

Summary of Input Provided and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council [Attachment 4.2(c)]

The Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC) continues to work with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) to ensure the services provided by our agency meet the needs of Louisiana's citizens with disabilities. The council held six meetings during Federal Fiscal Year 2006-2007. These meetings incorporate public forums and consumer/counselor interviews.

The following recommendations were made by the Council and also include LRS' response to those recommendations:

- During the early months of FY 06, LRC voiced their concerns about the amount allowed for consumer textbooks reimbursement; the amount allowed mileage reimbursement; the requirement of working at least 20 hours a week before a consumer could be closed as successfully employed and; allowing the consumer to continue their education beyond the bachelor degree.
- LRS responded by increasing the amount allowed for textbook reimbursement, the 20 hour work week requirement was changed to no minimum required hours, and guidelines regarding pursuing training beyond the bachelor degree level are in the process of being revised. Mileage reimbursement costs remain the same but are under consideration for increase during the next federal fiscal year. The remaining budget for the current fiscal year did not allow for this added expense.

The following are activities/contributions that were made by the LRC:

- LRC and LRS jointly conducted the statewide needs assessment (LRC provided input for all surveys (employee and consumer) and participated in gathering input from focus groups in Lafayette, LA).
- A representative from the LRC attended the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation in San Francisco.
- LRC had a joint meeting with Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).
- LRC developed and distributed a consumer satisfaction survey in 2007. Two focus groups met with LRC to help refine the final draft of the consumer satisfaction survey. The revisions to the instrument included adding information to the cover letter which included additional information about the Council, adding a telephone number to call for assistance, and the length of the survey was shortened. LRC distributed 3,000 consumer satisfaction surveys to LRS

consumers in April 2007. LRC is currently receiving the completed surveys from consumers. The consumers surveyed have until June 30, 2007 to return the surveys. Once the deadline ends, LRC will compile the responses and distribute a report of the findings in 2008 to LRS and other interested parties.

- LRC participated on the LRS Policy and Procedure Workgroup in which numerous revisions were adopted.
- LRC worked with LRS in the supported employment program and development and training in the milestones program along with adjustments which needed to be completed.
- LRC provided feedback and cost savings measures to the LRS New Orleans Regional Manager during the July council meeting held in Metairie, Louisiana.
- LRC is involved in all LRS new initiatives.
- The LRC webpage continues to be utilized. The LRC brochure was updated and consumer success stories were published in the educational document *Louisiana Rehabilitation Services: an Investment in Louisiana's Economy & Future* and distributed to the Louisiana legislature.
- The Council monitored the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act and funding at the federal level for disability-related issues. The Council was informed of all pending federal and state legislation action regarding services to consumers with disabilities.
- The Council held a strategic planning meeting in order to set goals and objectives which will drive council activities for the coming years. An additional product of the planning was a reorganization of committees in order to more efficiently administer these projected goals.
- The council completed and distributed the 2005-2006 Louisiana Rehabilitation Council Annual Report.
- LRC is represented on numerous entities statewide which include but are not limited to Governor's Office of Disability Affairs, Families Helping Families, the Statewide Independent Living Council, Workforce Investment, the Louisiana Business Leadership Network, Chambers of Commerce, etc.
- LRC participated in the Disability Rights Rally at the Louisiana State Capitol. A booth with educational information regarding the status of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.
- LRC members are active participants in the LRS budget meetings.

- LRC provided feedback and input regarding LRS Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual Updates.
- LRC provided LRS with recommendations for scope of services.