

**Governor's Office of Disability Affairs  
State As a Model Employer (SAME) Task Force  
September 14, 2018  
9:30am – 12:00pm**

**Call to order and introductions:**

Task Force Members and others in attendance introduced themselves in their official capacities.

**Review and Discussion of Section III of SAME Report (page 13-20) "Five-Year Plan with Recommended Statewide Policies and Strategies"**

**2. Facilitate and Encourage Productive Partnerships between State Agencies and Agencies that Employ Individuals with Disabilities**

It was reported by Ken York and Melissa Bayham of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) that Brenda Bohrer will be the LRS/LWC point of contact to state agencies. Referrals will be made for individuals with disabilities who are looking for employment, and there will be proper linkage between the job seekers and the participating state agencies. Brenda will receive a list of agency designees so that she may make referrals to counselors or other necessary individuals to help streamline partnerships and employment services. Brenda provided a brief overview of her process relative to the interactions with counselors, and her intentions to make appropriate referrals based on the skills of the job seeker and the available employment opportunities. Participants agreed that this is an effective strategy, and that this strategy will be helpful for state agencies to employ individuals with disabilities.

**3. Expansion of Scope of Civil Service Rule 22.8(a), Civil Service Fast Track Rule**

An overview of the Civil Service Rule 22.8(a) was explained by Joan Hasse of Civil Service. Joan answered questions relative to testing procedures, job postings, and how the aforementioned rule is applied. Joan reported that a request for rule promulgation relative to training, hiring etc. will be made in October; she is hopeful that the rules will be promulgated by December 2018. Her department is currently viewing the procedures of other states. Joan will discuss the dissemination of letters, testing, and other ancillary concerns to the proper parties.

**4. Develop Comprehensive Three-Tiered LEO Training for Employees, Hiring Managers, and HR Managers**

Cheryl Schilling of the Division of Administration (DOA) discussed the Windmills training that she and Tanisha Matthews of Department of Corrections (DOC) attended. She reported that the Windmills training is modular, which allows for selection of content areas. They reported that they feel the training would be of great benefit to the overall efforts, and that the company has a long-standing history of being experienced and versed in the training of HR personnel in regards to employees with disability. They discussed specific trainings for HR managers relative to sensitivity and retention. Ken mentioned that he participated in the Windmills training, and he believed that it was very effective. The Train the Trainer model was discussed as well as web-based trainings. The Task Force recommended ***requesting a quote and official proposal so that the cost and funding logistics can be determined.*** The Task Force requested that the ***proposal be drafted so the cost of each component can be noted.*** Development of web-based training by the CPTP staff was discussed. The CPTP staff is very talented and versed, but there is concern in the timeframe that the development may take due to the other projects CPTP is tasked with. A cost analysis needs to be done once the quote from Windmill is received.

## **7. Call for Early Adopter Agencies to Pilot Best Practices to Provide Concrete Guidance for All State Agencies**

Cheryl Schilling of DOA hopes that recruitment initiatives will be bolstered for qualified individuals with disabilities to get them on interview list. Lisa Vosper says that the Board of Regents (BOR) would be on board.

### **Review and Discuss Section IV of SAME Report (pages 20 - 24) "Recommended Strategies and Guideline for Agencies"**

#### **1. Agency point of contacts (POC) should be expected to communicate regularly with LRS**

Brenda Bohrer with LRS will make personal connections with agency designees in addition to sending emails and other correspondence for proper linkage. Agencies need to identify their POC.

#### **2. Specific Process for Agency to Work with LRS single point of contact (POC)**

A brief overview of Supportive Employment and Customized Employment was provided to the group and the benefits of each. If agencies would like to include these initiatives in their plan, LRS will be able to assist. It was recommended that in the future Brenda provide a presentation with an overview of customized employment including scenarios of how it works. It was also suggested that Brenda and Bambi and other members of the Task Force attend HR and SHRMA meetings as well as BOR Lunch and Learns.

#### **4. Use of WAE Part-time Jobs for People**

Joan provided a brief overview of WAE positions. The advantages are that a person may not need to test for the job and the job itself may not need to be posted. It is also good for a "trial period" for both the job seeker and employer.

#### **5. Create Program to Work with LRS, and Secondary and Post-Secondary Programs to Develop Meaningful Paid Internships**

Work Based Learning Experiences (WBLE) great opportunity to provide meaningful employment to ages 16-21 in a state agency that would not have an opportunity otherwise. This program is funded through LRS on a reimbursement basis, and would not be cumbersome for state agencies. Regional governmental agencies/offices would be good targets to take advantage of this opportunity.

#### **7. Include In the Agency Plans a Requirement that the following types of training be provided to staff**

The addendum of the report gives a list of accessible trainings. It is important for agencies to develop processes, utilize the trainings in the report, and work with LRS (Brenda).

#### **8. Include in Agency Plans a Requirement that HR managers, Hiring Managers, and Supervisors Receive Trainings in Reasonable Accommodations and Other Workplace Rights Topics**

This topic covers ADA and how to properly accommodate individuals in the workforce. Brenda says that the accommodations are generally at little to no cost. Brenda will share a presentation relative to accommodations to the group.

**9. Publicize to All Staff the Availability of Information, Education, and Training on the Right to Reasonable Accommodation and Workplace Rights**

The awareness of employers to be more open to accepting individuals with disabilities will make it more likely that people will be willing to disclose information without fear of retaliation.

**10. Designate a Resource Person within the Agency for Supervisors**

It is mandatory to have an ADA coordinator within a government agency with 50 or more employees. There needs to be a key person within a department to get the necessary information which may or may not be the ADA Coordinator. It is important to put in the plan to include roles and responsibilities of the ADA coordinator.

**11. Include in Job Postings Statements that Highlight the Commitment to Employ Individuals with Disabilities**

Including “Louisiana is a State as a Model Employer for individuals with disabilities” in job postings will encourage more targeted job seekers to apply for positions within the state.

**Discussion of Next Steps**

Over 11,000 people participated in the survey. The data will be analyzed for research and information purposes. Agencies will receive their individual data. The anonymous responses have generally been positive. Each agency can decide how they will use the data to reach the intended outcomes. The group also discussed strategies measuring their successes and how to determine if their plans are working.

The Task Force recommended ***a presentation be made at the next Cabinet meeting in order for Cabinet Secretaries to understand the initiative.*** The Task Force agreed that buy-in from the top level is essential to long-term success.

The Task Force recommended that ***state agencies collaborate on development of the plans that are required in the SAME executive order.***