**Louisiana State Apprenticeship Council Meeting**

**Wednesday, June 28th, 2017**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Large Executive Conference Room – 1st Floor, Annex Building**

**MINUTES**

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Henry Heier (Chairman)

Brent Moreland

Keith Brand

Claire Obgartel

Aldo Irias-Duron

Nicholas Felton, Jr.

David Helveston (in place of Monty Sullivan [Ex-Officio])

Danielle Birney (in place of Kelly Carpenter)

**Members Absent:**

Woody Oge

Andrew O’Brien

**LWC Officials Present:**

Joseph Hollins (Council Secretary, Director of Apprenticeship)

Shannon Brown Joseph (Office of Workforce Development Director, LWC)

Kenneth Burrell (in place of Ava Dejoie [Executive Director, LWC])

*A quorum was present*

**REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SAC MEETING**

After several minutes of review, the council approved the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Brent Moreland made a recommendation that the minutes to be more specific, as he found the minutes from the previous meeting to be vague.

**STATE APPRENTICESHIP UPDATES**

Mr. Henry Heier, Chairman of the State Apprenticeship Council, expressed gratitude that meetings are being scheduled regularly and that more applications for potential programs are being reviewed.

Heier noted that Registered Apprenticeship is being brought to the public’s attention in a larger capacity, and that this is a good thing.

Mr. Joseph Hollins, State Director of Apprenticeship, provided a recap of what’s been going on since the previous meeting, noting that the agenda features the main topics of interest. One of which being the ApprenticeshipLouisiana website.

**WEBSITE UPDATES**

Hollins displayed the latest wireframe for the ApprenticeshipLouisiana website; he mentioned that the apprenticeship staff is working on the web content, adding apprentices and program sponsors, and asked the floor to please send any suggestions they may have. Working with the RNS Director, the *My Life My Way* tool, already utilized on LWC’s main site, will be included. This tool determines what kind of job is necessary based on the lifestyle that an individual is seeking. Pre-screening forms for apprentices will also be incorporated, routing info to the one-stop Business and Career Solution Centers. Prospective apprentices will be able to look through all Registered Apprenticeship programs, filtering by region, and access contact and application information. Upcoming LWC events with apprenticeship involvement will be displayed on a calendar, including program sponsors events.

**MESSAGE FROM DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BURRELL**

Deputy Executive Director Kenneth Burrell thanked everyone for coming and was excited about everyone’s efforts and input regarding Registered Apprenticeship. His message involved keeping the current momentum, noting that there is now a lot of national attention regarding the program. He expressed that Registered Apprenticeship has a large role to play and will greatly benefit the citizens of the state of Louisiana.

**NEW PROGRAMS**

Heier announced a new component with program applications. With new fields of non-traditional occupations (e.g., healthcare, information technology, and others) which is not within the expertise of the council members, ATRs who work with the programs will now give a brief introduction before getting the applicants to appear before the council, to provide insight which might allow the council to further understand the program.

**ACADIANA PLUMBERS ASSOCIATION**

**Program Sponsor – Kevin Richard ATR - Michael Knapps**

**Plumber**

Mr. Michael Knapps introduced the Acadiana Plumbers Association (APA). APA was first reviewed at the previous council meeting and asked to return to determine if items which had caught the council’s attention had been amended. Mr. Kevin Richard has been communicating with LWC since December of 2016. Richard’s purpose for creating the program is to provide Lafayette with licensed plumber. Due to the new plumbing board requirement, which went into effect in January 2016, it is now mandatory to go through a Registered Apprenticeship program to attain a plumber’s journeyworker license. The issues of the previous review involved: 1) the number of journeyworkers not being specified; and 2) the maximum credit for previous experience not being specified. With the assistance of the ATR, amendments were made to the Standards of Apprenticeship, and Knapps believed everything to be in compliance with the council’s remarks from the previous meeting.

Heier offered questions to the ATR, noting it was a new exercise. No questions were asked.

Richard approached the council and Heier asked the council to bring up any questions about the application.

Mr. Brent Moreland remarked on the OJT Hours in the periods of apprenticeship being inconsistent (Period One, 2250 hours; Period Two, 1600 hours; etc.) Knapps stated that he updated the hours to fit what he believed to be the council’s recommendations based on the previous meeting: specific hours, rather than years, with a focus on the skills covered in each level to progress.

Moreland remarked that is it difficult to work 2000 hours per year, and that would prolong the apprentice even further requiring an additional 250 hours to advance to the next period.

Richard stated that his original work process schedule involved eight periods, 1000 hours per period.

Ms. Claire Obgartel mentioned that sorting the work process schedule into periods limits the learning of the apprentices. She questioned if it is necessary to divide the work process schedule into periods. Instead, she suggested having the wage schedule divided by periods and having approximate hours for the work process schedule with no period restrictions on when they’re covered.

Moreland agreed with this as acceptable, mentioning that you don’t want to limit the apprentices. They’d never be able to directly follow that on the job anyway.

Mr. Aldo Duron pointed out that the Standards stated the apprentices will be paid for classroom training, and questioned Richard.

Richard stated that they will not be paid. They will come in on Fridays and Saturdays for training, and some instructors may pay them as an extra perk, but it is not guaranteed.

Mr. Keith Brand wanted to know what would be the standard in that, some being paid and others not.

Moreland mentioned that he believed it was in reference to the contractor, and requested clarity within the Qualifications and Selection Procedures section of the standards where it referenced employees of a non-signatory employer.

