Governor’s Advisory Council on Disability Affairs

**December 18, 2018**

**Minutes**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AGENCY** | **GACDA MEMBER** | **PRESENT** | **PROXY** | **PROXY NAME** | **ABSENT** |
| GOHSEP | Amy Dawson |  |  |  | X |
| OBH (LDH) | Ashley Jefferson | √ |  |  |  |
| LaCAN/Parent | Ashley McReynolds | √ |  |  |  |
| DCFS | Christopher Kirby |  |  |  | X |
| Fire Marshall | Cynthia Obier |  |  |  | X |
| Provider/Parent | Donna Breaux |  |  |  | X |
| Senator | Gerald Boudreaux |  |  |  | X |
| Advocate | Jamie Karam | √ |  |  |  |
| LDE | Jamie Wong | √ |  |  |  |
| DOTD | Joshua Hollins |  | √ | Jamie Ainsworth |  |
| OCDD (LDH) | Julie F. Hagan | √ |  |  |  |
| FHF/Parent | Katie Corkern |  | √ | Amy Donarski |  |
| Arc of LA | Kelly Monroe |  |  |  | X |
| Providers | Laura Brackin |  |  |  | X |
| LASEA | Laureen Mayfield |  |  |  | X |
| LRC | Libby Murphy |  |  |  | X |
| Parent | Linda Kocher |  |  |  | X |
| LDVA | Linda Theriot |  |  |  | X |
| **Chair** / Advocate | Lynette Fontenot | √ |  |  |  |
| Representative | Malinda White |  |  |  | X |
| Higher Education | Mary Breaud |  |  |  | X |
| LWC - LRS | Melissa Bayham |  | √ | John Schweitzer |  |
| GOEA | Michelle Guillory |  |  |  | X |
| Advocate | Pam Darby |  |  |  | X |
| Deaf/DB/HoH | Paula Rodriguez | √ |  |  |  |
| SILC | Roszella Viltz |  | √ | Jessica Lewis |  |
| DD Council | Sandee Winchell |  | √ | April Dunn |  |
| People First | Sharon Hennessey | √ |  |  |  |
| Advocacy Center | Stephen Kauffman | √ |  |  |  |
| OAAS (LDH) | Tara Leblanc |  |  |  | X |
| LATAN | Yakima Black |  |  |  | X |
| **ROLE** | **STAFF** |  |  |  |  |
| Exec Director | Bambi Polotzola | √ |  |  |  |
| Asst. Director | Jamar Ennis | √ |  |  |  |
| SICC Director | Melanie Washington | √ |  |  |  |
| **AGENCY** | **GUESTS** |  |  |  |  |
| Lighthouse Louisiana | Meredith Bailey | √ |  |  |  |
| Lighthouse Louisiana | Beau Ellerbe | √ |  |  |  |
| FHF | James Sprinkle | √ |  |  |  |
| Advocacy Center | Chris Rodriguez | √ |  |  |  |

1. **Call to Order and Approval of the Minutes**

The committee meeting was officially called together at 12:30pm. The members of the Governor’s Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA) and guest in attendance provided a brief introduction of themselves. Quorum was not established.

1. **Committee Reports**

Education Committee Report:

On behalf of Laureen Mayfield, Executive Director Polotzola provided the Education Committee Report to the members of GACDA. Quorum within the Education Committee was established. The Education Committee discussed various issues regarding the Implementation of Act 696. The committee analyzed the State of Virginia as a model for Special Education Advisory Councils. The committee discussed the concerns with school districts in regards with the intent of the Act 696, developing policies, and using best practices.

The Education Committee recommended that collaboration committees for each student with behavioral health services in school that are separate from an IEP team meeting be in compliance with HIPPA.

The committee also recommended that GACDA request that the creation of local special education advisory committees be added to the legislative agenda.

Transportation Committee:

Jamie Karam provided an update on behalf of the transportation committee. Quorum was not established. Jamie Ainsworth provided an on behalf of the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) relative to transportation during emergency situations. Karam provided the members of GACDA with an overview of Ainsworth’s report. Ainsworth provided information relative to the requirements necessary for a local entity to qualify for federal matching fund for transportation reimbursements. The committee also discussed the need have more emergency managers from state departments participate in future committee meetings.

In an effort to continue the discussion on transportation concerns. The Committee made a recommendation to GACDA to draft and send a letter to the Department of Transportation and Development to continue the discussion regarding emergency transportation, and to have a permanent representative from DOTD who specializes in emergency transportation participate in GACDA and EMDAC.

Accessibility Committee:

Jamie Karam provided an update on behalf of the Accessibility Committee. Karam provided an overview of the presentation given by representatives of Louisiana Lighthouse regarding accessibility of public webpages. Louisiana Lighthouse performed an audit of the Governor’s webpage which revealed 49 screen code errors. Jamar Ennis of the Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs mentioned that he will connect Lighthouse Louisiana with the web developers on staff within the Governor’s Office. Lighthouse Louisiana will continue to perform audits on public webpages and bring greater awareness of the importance of digital accessibility. Paula Rodriguez expressed concerns in regards to the “48 Hour” rule in regards to requesting interpreters, especially for deaf-blind individuals during legislative session.

