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### **Section 5. Resignation**

Any Council member may resign at any time in the duration of their appointment, but must resign upon the expiration of their final term of service by filing a written letter of resignation with the Council Chairperson. This letter will then be forwarded to the Governor, the appointing authority.

### **Section 6. Conflict of Interest**

No Council member will vote on any issue that would provide direct financial benefit to the member, or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest as defined under Louisiana law. The member will make a clear statement to the Council when a potential conflict of interest arises. Meeting minutes should reflect the member's removal from any vote taken and indicate that the member in no way otherwise influenced the Council's decision in the matter.

### **Section 7. Compensation and Reimbursement**

- A. Council members may be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses of attending Council meetings and performing Council duties. This may include childcare, personal assistance services or forfeited wages for each day the member is engaged in performing Council duties. All requests for reimbursement must be in accordance with state travel and other appropriate state and/or agency guidelines, which may apply.
- B. Council members may not receive additional compensation or a per diem from the Office of the Governor for serving on the Council.
- C. Council members who are employees or elected public officials of the state of Louisiana or political subdivision thereof may seek reimbursement of travel expenses in accordance with state regulations, from their employing or elected department, agency and/or office.
- D. Council members who are also members of the Louisiana Legislature may seek a per diem from the Louisiana State senate or House of Representatives, as appropriate, for their attendance.

## **ARTICLE V. Meetings**

### **Section 1. Regular and Special Meetings**

- A. The Council will hold no less than six (6) meetings in combination of General and Standing Committees, per year or as often as necessary to conduct its business.
- B. The Council is dedicated to maximizing opportunities statewide for input from recipients of Louisiana Rehabilitation Council through its Public Forums. Members shall make every effort to attend each meeting but it is understood members may miss some meetings due to unavoidable circumstances. Each absence will be documented by the Secretary in the Meeting Minutes and by

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the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council Liaison who will provide an updated running report of attendance.

- C. The Chairperson, the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services Director, or a majority vote of the Council may call special meetings.
- D. All meetings, forums, and hearings will be publicly announced and open and accessible to the general public as required under state law. Executive sessions may be held only for valid reasons that also meet the requirements of state law.
- E. Interpreters and other accommodations to ensure accessibility will be provided at all Council meetings for members or participants upon request.
- F. In accordance with regulations and rules established by Act 393 of 2023 and LWC, virtual meeting participation may be permissible for members with disabilities. To be considered in attendance for quorum and voting purposes, the member's camera, audio, and microphone must be engaged.

### **Section 2. Quorum**

A quorum will exist when a simple majority of voting members is present. Business requiring the vote of the Council will not be addressed absent a quorum.

### **Section 3. Proxy**

Voting by proxy shall not be allowed.

### **Section 4. Parliamentary Procedure**

- A. The rules contained in the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order will govern the Council at all meetings. Applicable federal and state laws, Council Bylaws and other special rules adopted by the Council may apply when deemed appropriate and necessary.
- B. Each voting member present will have one (1) vote. The Chairperson shall not vote except in case of a tie vote.

## **ARTICLE VI. Committees**

### **Section 1. Standing Committees**

The Council's standing committees will be the Legislative, Community Outreach, Community Rehabilitation Program, and Executive (further discussed in ARTICLE VII). All Standing Committees will convene prior to General Committee meetings.

### **Section 2. Committee Duties**

The duties of the Council's committees and committee of the whole shall be to implement the goals and objectives of the Council in their respective areas:



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### **A. Legislative Committee**

Monitor, inform, and recommend State legislative activities pertaining to the efficacy of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, and public policy regarding employment-related issues for Louisianans with disabilities as in accordance with ARTICLE III.

### **B. Community Outreach Committee**

Research, develop, and distribute materials relating to LRS Surveys, public announcements, educational materials, and LRC recruitment efforts as in accordance with ARTICLE III.

### **C. Community Rehabilitation Program Committee**

Research and report LRS service delivery and provider needs, and the program's strengths and outcomes as in accordance with ARTICLE III.

### **Section 3. Non-standing Committees**

Ad-hoc committees or sub-committees may be appointed by the Council Chairperson as required to address the goals of the Council.

## **ARTICLE VII. Executive Committee**

### **Section 1. Officers**

A. The officers of the Council will include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Chairpersons of each standing committee (3) and one (1) Member-at-large.

B. The term of service for each Officer shall be two (2) years and shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Election results shall be effective July 1.

The voting members of the Council shall select by majority vote the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Chairpersons of each standing committee from among its voting membership during the Council's final regularly scheduled meeting of the state fiscal year.

The Member-at-large position shall be filled by the immediate past Chairperson unless either of the two conditions are met: the immediate past Chairperson is elected to one of the other offices listed above in this part or is unable or declines to serve as an Officer. If either of the two conditions are met, the voting members of the Council shall select the Member-at-large by majority vote from among its voting membership during the regular election.

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- C. An ad-hoc committee for nominations of Council Officers shall provide notice in writing of its nominees to all council members at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting in which elections will occur. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. The Chairperson of the nominating committee will preside over the election of the new Council Chairperson. The newly-elected Council Chairperson will preside over the election of the remainder of the Officers.
- D. When a vacancy occurs in an office due to resignation or rotation off of the Council, the Chairperson shall appoint a Council member to complete the remainder of the term. In the event of the resignation of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson will step in to fulfill the remainder of the term of office of the Chairperson. If the Vice-Chairperson is unable or unwilling to complete the term of office of the Chairperson there will be a special election to fill the remainder of the Chairperson's term of office. Such election will be held at the Council meeting immediately following the resignation of the Chairperson. Members will be advised that there will be an election at least two (2) weeks before the Council meeting. Nominations shall be made from the floor.

