



**Governor's Office of Disability Affairs
(GODA)**

Annual Report 2019



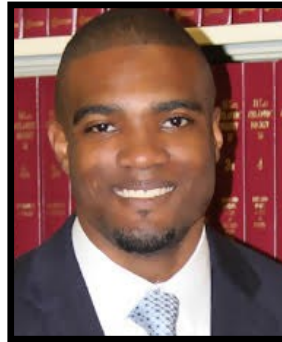
OFFICE of the GOVERNOR

JOHN BEL EDWARDS



**Bambi Polotzola
Executive Director**

Governor's Office of Disability Affairs



**Jamar Lanier Ennis
Assistant Director**

Governor's Office of Disability Affairs



**Melanie Washington
Director**

**State Interagency Coordinating
Council**



**Jessica Lewis
Director**

**Statewide Independent Living
Council**



**April Dunn
Coordinator**

Governor's Office of Disability Affairs



**Adren Wilson, Ph.D
Deputy Chief of Staff**

Governor's Office of Programs and Planning



**Bruce Parker, Ph.D
Director**

Governor's Office of Programs and Planning

GODA Activities in 2019

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs works to adequately educate, address, and resolve issues and concerns relative to the disability community. GODA participates in initiatives that promote, encourage and support citizens with disabilities so they may have an equal opportunity to actively participate in all aspects of life.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Symposium

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs (GODA) hosted its Annual Conference on July 26, 2019 at the Claiborne Building in Baton Rouge, LA. The Conference was held on the 29th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Governor John Bel Edwards provided a videoed welcome to participants in attendance. The Conference was attended by more than 350 people.

The GODA Conference featured a Keynote Presentation from Kristi Avalos, the founder and CEO of Accessology and national expert in accessibility, the ADA, and national disability related issues. The GODA Conference featured sessions on education, employment, healthcare, housing, transportation, and emergency preparedness.

To view the recap video of the GODA Conference please click [here](#).

YOU'RE INVITED TO THE
Governor's Office of
Disability Affairs Conference

Friday, July 26th, 2019
9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Louisiana Purchase Room, Claiborne Building
1201 N. 3rd St. Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

Featuring National ADA Expert: Kristi Avalos, CEO of
Accessology. Will Include Sessions on ADA Accessibility,
Education, Employment, Healthcare, Housing,
Transportation and Emergency Preparedness.

RSVP: <https://godaconference.eventbrite.com>
For questions, concerns, or requests for accommodations, please email
DisabilityAffairs@la.gov or call (225) 219-7553.



The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Monthly Disability Newsletter

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs distributes a monthly newsletter to highlight the relevant issues and concerns of disability in Louisiana. The newsletter is designed to deliver important news and announcements that impact the disability community. Some of the content in this newsletter is created by the members of The Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA). This newsletter also provides information about disability affairs and other programs and events sponsored by agencies and organizations that serve individuals with disabilities. The newsletter is distributed statewide to increase awareness of the available statewide disability programs and services. The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs has archived all of its 2019 newsletters. These archived newsletters can be found at: <http://gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/category/13>



The screenshot shows the website header for the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs. At the top, a blue bar contains the name "JOHN BEL EDWARDS". Below this is a dark blue banner with the state seal of Louisiana and the text "OFFICE of the GOVERNOR". A navigation menu includes "ABOUT", "NEWSROOM", "PROGRAMS", "STATE AGENCIES", "INTERACT", and "DISASTER RESOURCES". A search bar is located on the right. The main content area is titled "Newsroom > Disability Affairs" and lists four archived newsletters, each with a "READ MORE" button.

JOHN BEL EDWARDS

OFFICE of the GOVERNOR

ABOUT NEWSROOM PROGRAMS STATE AGENCIES INTERACT DISASTER RESOURCES Search

Newsroom > Disability Affairs

Copy of Governor's Office of Disability Affairs December 2019 Newsletter
December 09, 2019 [READ MORE](#)

Copy of Governor's Office of Disability Affairs November 2019 Newsletter
November 22, 2019 [READ MORE](#)

Copy of Governor's Office of Disability Affairs September/October 2019 Newsletter
November 22, 2019 [READ MORE](#)

Copy of Governor's Office of Disability Affairs August/September 2019 Newsletter
September 03, 2019 [READ MORE](#)

Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Programs and Events

The 2019 GOLD Awards

The Governor's Office hosted the Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities (GOLD) Awards on December 10, 2019 at the Old State Capitol. The GOLD Awards ceremony was created to serve as an opportunity for Louisiana to pay tribute to the achievements, dedication, and extraordinary efforts of individuals who benefit the disability community. The Award Ceremony can be viewed [here](#). The GOLD Awards ceremony was televised statewide. The following awards were presented:

- Educator of the Year: Sondra Mullen
- Direct Support Professional of the Year: William Jackson
- Service Provider of the Year: Edda Curry
- Employer of the Year: Lenny Martinsen
- Volunteer of the Year: Pittre Walker
- Family of the Year: The Brooks Family
- Service Animal of the Year: Annie Frannie Corkern
- Youth of the Year: William Romero
- Patsy Barrett Memorial Award: Ali Hebert
- Ken Vince Memorial Award: Jeff Arseneaux
- Distinguished Merit Award: Tom Barnes
- Elected Official of the Year: Senator Dan Claitor
- Public Servant of the Year: Dr. Jay Sevin



The 2019 Inclusive Art Show Contest

Over 40 individuals participated in the 2019 Inclusive Art Contest. To bring greater awareness of the importance of inclusion in today's society, the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs accepted entries that illustrated or described ideas related to this year's theme: "Living, Learning, and Loving Together." A ceremony took place on December 10, 2019 in recognition of the Inclusive Art Contest participants. Patrice Parks was selected as the "Lynette Fontenot Excellence in Inclusion Award" recipient (named after the GACDA chairperson) for the best overall entry. Participants were encouraged to use art as a means to share their vision, experiences, and talents to demonstrate this year's theme of inclusion. Medals and special recognition from Gov. Edwards were presented to those who earned first place, second place, third place, and honorable mention. Other individuals received recognition at the ceremony. GACDA Chairperson Lynette Fontenot was the keynote speaker. This event was also televised statewide. To view the recap of the Inclusive Art Show Contest Ceremony please click [here](#).



