**State As a Model Employer (SAME) Task Force**

**January 10, 2020**

**Press Room, 4th Floor, Louisiana State Capitol**

Members Present: Members Absent:

Bambi Polotzola GODA Cheryl Schilling DOA

Joan Haase SCS Lisa S. Vosper BoR

Julie Hagan OCDD Nancy Watkins CRT

Sue Killam LSUHDC Quintin Taylor LCTCS

Cindy Rives LDH Proxy- Ashley Young Tanisha Matthews DOC

Kaffia Arvie LWC Proxy- Daphne Stewart

Ken York LRS Proxy- Melissa Bayham

Agency Designees Present: Others Present:

Dawn Thibodeaux LED Brenda Bohrer LRS

Doug Bordelon DEQ Rosemary Morales OCDD

Beverly James GOHSEP Laura Stazio LSUHDC

Amy Dawson GOHSEP Johnny Manela BRCC

Brandi Conway LDR

Burgundy Cummings SOS

Samantha Harris SCS

Andre Ward DOTS

Sycondria Wilson LDVA

**Call to order and introductions**

The meeting was called to order and all present introduced themselves.

Rachel Pollock, the subject matter expert to the taskforce introduced herself via conference call and provided brief remarks. It was announced that the Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs received 100 hours of technical assistance for the SAME Initiative to improve employment outcomes for individuals with behavioral health concerns.

**Approval of Minutes**

Joan Haase made a motion to approve the September 27, 2019 minutes. Julie Hagan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved without any objects or abstentions.

**Establish Statewide Annual Goals and Recommend Agency Specific Annual Goals on Date Collected Through Survey of State Workforce: Review 2019 survey results and reports**

Members of the task force were provided physical copies of the survey. The task members took a few moments to review the results of the 2019 survey. Members of the task force also shared physical copies of their agency reports.

Bambi Polotzola provided that the survey participation is down to 26.3% from 28.2% last year, and the participation of individuals with disabilities is 5.5% percent, which is the same as from previous years. Bambi will provide a report on these metrics by agency.

**Establish clear next steps for 2020 survey based on discussion at September 27, 2019 meeting**

It was advised that a statistician participate in this survey initiative to make suggestions in regards to the collection of data, participation, etc.

A webpage will be created to highlight the work completed, the available training, and a synopsis of the survey data to create greater awareness and to inform the public of the progress made. The website project will begin in January.

It was suggested that Governor Edwards participate in a video highlighting the employment initiatives, and to encourage a greater response from survey participants.

It was suggested that mobile, user-friendly/ accessible technology be created to enable more clients to participate.

It was recommended that the taskforce develop the means to provide opportunities to participate in the survey to constituents who do not have access to email. It was suggested that a separate website be created (for the survey only)

It was suggested that the survey be integrated into training, such as Louisiana Employees Online (LEO) system. It was also suggested that it be integrated into the Performance Evaluation System (PES).

Taskforce members suggested that different links should be created- one for multiple users on the same I.P. address, one link that does not have a time restriction.

It was suggested that the task force utilize the media to gain more attention to the survey participation and awareness efforts.

It was suggested that the task force be afforded more time to brainstorm for solutions in regards to increasing numbers and overall success of the survey initiative.

**Partnerships between State Agencies and Agencies that Provide Employment Services to Individuals with Disabilities:**

LRS: Twenty-three (23) vocational rehab clients have been hired by state agencies over a six-month period (July 2019-to-Present). It was reported that these hires were made by a variety of agencies.

OCDD: The department is in the midst of figuring out how to transmit and receive information regarding WAE positions and their job descriptions to the masses. It was reported that LRS has handled the initial intake process for employment. The department will brainstorm ideas on how to create best practices and a possible system.

**Review Annual Agency Reporting and Plans:**

DOTD: Expressed positive reviews in regards to the PSE program and the student participants affiliated BRCC. The department has a few students from BRCC who are employed part-time.

BRCC: will be meeting with LRS to discuss opportunities to expand the PSE program

**Potential Legislation:**

It was expressed that there is a desire to integrate the contents of the Executive Order into legislation to preserve the task force and its employment initiatives.

It was suggested that the task force examine what other states have done to achieve this end. It was expressed that legislators should be exposed to the work of the task force to account for the employment of individuals with disabilities. It was also expressed that the benefit of enacting legislation is to secure funding for the long term.

**Technical Assistance Grant**

The members of the taskforce discussed what type of assistance will be needed under the current award. To determine the nature of what is needed, it was suggested that the taskforce determine what agencies have worked well under the grant, and determine how to meet the unmet needs of consumers. It was also suggested that the taskforce create a list or survey to examine what are the needs within each agency.

**Meeting Schedule**

It was discussed and decided that SAME Taskforce meeting and activities will be scheduled on the second Friday morning of each month.

**Membership**

It was determined that there are at least three (3) openings in the taskforce, the members discussed what agencies should participate. The taskforce members will make recommendations in the near future.

**Adjournment** The task force adjourned at 10:56 am.