Hollins explained that there will be a training agreement between the Registered Apprenticeship program and the individual contractors. Employees of individual contractors that have employers below the status of journeyworker may test to see where they will place in the program if interested in joining.

Subsequent discussions involved the length of the probationary period (1000 hours), the evaluation process by board members to grant credit for previous experience (proof of previous experience and passing a test), and who configures the Louisiana Labor Market Data and goals (Louisiana Workforce Commission).

Heier thanked Richard for being the first one to experience new ATR component and asked a council member to call for a motion.

Duron made a motion to hold off on the application until the next meeting and Moreland seconded the motion. There was no opposition to the motion. Richard was asked to return to the next council meeting.

**LOUISIANA HEALTHCARE INSTITUTE**

**Program Sponsor - Sherie Phillips Thomas ATR - Michael Knapps**

**Medical Billing and Coding Specialist/Compliance Officer**

As a preface, Knapps stated that based on the last council meeting, under the impression that the council’s preference to hours being specifically laid out by competency rather than divided into several uniform periods, Sherie Phillips Thomas’ Work Process Schedule was divided as such. Knapps explained that rather than your traditional time based Medical Billing and Coding occupation, the program contained components of the competency based Compliance side of the industry. LWC’s Apprenticeship Division saw it fit to combine the two occupations to form a Hybrid model of both time and competencies. The program, possessing more rigor than the average Billing and Coding program, prepares students for the national certification rather than the basic entry level certification.

Ms. Sherie Phillips Thomas further explained what Medical Billing, Coding and Compliance consists of with an overview, focusing on the importance of accuracy sent to insurance carriers to ensure proper payments. She’s noticed that too many coders are not experienced enough to do this. American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC) has set up an externship project to provide journeyworker level experience under Healthcare providers or certified coders. Many can’t get employed because they don’t have enough experience. Thomas explained that there are no state certifications currently. They are regional certifications, but not nearly as much experience is required to attain these. Louisiana Healthcare Institute receives their regulations through the Board of Regions.

Mr. Keith Brand brought attention to the fact that they’re entrepreneurs. Being paid by a percentage, they might code improperly in order to receive more money.

Thomas ensured that the proper training will correct this concern. The compliance portion of the program provides an obligation and oath to report something that’s illegal.

Mr. Nicholas Felton asked if auditing is performed to ensure everything is done correctly.

Thomas confirmed yes, stating that audits are performed regularly. Records are pulled to see if it measures up to what the physician recorded. Each insurance carrier has its own compliance audit (e.g., Workers Compensation, Medicare, and Medicaid).

Thomas was asked about the cost of the training.

She replied that the full program cost is $5,295, which is billed to employer not the students. The employer is incentivized by the quality of worker that they receive through the program.

When asked how many journeyworkers there are, Thomas replied 12, and that they are aiming for 12 apprentices per year.

In Thomas’ Standards of Apprenticeship, Random Selection is chosen as the selection method. When asked who provides this Random Selection, Thomas stated that the Human Resources department selects from the eligibility pool. As the HR staff works within the organization, the council found that it could not impartial, as stated in the Standards, and that the section must be amended.

It was decided that Thomas would uncheck the box for pre-apprenticeship direct entry, as the council stated it contradicted the Random Selection method chosen.

It was also pointed out that the language of the selection method reads “may” rather than “shall”, as if the selection method is optional. The council asked the language be amended.

A motion was called to approve the Registered Apprenticeship program of Louisiana Healthcare Institute on the condition that Thomas works with the apprenticeship staff to amend her Standards are the council has instructed.

All were in favor. The program was approved.

**STATE REGULATIONS**

**NEW EXECUTIVE ORDER**

Hollins mentioned that with the new Executive Order from the President of the United States it will no longer be necessary for programs to follow regulations or to be federally registered. However, the process will take some time. If it were to happen quickly it would be a problem affecting available funding for apprentices and program sponsors.

Heier noted that the Executive Order refers to general apprenticeship, not federally regulated Registered Apprenticeship.

**WAGE PROGRESSION RULE**

Hollins brought attention to the Louisiana Administrative Code Title 40, Part IV, which pertains to Registered Apprenticeship. Stating that the Administrative Code is outdated, Hollins plans to bring up a new issue within the regulations at each council meeting to be discussed.

At the federal level, it’s not specified what percentages have to be within the scheduled wage increases. However, in the state rule, it specifies that programs with wage schedules which rise every six months must have a minimum of 5% increase. Wage schedules in one year increments must have a minimum of 10%

Mr. Louis Reine, in the public audience, mentioned that the law doesn’t prevent you from paying more than the minimum.

It was decided unnecessary to amend this portion of the state rule regarding wage progression at this time, as the language states that if a program exceeds the minimum percentages it will still be compliant with the Louisiana Administrative Code Title 40 Part, Part IV §303 F. 16.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

The council agreed to continue meeting on the fourth Wednesday of every month, setting the next State Apprenticeship Council meeting for Wednesday, July 26th, 2017.

**ADJOURN**

**SUBSTANCE OF ALL MATTERS DECIDED:**

1. Minutes from the previous council meeting were approved.
2. The apprenticeship program of Acadiana Plumbers Association was denied approval of registration and asked to return to the next meeting.
3. The apprenticeship program of Louisiana Healthcare Institute was approved for registration with the State of Louisiana.
4. The wage progression rule of Louisiana Administrative Code Title 40 Part, Part IV §303 F. 16. will not be changed at this time.