2019 Inclusive Art Show Contest Award Recipients

K-5th Grade Division

Alli Nezat- First Place

Tahj Thomas- Second Place

DaMarius Richard- Third Place

Madison Williams- Honorable Mention

6th-8th Grade Division

Emily Grimmett- First Place

Grace Daigle- Second Place

Zavier Simon- Third Place

Maise Richard- Honorable Mention

9th-12th Grade Division

Blake Artigue- First Place

Aunan Hanna- Second Place

Ivy Meyers- Third Place

Adult Division

Patrice Parks- First Place

Shawane Thomas- Second Place

Bonnie Dempster- Third Place

Diana Territo- Honorable Mention

Malorie Albert- Honorable Mention

Kat Guidroz- Honorable Mention

The Lynette Fontenot Excellence in Inclusion Award

Blake Artigue





**Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs
(GACDA)
Annual Report**

Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs

The Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA) was established by Governor John Bel Edwards through Executive Order NO. JBE 2016-10 on April 7, 2016 to monitor state compliance with the Americans with Disability Act and to advise the governor on the needs of individuals with disabilities in Louisiana. GACDA is also charged with assisting the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs with the resolution of state disability issues and provide education, communication, and networking services concerning disability issues and needs for all Louisiana citizens. GACDA is composed of 31 members appointed by Governor Edwards. Support staff, facilities, and resources for GACDA are provided by the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs within the Governor's Office of Programs and Planning.



GACDA is required to submit an annual report to the Governor pursuant to Executive Order NO. JBE-2016-10. This report highlights the significant activities undertaken by GACDA in addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities in the state of Louisiana. In order to fulfill this requirement, the GACDA Annual Report is included in this section of the GODA report.

This annual report provides an overview of the important achievements of GACDA. The council carries out its responsibilities through its various standing committees. These committees are comprised of individuals representing the public, not-for-profit, and self advocate sectors who provide invaluable contributions of time, expertise, and unwavering commitment to articulate the needs of individuals with disabilities.

GACDA Legislative Report

In 2019, GACDA made the following recommendations to the Office of the Governor during the 2019 Regular Legislative Session:

- Restore rates for home and community based services for people with disabilities.
- Increase of the EPSTD Personal Care Service rate to the same as the Children Choice IFS Rate.
- Fully fund Louisiana Rehabilitation Services: approximately an additional \$5.5 Million is needed to draw down the remaining \$20 Million of [Federal allocation](#).
- Support the prohibition of discrimination against potential organ transplant recipients based on disability.
- Support using all but \$1 Million of the funds currently in the New Opportunities Waiver Fund to restore waiver provider and support coordination rates to 2008 levels for this fiscal year.
- Provide funding of \$600,000 to expand the [State Personal Assistance Services \(SPAS\)](#) program to serve individuals on the waiting list.
- Discontinue family cost participation in EarlySteps for Fiscal Year 2020 without changing eligibility criteria for the program.
- Support the prohibition of discrimination against potential organ transplant recipients based on disability

In 2019, GACDA voted to support the following legislation during the 2019 Regular Legislative Session:

House Bill 199, which requires the Louisiana Department of Health to begin a program to provide health care services via the state's Medicaid program to children in the TEFRA population no later than June 1, 2020, pending CMS approval

House Bill 320 and **Senate Bill 78**, which includes Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) providers in the definition of behavioral health service provider in order to allow these providers to gain access to students during school hours upon the request of the parents.

Senate Bill 151, which transfers the Louisiana Special Education Center from the Special School District to LDH and renames the center the Central Louisiana Supports and Services Center.

Senate Bill 158, which requires each local public school superintendent and the administrative head of each charter school to establish a special education advisory council to provide advice and feedback regarding special education policies, procedures, and resources and engage in community outreach.

House Bill 143, also known as Evie's Law, prohibits discrimination against potential organ transplant recipients based on disability.

Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs Members



Lynette Fontenot
GACDA Chairperson



Laura Brackin
Representative of
Community
Providers
Association



Donna Breaux
Member at Large



Ashley McReynolds
Member at Large



Michelle Guillory
Representative of
Governor's Office of
Elderly Affairs



Gerald Boudreaux
Representative
Member of the
Louisiana State
Senate



Katie Corkern
Member at Large



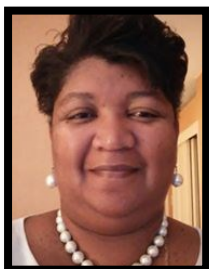
Pam Darby
Member at Large



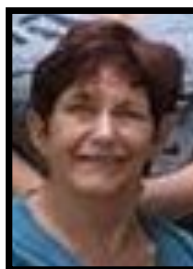
Amy Dawson
Representative
Member of the
Governor's Office of
Emergency
Preparedness



Ashley Jefferson
Representative
Member of the
Office of Behavioral
Health



Roszella Viltz
Representative
Member of the
Statewide
Independent Living
Council



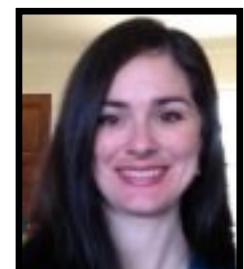
Sharon Hennessey
Representative
Member of People
First Louisiana



Joshua Hollins
Representative of the
Department of
Transportation and
Development