### **Section 2. Duties of Officers**

- A. Chairperson
  - 1. Will guide and conduct activities of the Council in accordance with its bylaws and all applicable federal and state laws and orders;
  - 2. Will preside over all meetings of the Council;
  - 3. May establish committees and appoint members as needed to carry out the functions of the Council and may participate as a member of any of the standing committees being allowed one vote if not serving as the Chair for that committee;
  - 4. Will serve as the official spokesperson for the Council and may sign all letters, reports and other Council communications;
  - 5. Will implement the Council member absence policy as applicable;
  - 6. Will appoint, with input from the Executive Committee, members of the standing committees and any ad-hoc committees established;
  - 7. Will, with Council input, establish during its January meeting the date and location of its General Committee meetings for the following state fiscal year; and
  - 8. Will ensure that the functions of the Council as described in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C.A. §701, et seq., as amended, and Louisiana Executive Order JML 24-58 are carried out.
- B. Vice-Chairperson
  - 1. Will, in the absence of the Chairperson, serve as Chairperson with all duties and powers ascribed to the Chairperson;
  - 2. Will assume the duties of the chairperson, if that office is vacated, through the remainder of the term or until a special election is held.

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3. Will coordinate and oversee the recommendations and selection of new Council members.
4. Will perform other duties as assigned by the Chairperson.
- C. Secretary
  1. Will serve as Recording Secretary at Council meetings; and
  2. Will perform other duties as assigned by the Chair.
- D. Standing Committee Chairpersons
  1. Will develop committee agendas and conduct meetings;
  2. Will give committee report at Council meetings; and
  3. Will perform other duties as assigned by the Chairperson of the Council.
- E. Member(s)-At-Large
  1. Will perform such duties as assigned by the Chairperson.

### **Section 3. Executive Committee**

- A. The Executive Committee will consist of the Council Officers and will meet separately each time the full Council meets and as needed to fulfill its duties.
- B. The Executive Committee will:
  1. Take emergency actions when a full meeting of the Council is not possible and ensure that such actions are presented to the full Council for ratification at its next regularly scheduled meeting;
  2. Advise and consult regarding issues presented by the Chairperson;
  3. Review the coordination of committee activities in implementing the goals and objectives of the State Plan;
  4. Reviewing Council financial statements as submitted by the LRC Liaison;
  5. Recommend removal of a member due to absence as established in ARTICLE IV., Section 4;
  6. Coordinate activities with other bodies in the state, specifically the Statewide Independent Living Council, the Special Education Advisory Council, the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, the Louisiana Mental Health Planning Council, the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council, and Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network in accordance with ARTICLE III., F.;
  7. Coordinate its activities with the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs; in accordance with ARTICLE III., G.;
  8. Advise Louisiana Rehabilitation Services regarding its activities and assisting in the preparation of and amendments to the state plan in accordance with ARTICLE III., C.;
  9. Coordinate with LRS staff to conduct Orientation required for new members to include, but not be limited to, functions of the State Vocational Rehabilitation program, and functions of the Council;
  10. Will contribute to the development of the LRS Strategic Plan;

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11. An ad-hoc committee for nominations of Council Officers, including a Chairperson, shall be appointed by the Chairperson by the April meeting of the Council;
12. Perform other duties as assigned by the Chairperson.

### **ARTICLE VIII. Amendment**

Any proposed amendment to these Bylaws, along with the date it is to be voted upon, shall be presented in writing to the Council at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which it is to be voted upon. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting at a meeting in which there is a quorum will be required for ratification.

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### **Revisions:**

11/15/93:	Original draft approved
9/20/94:	ARTICLE IV, Section 2
9/15/95:	ARTICLE III, Section 5
3/21/97:	ARTICLE I, Section 1
9/18/97:	ARTICLE IV, Section 2
9/22/98:	ARTICLE I, Section 2
1/11/99:	ARTICLE II, Section 1; ARTICLE III, Section 1; ARTICLE III, Section 2; ARTICLE III, Section 7; Endnote #1
12/7/00:	ARTICLE III, Section 1
9/28/07:	ARTICLE I, Section 1; ARTICLE II, Sections 1, 2; ARTICLE III, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; ARTICLE IV, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; ARTICLE V, Sections 1, 2, 3; ARTICLE VI, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
1/26/12:	ARTICLE I; ARTICLE II; ARTICLE III; ARTICLE IV, Sections 1, 3, 4; ARTICLE V, Sections 1, 4; ARTICLE VI, Sections 1, 2, 3; ARTICLE VII, Sections 1, 2, 3; ARTICLE VIII
1/24/13:	ARTICLE VI, Sections 1, 2
2/27/14:	ARTICLE VII, Section 1
7/25/14:	ARTICLE VII, Section 1
4/24/15:	ARTICLE VI, Section 2 and ARTICLE VII, Section 3
1/25/18:	ARTICLE II; ARTICLE IV, Section 1, 3; ARTICLE VI, Section 1; ARTICLE VII, Section 2, 3
7/10/23:	ARTICLE IV; Section 3 A
4/25/25:	ARTICLE II; ARTICLE III; ARTICLE IV, Sections 1, 4, 5; ARTICLE V, Sections 1, 2, 4; ARTICLE VI, Sections 1, 2, 3; ARTICLE VII, Sections 1, 2, 3; ARTICLE VIII