The Accessibility Committee recommendation that GACDA submits a letter to the Speaker of the house, The President of the Senate, and other interested parties at the State Capitol to discuss the accessibility of the digital content on the legislative webpage, and request a written plan in writing relative to the procedures and processes to request interpreters and also a meeting to discuss captioning and various concerns.

Housing Committee:

The Housing Committee discussed the various housing programs provided by the Louisiana housing corporation, and also discussed the various local, regional, state, and federal concerns regarding housing. Members of the committee reasoned that there are not enough housing resources and that some individuals lose their vouchers before they are able to receive housing through the various programs. Members also discussed the qualified allocation plan and how advocates may have input in the scoring to increase housing opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Amy Dawson expressed satisfaction in regards the formation of this GACDA subcommittee, and mentioned that when constituents are affected by natural disasters, housing is often underappreciated.

The committee also discussed agencies who are believed to be essential parties to effectively move the initiatives of the housing committee forward. The Louisiana Corporation, OAAS, OCDD, Behavioral Health, The Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs, and the Louisiana Workforce Commission, Louisiana Medicaid, and DOTD were among the agencies discussed as possible groups that should be engaged to collaborate on housing matters.

Sharon Hennessey will serve as the Chair of the Housing Committee.

Legislative Committee:

Executive Director Polotzola provided GACDA members with a document regarding the legislative update. The priorities are to: fully fund LRS to enable the draw-down of federal funds, increase the EPSD personal care rate to $14 an hour, and to restore all supports and services to the rates for individuals with disabilities by resorting provider rates effective 2008.

1. Update on Employment Initiatives

Executive Director Polotzola, mentioned that state agencies have submitted their plans in regards to the State as A Model Employer Initiative. Many agencies have expressed the need for training, and it was recommended that the Windmills program be utilized for this effort. There will be multiple training opportunities to satisfy the demand. The trainings will be focused on training Human Resource personnel who are willing and capable of training others in the field of HR. The first training will take place in the first week of February 2019, and will be cost effective. Civil Service will be participating in this effort and will develop training sessions on the LEO program.

GODA applied for and received the Vision Grant from the EFSLMP. GODA created a resource guide that centers on the State As A Model Employer Initiative. The Vision quest grant is instrumental in to assisting with mental health employment, and will be working with OBH, LRS, and LWC, DOE, and Louisiana Medicaid. Executive Director Polotzola and Ashley Jefferson are co-coordinators for this initiative. Polotzola will attend a conference in DC on behalf of Louisiana to participate in a two-day meeting. Louisiana will be required to create a state plan. Executive Director Polotzola hopes to reach more providers and stakeholders so that may participate.

1. La Department of Health Updates

Julie Foster Hagan provided updates on behalf of the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD). Hagan provided that OCDD has been working to get the restoration of community-based waiver services rates on the Joint Legislative Committee’s agenda. Hagan mentioned that there are budget authority concerns in regards to the restoration of rates.

OCDD will be moving in the direction of creating a consolidated waiver. The department realizes that there are gaps in providing services to the deaf and blind communities and would like to make adjustments.

OCDD has presented a budget that includes restoration for long term personal care and community choice waivers, and hopes that all communities will gather to advocate for the proposed budget.

OAAS is taking a look at the individuals on the waiting list for waiver services, and will conduct a statewide series of community meetings to discuss a work plan to reduce the number of individuals on the waiting list for waiver services. There has also been efforts to increase rates for health care professionals. The meeting dates for the community meetings are listed on the Governor’s Office of Disability Affair’s website.

There is a media push to publicize the positive stories of the newly implemented tiered waiver system.

There is also an effort to better educate members of the Louisiana Legislature to understand the importance of fully funding waiver services.

Ashley Jefferson of the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) provided that meetings are taking place to discuss the Center for Evidence to Practice to expand resources to behavioral health. There has been Act 378 trainings that have been taking place in three areas across the state. OBH has met with Families Helping Families regarding the Louisiana State Response Grant. Jefferson also mentioned that North East Delta Human Services has started the Golden Years Initiative, and provided information relative to the My Choice Program.

1. **Agency/ Member Updates**

Paula Rodriquez of Deaf Focus provided that their agency will be conducting a police officer sensitivity training. There will also be the Deaf Education Alliance Conference on February 1, 2019.

April Dunn of the DD council provided that LaCan will be doing the legislative roundtable events across the state.

Chris Rodriquez of The Advocacy Center acknowledged the passing of David Giangos. The Advocacy Center has been awarded a grant to pursue a project in the New Orleans Area to address recidivism rates among inmates with mental illness. Rodriquez mentioned that 15 percent must be raised to be eligible for the grant.

1. **Establish GOLD Awards Criteria Review Panel**

Jamar Ennis provided a recap of the 2018 GOLD Awards Ceremony, and discussed the possibility of establishing the GOLD Awards Criteria Review Panel. The panel will be charged with further developing the criteria of the various award categories, make recommendations, and create themes for the Inclusive Art Contest.

The committee will also attempt create a list of previous award winners since the inception of the program. Emails will be sent the members of GACDA to determine who would be interested in participating in the GOLD Awards Criteria Review Panel.

1. **Other Business**

There was no other business

1. **Adjournment**

The GACDA Committee officially adjourned at 2:16pm.