Jamie Wong
Representative of the
Louisiana Department
of Education



Jamie Karam
Member at Large



Steve Kaufman
Representative
Member of the
Advocacy Center



Christopher Kirby
Representative of the
Department of
Children and Family
Services



Linda Kocher
Member at Large



Tara Leblanc
Representative of
Office of Aging and
Adult Services



Cynthia Obier
Representative of the
State Fire Marshal
Public Safety



Lauren Mayfield
Representative of
the Louisiana
Association of Special
Education
Administrators



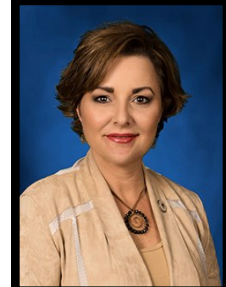
Kelly Monroe
Representative of the
Arc of Louisiana



Libby Murphy
Representative of the
Louisiana
Rehabilitation Council



Paula Rodriguez
Representative of the
Deaf Grassroots
Movement



Malinda White
Representative of the
Louisiana House of
Representatives



Linda Theriot
Representative of the
Department of Veteran
Affairs



Julie Foster-Hagan
Representative of the
Office of Citizens with
Developmental
Disabilities



Sandee Winchell
Representative of the
Louisiana
Developmental
Disabilities Council



Yakima Black
Representative of
Louisiana Assistive
Technology Network



Mary Breaud
Representative of
Higher Education



Melissa Bayham
Representative of the
Louisiana Workforce
Commission

Housing Subcommittee

<u>Members:</u>	Sharon Hennessey (Chairperson)	Charles Tate
	Laura Brackin	John Schweitzer
	Joel Harrell	Sandee Winchell
	Linda Kocher	Sharon Hennessey
	Linda Bowman	Chris Kirby
	Pam Darby	Julie F. Hagan
	Yakima Black	Kelly Monroe
	Roszella Viltz	Mary Breaud
	Melissa Bayham	Ashley Jefferson
	Ashley McReynolds	Rep. Malinda White
	John Moran	

Mission And Areas of Responsibility

This committee provides recommendations to identify problems and concerns with issues of housing, while promoting and understanding employment needs and potential of individuals with disabilities. The Housing Committee monitors legislation relative to equal opportunity to accessible housing for individuals with disabilities.

Committee Accomplishments

In 2019 the Housing Committee accomplished the following:

- Participated in the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Conference.
- Recruited developers, public servants, and advocates to participate in GACDA Housing Committee Initiatives.
- Strengthened the relationship between the Louisiana Housing Corporation and GACDA.
- Participated in the planning of the Louisiana Housing Corporation's Inaugural Inclusive Housing Conference.
- Led in collaborative efforts with multiple agencies and organizations to promote education and awareness of the Qualified Application Process, LAHEAP Program, and Home Weatherization Programs.
- Bolstered advocacy efforts by encouraging interested parties to participate in public forums, and by disseminating information.

Accessibility Subcommittee

<u>Members:</u>	Cynthia Obier (Chairperson)	Amy Dawson
	Jamie Karam	Lynette Fontenot
	Ashley Jefferson	Katie Corkern
	Sharon Hennessey	Michelle Guillory
	Tara Leblanc	Paula Rodriguez
	Laureen Mayfield	Linda Theriot
	Steve Kaufman	Yakima Black

Mission And Areas of Responsibility

This committee meets quarterly and provides recommendations to identify the problems and concerns with issues of accessibility for Louisiana citizens with disabilities. The Accessibility Committee provides assistance to ensure that communications, emergency services, public services, and public entities are accessible for people with disabilities.

Committee Accomplishments

In 2019, the Accessibility Committee accomplished the following:

- Coordinated meetings with the Division of Administration in regards to improving the accessibility of the Louisiana State Capitol.
- Advocated for the passage of HCR 80.
- Recommended that the Office of the Governor investigate the funding allocation of Act 273 from the 2017 Regular Legislative Session.
- Participated in the coordination of the 2019 GODA Conference.

Transportation Subcommittee

<u>Members:</u>	Jamie Karam (Chairperson)	Linda Kocher
	Amy Dawson	Chris Kirby
	Donna Breaux	Kelly Monroe
	Michelle Guillory	Laura Brackin
	Steve Kaufman	Sharon Hennessey
	Roszella Viltz	Linda Theriot
	Tara Leblanc	John Schweitzer
	Cynthia Obier	Tina Anthlone
	Julie F. Hagan	Andrew Baer
	James Sprinkle	Jamie Ainsworth

Mission And Areas of Responsibility

This committee shall identify the needs, concerns, and availability of accessible transportation for individuals with disabilities in Louisiana. This committee is charged with making recommendations to the Governor and appropriate agencies relative to accessible transportation.

Committee Accomplishments

In 2019, the Transportation Committee accomplished the following:

- Participated in the Department of Transportation and Development's Section 5310 and 5311 grant review process which provides transportation resources for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and individuals residing in rural parishes.
- Voted to support HCR 68 of the 2019 Legislative Session.
- Planned a meeting with Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) to go over policies and preparedness during emergency and disaster situations for individuals with disabilities.
- Advocated for a favorable transportation contract during emergency evacuations within DOTD's ESF1 Plan.
- Presented at the 2019 GODA Conference.



**Statewide Interagency Coalition Council
(SICC)**

State Interagency Coordinating Council

The State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) for EarlySteps is an independent board that advises EarlySteps. A state that desires to receive financial assistance under Part C of IDEA must establish a State Interagency Coordinating Council. In drafting the original legislation, Congress recognized the need for a group outside of the Lead Agency to “advise and assist” in the development of this comprehensive system of coordinated early intervention services. The Council must be appointed by the Governor and the appointment of membership must reasonably represent the population of the state.

The SICC advises and assists in the performance of its responsibilities, particularly in regard to:

- The identification of the sources of fiscal and other support for early intervention services;
- The assignment of financial responsibility to the appropriate agency;
- The transition of toddlers with disabilities to preschool and other appropriate services;
- The provision of appropriate services for children from birth through age five;
- The promotion of interagency agreements;
- The SICC also advises and assists the Lead Agency in the preparation of applications, the transition of infants and toddlers to preschool or other appropriate services at age three, and the preparation and submission of an annual report to the Governor and to appropriate federal authorities on the status of EarlySteps.



SICC Mission

To work in collaboration with the Louisiana Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, in an advisory capacity, to design and oversee the implementation of a family-centered, community-based, comprehensive, interagency service delivery system for infants and toddlers (birth to two) who are eligible for Part C services, and their families. This system will be monitored and evaluated to ensure that families are supported and that the potential of each child is maximized.

State Interagency Coordinating Council Members



Shanida Mathieu
Chairperson



Angelá Lorio
Vice-Chairperson



Bambi Polotzola
Secretary



Mike Billings
Parliamentarian



Michelle Roberie
Parent-at-large

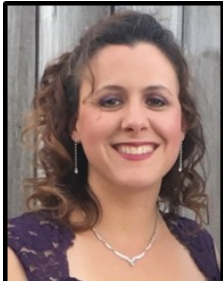


Melanie Washington
**State Interagency Coordinating
Council Director**



Brenda B. Sharp
**OCDD - EarlySteps
Representative**

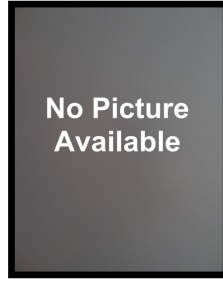
State Interagency Coordinating Council Members



Tracy Barker
Louisiana Medicaid



Rebecca DeLaSalle
Insurance Representative



Leslie Doyle
Insurance Representative



Marc Garnier
Insurance Representative



Jennifer Hannon
Insurance Representative



Kathyne D. Hart
Insurance Representative



Antiqua Hunter
Insurance Representative



Soundra T. Johnson
Insurance Representative



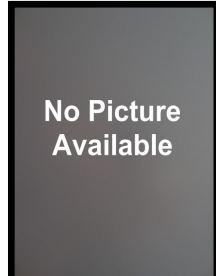
Colleen Klein-Ezell
Insurance Representative



Ursula O. Meaux
Insurance Representative



Tawnya Moore
Insurance Representative



Joy Pennington
Insurance Representative



Ann Phillips
Insurance Representative



Fiona Ritchey
Insurance Representative



Patricia H. Smith
Insurance Representative



Sandee Winchell
Insurance Representative



Libbie Sonnier-Netto
Insurance Representative

SICC Committees

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee provides leadership for the SICC and Lead Agency. The duties include overseeing the activities of the Executive Director, appointing other committee members, appointing task forces as needed, planning SICC quarterly meeting agendas, and overseeing the business of the SICC, handling special requests/concerns as related to EarlySteps, and certifying the Annual Performance Report.

Shanida Mathieu
Angelá Lorio
Bambi Polotzola
Mike Billings
Michelle Roberie
Tracy Barker
Mary Hockless
Brenda Sharp

SICC Standing Committees

The SICC has standing committees to address the needs of the council as determined by the SICC. The role of the council committees is to provide advice and assistance to the Council regarding the development and implementation of Louisiana's Early Intervention System by making recommendations that are endorsed and approved by the Council and submitted to the Lead Agency for their consideration. The committees were re-formed in 2017 to address the current needs of the EarlySteps State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). The committees meet quarterly.

Family Assessment Committee

This committee was formulated to establish the process that identifies and supports family concerns, priorities, and resources needed to address their child's development resulting in functional Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcomes.

Mary Hockless (co-chair)
Monica Stampley (co-chair)

Valarie LaDay
Joyce Ridgeway
Helen Monic
Lisa Pierron
Ariana Alexander
Terri Coombs
Tomorrow Fondal
Tracy Crump
Kelli Morgan
Chardell Young
Kelli Kent
Nina Seneca
Santee Winchell
Kahree Wahid
Bambi Polotzola

Team-Based Practice Supports

This committee was formulated to develop and implement a team-based approach where early interventionists and families collaborate with each other to address the family CPRs.

Tim Butler (Chair)

Steve Ivey
China Guillory
Kelly McGehee
Chrissy Kraemer
Ashley Casteel
Holly Bell
Anthony Stafford
Jen Walle
Joanna Cottrell
Tracy Barker
Ann Phillips

Service Delivery Supports Family Priorities

Service Delivery supports Family Priorities such that early interventionists address IFSP outcomes using intervention strategies where both the child and family are actively engaged and focused on familiar, everyday routines and activities.

Marc Garnier (co-chair)

Shanida Mathieu (co-chair)

April Hearron
Monica Dowden
Penny Thibodaux
Tedra Landreaux
Rebecca Walker
Annette Fruge'
Dianne Pitts
Torrie Keller
Nicole Meyers
Sonya Heisser
Valencia Allen
Donna Talley
Jill Broussard



EarlySteps is a federal program that provides a comprehensive system of coordinated early intervention supports and services to families of infants and toddlers with disabilities. The requirements for the program are outlined in the legislation of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, otherwise known as IDEA. Early Steps is an interagency effort administered through the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) in conjunction with LA-SICC.

EarlySteps provides services to families with infants and toddlers aged birth to three years (36 months) who have a medical condition likely to result in a developmental delay, or who have developmental delays. Children with delays in cognitive, motor, vision, hearing, communication, social-emotional or adaptive development may be eligible for services. EarlySteps services are designed to improve the family's capacity to enhance their child's development. These services are provided in the child's natural environment, such as the child's home, child care or any other community setting typical for children aged birth to 3 years (36 months).

Experience has shown that families with young children with special needs frequently require a range of services which cannot be provided entirely by a single agency. Intervening with coordinated health, social, and educational services during the first three years of life increases developmental and educational gains for the child, improves family function, and reduces the costs of special care later in life. For more EarlySteps information, go to: <http://www.ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/139>

EarlySteps Regional Offices

Nine regional coordinators are responsible for training, technical assistance, provider and referral source outreach, providing leadership at the regional level to support the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), enrollment, and handling problems and complaints, etc. Regional coordinators are housed in LDH Human Services District/Authority offices, OCDD regional resource center offices, or in other state agency offices.

Each Region within the state has an Interagency Coordinating Council (RICC). The regional coordinators are responsible for coordinating the RICC activities and meetings with regional providers, families, and other stakeholders. The RICC's are a major communication source at the local/regional level for EarlySteps information and early childhood activities in general. Parents, guardians, caregivers, providers, stakeholders, and all interested parties are encouraged to attend RICC meetings to stay current with the latest information and provide valuable feedback.

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Leadership Conference 2019

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) held its annual conference on July 21st through July 24th in Arlington, VA. Sunday, July 21st was a day filled with pre-conference information and engagement activities for State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) Chairs, Members, and Staff. Topics covered during the pre-conference ranged from federal content of state ICCs to strategic planning and parent leadership and engagement, to name a few. For preconference, there was SICC representation from 21 U.S. States and territories.

Louisiana State Interagency Coordinating Council 2019 Recommendations

Date:

To: Louisiana Department of Education

From: State Interagency Coordinating Council for Early Steps

Title

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) Recommendations to the Louisiana Department of Education, February 2019.

Recommendation

The SICC recommended that a letter be sent to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) Superintendent of Education, John White, to request that the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission consider the inclusion of infants and toddlers with disabilities and the early childhood gaps that affect this population in their efforts to enhance the quality of early childhood education in communities across the state.

The recommendation was approved by the SICC and the actions went forth to the Louisiana Department of Education.



**Statewide Independent Living Council
(SILC)**

Statewide Independent Living Council

The Louisiana Statewide Independent Living Council is a Governor appointed council established to develop and monitor the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). This responsibility is held jointly with the Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Mandated under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1992, the governing body of the LASILC is composed of twenty-two (22) individuals, seventeen voting members appointed by the Governor of Louisiana based on recommendations provided by the Council after a nominations and review process, and five ex-officio, non-voting members representing various state agencies which are also appointed by the Governor. A majority of the Council members are individuals with disabilities who are not employed by any state agency or a Center for Independent Living. Funding for the LASILC is federal from the Administration of Community Living (ACL) provided by Title I and Title VII, Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act. LRS is a pass-through entity, applying for and distributing the funds. All policies governing the activities and operations of the LASILC are made by the Council.



VISION STATEMENT: “The Louisiana Statewide Independent Living Council envisions a fully inclusive Louisiana; where all of its citizens, including those with disabilities, have the resources and opportunities to live, work and thrive in their integrated communities.”

MISSION STATEMENT: “The mission of Louisiana’s Independent Living program(s) is to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, facilitating integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society. Louisiana’s IL Partners promote a philosophy of Independent Living, including: consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy.”

PURPOSE STATEMENT: “The purpose of the Council is to promote a philosophy of independent living, including a philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy.

Statewide Independent Living Council Members



Danny Cottonham
Chairperson



Rashad Bristo
Vice-Chairperson



Steven Nguyen
Member-At-Large



Antoinette Harrell
Secretary



Sharron Hennessey
Treasurer



Jessica Lewis
Executive Director

Statewide Independent Living Council Members Cont.



Jamie Duplechine
Self-Advocate



Mitch Granger
Representative of
Southwest Louisiana
Independent Living
Center



Rocky Fuseller
Representative of
Southwest Louisiana
Independent Living
Center



Daryn Broussard
Self-Advocate



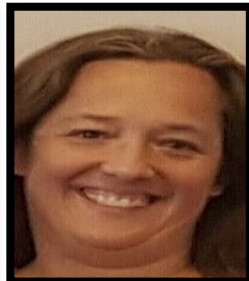
Roszella Viltz
Representative of
Insight Guidance
Group



Sharron Geddes
Self-Advocate



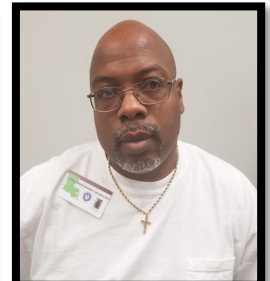
Jay Cochran
Representative of
New Horizons Living
Center



Jill Egle
Self-Advocate



Anita Gray
Self-Advocate



Erick Taylor
Parent-Advocate



Michelle Guillory
Representative of the
Governor's Office of
Elderly Affairs



Kandy Baker
Representative of the
Louisiana
Rehabilitation
Services



Rosemary Morales
Representative of the
Office for Citizens with
Developmental
Disabilities



Bambi Polotzola
Representative of the
Governor's Office of
Disability Affairs



Jamie Ainsworth
Representative of the
Department of
Transportation and
Development

SILC Activities in 2019

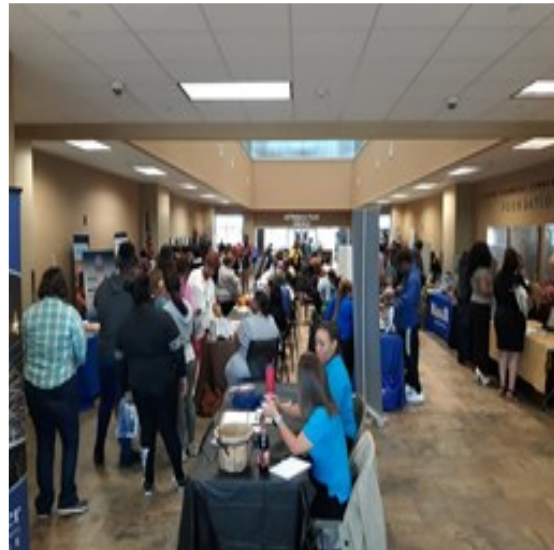
In 2019, the members of SILC participated in various initiatives that promoted a philosophy of independent living and the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society.

During the 2019 Regular Legislative Session, SILC advocated for the creation of a Commission to represent the interest of the Aging and Adult population in Louisiana, to fully fund TEFRA, the State Personal Assistance Services (SPAS) program to serve all individuals on the waiting list, and for the favorable passage of HB 199, HB 390, and HB 237.

SILC established partnerships with the Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network (LATAN), and the Office of Aging and Adult Services by participating on their respective councils.

The SILC has devoted its advocacy efforts to improve the availability of accessible and affordable housing in Louisiana participating in the Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs' (GACDA) Committee on Housing.

Statewide Independent Living Council Inclusion Job & Resource Fair



The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) hosted a series of Inclusion Job and Resource Fairs in October throughout the state. October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). The SILC encourages all interested parties to find out more about possible career opportunities and resources available to the community by with interfacing over 40 vendors.

The job fairs took place in various locations throughout the state including Lake Charles, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Monroe, Shreveport, Pineville, Hammond, New Orleans, Shriver, and Metairie. These job and resource fairs provided valuable information regarding employment and other important resources for individuals with disabilities and reached over 500 job seekers. This event was sponsored by the Statewide Independent Living Council and Healthy Blue.

National Council on Independent Living Conference



The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) participated in the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) conference in Washington D.C July 21st- July 26th. The members of the SILC also participated in the ADA march to Capitol Hill on July 23, 2019 to spread awareness of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The participating members of SILC joined hundreds of advocates from all across the country to participate in this important event. After the march, the members of the SILC visited the offices of some of Louisiana Senators and Representatives and spoke with their staff. The members of the SILC met with U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy to discuss concerns regarding independent living.

SILC GALA



The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) hosted its first Inclusion Gala on August 10, 2019 in Lafayette, Louisiana. Humana and United Healthcare sponsored the event.

The SILC's Inclusion Gala was created to create awareness of the importance of inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of today's society, and to recognize individuals and organizations whose contributions helped the independent living movement.

The following individuals were recognized:

- SILC Distinguish Servant Award – Gale Dean
- SILC Outstanding Advocate Award- Jamie Duplechine and Sharron Hennessey
- SILC Community Service Award- Antoinette Harrell and Rashad Bristo
- SILC Memorial Recognition Award – Kris “Biscuit” Herbert and Rev. Mallery Callahan Sr.
- Outstanding SILC Executive Director- Jessica Lewis

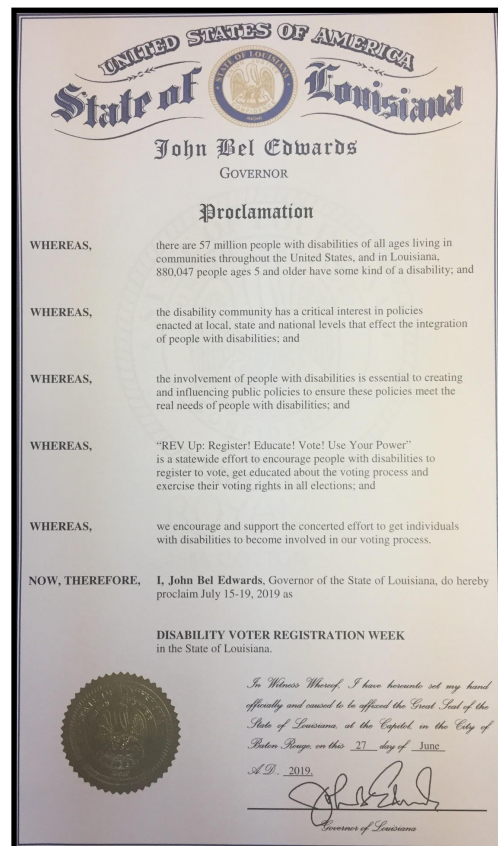
REV UP Campaign for Disability Voter Registration

The [Statewide Independent Living Council](#) (SILC) promoted the REV UP Campaign at various events across the state. The REV UP Campaign is a national initiative implemented to increase the political participation of the disability community. REV UP stands for: Register Educate Vote and Use your Power. SILC used the REV UP Campaign as a platform to discuss: eliminating barriers to voting, promoting accessibility of voting technology and polling places, and promoting voter turnout of individuals with disabilities in future elections. In addition to promoting the REV UP Campaign, SILC educated interested parties about the Centers for Independent Living located throughout the state. CILS are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, non-residential, private, non-profit agencies that are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provide an array of independent living services.

Disability Voter Registration Week in Louisiana

In conjunction with the REV UP Campaign, the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) coordinated Disability Voter Registration Week in Louisiana during the week of July 16-20, 2019.

Disability Voter Registration Week was created to support all efforts to get individuals with disabilities registered to vote, as part of a nonpartisan initiative that coordinates with national, state, and local organizations to increase political participation of the disability community.





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

Employment Initiatives

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs hosted workgroups, roundtables, and other events in collaboration with diverse and varied stakeholders about Employment First, which is an initiative of stakeholders designed to address barriers to employment and improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Due to those efforts, in collaboration with diverse and varied stakeholders, Louisiana was selected to receive Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) as a Vision Quest (VQ) State for the 2018 fiscal year under the [United States Department of Labor's, Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\) Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program \(EFSLMP\)](#). This technical assistance has furthered the efforts to increase competitive, integrated employment outcomes for all individuals with disabilities.

Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program

In 2019, Louisiana was selected again to receive Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) as a Vision Quest (VQ) State as well as a Core State for the 2019 fiscal year under the United States Department of Labor's, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) Provider Visionary Opportunities to Increase Competitive Employment (VOICE).

Louisiana received 100 hours of T/TA to support the state in achieving its goals within the area of Mental Health and Employment. Louisiana received 200 hours of T/TA to support the state in achieving its goals within the area of Provider Transformation and/or Capacity Building.

Furthermore, the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) of Louisiana hosted two regional capacity building sessions to further its objective of providing increased community-based, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The two regions that were selected are:

Region 3 - Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. John, St. Mary, Terrebonne

Region 4 - Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Vermilion.

The regions are a combination of LA Department of Health and LA Workforce Commission regions.

Employment Resource Guide



The Employment First Vision Quest Team, coordinated by the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs , developed the Employment Resource Guide which can be found at www.laworks.net. This guide is useful for people with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who support them in exploring employment and career possibilities. It includes six sections that summarize resources to meet a variety of employment related questions and concerns.

State As A Model Employer Taskforce

The SAME Task Force was delegated responsibility to: develop policies, strategies, and services designed to achieve the employment targets established in the Order; establish a five-year plan with annual goals that will enable the state workforce to reach parity with the percentage of working age people with disabilities in Louisiana, and provide guidance and other support to agencies and institutions of higher education for recruitment, retention, accommodations, and accessibility for persons with disabilities. Each state agency was required to designate a State as Model Employer point of contact and delegated responsibility to develop an individual agency plan to promote hiring, recruitment, and retention.

State As a Model Employer (SAME) Task Force



Kaffie Arvie
Louisiana
Workforce
Commission



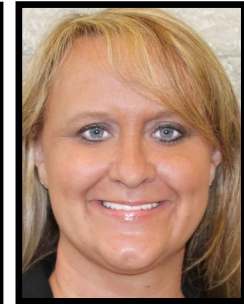
Jeff Arseneaux
Advocate



Taryn Branson
Department of
Children and Fam-
ily Services



Joan Haase
Louisiana State
Civil Service



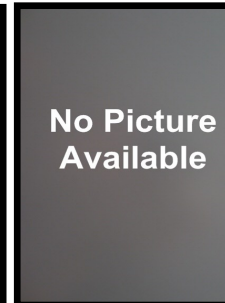
Julie Foster Hagan
Office for Citizens with
Developmental
Disabilities



Susan Killam
Louisiana State
University Human
Development Center



Cindy Rives
Louisiana
Department of
Health



Cheryl Schilling
Division of
Administration



Tanisha Matthews
Louisiana
Department of
Corrections



Lisa Vosper
Louisiana Board of
Regents



Quintin Taylor
Louisiana Community
and Technical College
System



Bambi Polotzola
Governor's Office
of Disability Affairs



Nancy Watkins
Louisiana
Department of Culture,
Recreation
and Tourism



Ken York
Louisiana
Rehabilitation
Services



Aneatra Boykin
Department of
Transportation and
Development

State As a Model Employer (SAME) Agency Designees



Holly Anderson
Coastal Protection and
Restoration Authority



Brenda Bohrer
Louisiana
Rehabilitation
Services



Doug Bordelon
Louisiana Department
of Environmental
Quality



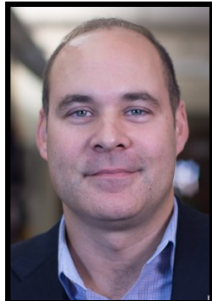
Brandi Conway
Louisiana
Department of
Revenue



Gena Doucet
Louisiana Community
and Technical College
System



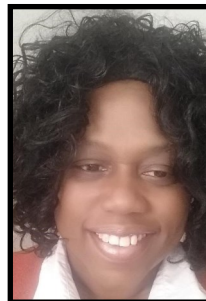
Stacie Evans
Louisiana
Department of
Insurance



Dustin Guy
Louisiana
Department of
Veteran Affairs



Shelly Johnson
Department of
Children and Family
Services



Valerie Joseph
Louisiana State
Employees
Retirement System



Kaya Lambert
Louisiana State Civil
Service



Beverly James
Governor's Office of
Homeland Security
and Emergency
Preparedness



Marcella Jones
Louisiana
Department of Health



Dawn Monk
Louisiana
Department of
Economic
Development



Susan Pellegrin
Department of
Transportation and
Development



Connie Nelson
Office of the Governor



Sandra Schober
Office of the
Attorney General of
Louisiana



Stacie Evans
Office of the
Attorney General of
Louisiana



Jo Ann Beck
Office of the
Lieutenant Governor



Daphne Steward
Louisiana Workforce
Commission

GACDA Community Partners

Governor's Office of Disability Affairs and GACDA collaborates with various community partners in the effort to connect individuals with disabilities with the appropriate and necessary information and resources. Establishing relationships with other groups enables GACDA to build a diverse network of individuals to better serve the disability community.



The **Advocacy Center of Louisiana** (AC) protects, empowers, and advocates for the human and legal rights of people with disabilities and seniors living in Louisiana, in order that they may live an integrated life in the community, free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The AC is the protection and advocacy (P&A) system for Louisiana. There is no charge for AC services. AC provides 6 types of assistance: Information & Referral, Legal Assistance, Investigations of Abuse and Neglect, Outreach & Training, Systems Advocacy, Legislative Information and Education.



The **Arc of Louisiana** advocates with and for all people with intellectual and related developmental disabilities and their families so that they shall live to their fullest potential.

<http://www.thearca.org/>



People First of Louisiana is a self-advocacy group run by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities, where people learn to speak up for themselves about decisions they make. Members can connect with others in their community, across the nation, and around the world and learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. <http://www.peoplefirstla.org>



COMMUNITY PROVIDER ASSOCIATION

The **Community Provider Association** is a member-driven association dedicated to providing leadership and support to agencies serving individuals with disabilities through community-based programs. <http://www.communityprovider.org/>



Louisiana Developmental
Disabilities Council

The **Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council** advocates for a system of services and supports in Louisiana which enable individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, productive and integrated and included in all facets of community life. The Council's mission is to lead and promote advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change to improve the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.



Families Helping Families is a statewide network of ten family-directed and family-staffed regional resource centers which provide information on all types of services, goods, technologies, and activities that improve the quality of life in the community; help individuals understand their rights and how to advocate for themselves; and lend support from someone "who has been there."

<http://www.laddc.org//Initiatives.cfm?aid=6&id=9>



LaCAN advocates for policies and systems that support inclusion everywhere people learn, work, live, and play. LaCAN advocates for service systems that support children and adults with disabilities to live in their own homes and be fully-included and participating members of their local schools and communities. www.lacanadvocates.org

GACDA State Agency Partners



AGING & ADULT SERVICES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/>



We put people to work.



Our Vision

- Working to keep children safe
- Helping individuals and families become self-sufficient
- Providing safe refuges during disasters



DOTD serves the transportation and water resource needs of Louisiana residents, businesses and government partners. We are committed to teamwork, quality, integrity, professionalism, innovation and excellence in serving our customers.



LOUISIANA office of state
FIRE MARSHAL
PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

protecting life and property from
the hazards of **fire** or **explosion**



<http://sfm.dps.louisiana.gov/>

The **Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness** is responsible for coordinating the State's efforts throughout the emergency management cycle to prepare for, prevent where possible, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against to lessen the effects of man-made or natural disasters that threaten our State. The State, through GOHSEP, has a significant responsibility to protect communities, citizens, property, and assets in the event of an emergency or disaster. GOHSEP does that by working with partners from State and Federal agencies; Parish, Tribal and local governments; nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); private nonprofits (PNPs) and other private-sector businesses to achieve its Mission and Vision.

Children's Cabinet

The **Children's Cabinet** serves as the governing body for the State of Louisiana and is responsible for coordinating funding and programmatic services at the state and local level, related to children and their families. It consists of the cabinet secretary of each state department and is chaired by the executive director of the Children's Cabinet, who is appointed by the governor. The mission is to achieve the most effective and efficient use of monetary, human, and organizational resources to lift children and their families out of poverty. The Children's Cabinet Advisory Board provides information and recommendations from the perspective of advocacy groups, service providers and parents on policies and programs relating to Louisiana children.

Children's Cabinet Advisory Board Strategic Goals:

- Advise and assist the Children's Cabinet
- Coordinate agency resources and provide linkages among agencies that serve children and families
- Develop policy, program and budget recommendations to address child and family issues



Louisiana's early intervention system

<http://www.gov.la.gov/page/childrens-cabinet>

The **Louisiana Statewide Interagency Coordinating Council (LA-SICC)** works in collaboration with the Louisiana Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, in an advisory capacity, to design and oversee the implementation of a family-centered, community-based, comprehensive, interagency system for infants and toddlers (birth through two years of age) who are eligible for Early Steps and their families. Our goal is to advise and assist the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), as the Lead Agency, in the monitoring and evaluation of this system to ensure that families are supported and the potential of each child is maximized.

<http://www.gov.la.gov/page/childrens-cabinet>

Louisiana Association of Special Education Administrators



LATAN assists individuals with disabilities to achieve enhanced quality of life and greater independence through access to Assistive Technology (AT). LATAN serves Louisiana citizens of all ages with all types of disabilities and those with limitations due to aging who need AT. AT includes items that individuals use to assist them in daily activities, such as canes, wheelchairs, communication devices, hearing aids, keyboard alternatives, learning software, and vision aids. LATAN envisions a future in Louisiana in which individuals who use AT can achieve greater



The **Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs** serves as a focal point for Louisiana's senior citizens and administers a broad range of home and community based services through a network of Area Agencies on Aging. GOEA has developed an extensive network of agencies recognized as the Aging Service Network. This network consists of the 64 Parish Councils on Aging (COA), 36 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), 139 Senior Centers, University Centers, Advocacy and Service Organizations, the Senior Corps (Foster Grandparents, Senior Companion, Retired Senior Volunteer Program), and the state Senior Employment Program (Title V).

Women's Policy and Research Commission

The **Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission** exists to:

- Research and collect facts and statistics about the wellbeing of women.
- Make special studies of conditions pertaining to the employment, health, safety and financial status of women in the state of Louisiana.

Louisiana.gov > LDH > Office of the Secretary

Louisiana Commission for the Deaf

The **Louisiana Commission for the Deaf** provides accessibility services for persons who are Deaf, deaf-blind, or have hearing loss or speech impairment to gain equal access to any public or private service. Accessibility services include, but are not limited to: Interpreting, Document Interpretation, Telecommunication Interpretation, Telecommunications and general accessibility equipment, Hearing Aids, Information and referral, Advocacy, Consumer Training, and Public Service Announcements. Each year over 20,000 residents benefit directly from services contracted for by the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD). LCD has eight (8) community-based Regional Service Centers who ensure accessibility is provided to all consumers.

<http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/318>

Workforce Development > Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC)

The **Louisiana Rehabilitation Council** listens to the concerns of those with disability issues, reviews, analyzes and evaluates the state rehabilitation program, collaborates with other state agencies, organizations, and consumer groups. The LRC consults with and advises LRS on the performance of its responsibilities under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, particularly in the areas related to eligibility, extent, and scope of services provided.

http://www.laworks.net/workforcedev/lrs/lrs_lrc.asp

The mission of Louisiana's Independent Living program(s) is to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, facilitating integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society. Louisiana's Independent Living Partners promote a philosophy of Independent Living, including: consumer control, peer support, self help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy.