

**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 18-08**

STATE AS MODEL EMPLOYER TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana is committed to developing and maintaining a high performing public workforce that provides access, meaningful services, and improved outcomes for all citizens and reflects the rich diversity of the citizens of this great state. In order to achieve this goal, state leaders must be able to apply diverse perspectives and experiences to the development of responsive solutions to the issues facing the state. Such diversity enhances the fullness of our understanding of these issues and opens opportunities for the consideration of new and better solutions;

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana is eager to emerge as a national leader in the recognition and protection of civil rights for people with disabilities;

WHEREAS, according to the 2017 Annual Disabilities Statistics Compendium 30% of people with disabilities in Louisiana live in poverty, compared to 16% of people without a disability;

WHEREAS, only 33% of people with disabilities are in the workforce compared to 72% of individuals without disabilities, research indicates that the level of employment, the quality of jobs, and the degree of the access to those jobs are crucial determinants of poverty reduction;

WHEREAS, the economic impact of unemployment and pay disparities between people with disabilities and those without, result in forgone state tax revenue while increasing job opportunities for people with disabilities saves the federal and state government money by reducing dependency on cash and medical and disability benefits;

WHEREAS, the state has a vested interest in reducing discrimination against people living with a disability, eliminating barriers to meaningful employment, and attracting the highest quality candidates into state employment opportunities;

WHEREAS, when the workforce that directs and provides essential services to residents of the state reflects the diversity of the population, those services are more likely to be responsive to and respectful of that diversity;

WHEREAS, to be competitive in the global economy, the State of Louisiana must use the talents and important contributions of all workers, including individuals with disabilities;

WHEREAS, progress towards serving and employing people with disabilities requires both the commitment and participation of executive leaders throughout state government; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's state government should serve as a model employer for business by a commitment to improved hiring, recruitment, and retention of individuals with disabilities, with the goal that seven percent of the state work force is comprised of persons living with a disability.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN BEL EDWARDS, Governor of the state of Louisiana, by virtue of the power vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the state of Louisiana do, effective immediately, hereby order and direct as follows:

SECTION 1: The State as a Model Employer Task Force (hereafter "Task Force") is hereby established within the executive department, Office of the Governor, Office of Disability Affairs.

SECTION 2: The duties of the Task Force shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Develop policies, strategies, and services designed to achieve the employment targets established in this Order;
- B. 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
- C. Provide guidance and other support to agencies and institutions of higher education on recruitment, retention, accommodation, and accessibility for persons with disabilities.

SECTION 3: By August 1, 2018, the Task Force shall submit a comprehensive report to the Governor on the issues set forth in Section 2 of this Order.

SECTION 4: The Task Force shall be composed of a maximum of fifteen (15) members appointed by the Governor from leadership of state agencies and subject matter experts. The chair of the Task Force shall be appointed by the Governor from the membership of the Task Force. All other officers, if any, shall be elected by the Task Force from its membership.

SECTION 5: The head of each state agency that reports to the Governor shall be responsible for executing the following:

- A. Designate a staff person within 30 days of this order who will be responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of effective strategies to attract, engage, and advance people with disabilities;
- B. Implement strategies for employment of people with the most significant disabilities, including utilizing the state's supported employment program, customized employment strategies, and civil service testing exemptions, when appropriate and in accordance with standards established by the Department of Civil Service;
- C. Increase awareness of the state's disability employment supports and services and utilize the resources, services, and funding available through Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and Louisiana Workforce Commission to provide opportunities for work based learning experiences, internships and trainings to high school and college students with disabilities including youth with significant disabilities;
- D. Ensure continued development and implementation of policies, strategies, and services to ensure successful implementation of this Order; and
- E. Submit a plan by October 31, 2018, and annually thereafter, to the Task Force that describes the strategies and policies adopted to meet the goals of this Order, and specifically addresses progress and outcomes in responsibilities detailed in items A, B, and C of this Section.

SECTION 6: Task Force members shall not receive additional compensation or a per diem from the Office of the Governor for serving on the Task Force.

A Task Force member who is an employee or an elected public official of the State of Louisiana or a political subdivision thereof may seek reimbursement of travel expenses, in accordance with PPM 49, from his or her employing and/or elected department, agency and/or office.

SECTION 7: Support staff, facilities, and resources for the Task Force shall be provided by the Office of the Governor, Office of Disability Affairs.

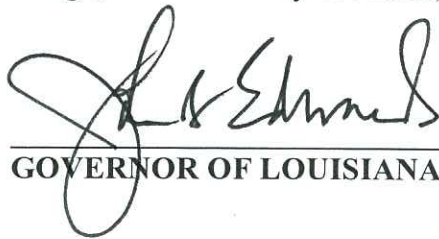
SECTION 8: This order shall not be construed to require any state employee to disclose disability status involuntarily. This order shall not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the state of Louisiana, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

SECTION 9: All departments, commissions, boards, offices, entities, agencies, and officers of the State of Louisiana, or any political subdivision thereof, are authorized and directed to cooperate with the Task Force in implementing the provisions of this Order.

SECTION 10: This Order is effective upon signature and shall continue in effect until amended, modified, terminated or rescinded by the Governor, or terminated by operation of law.

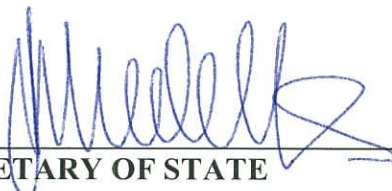


IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Louisiana, at the Capitol, in the City of Baton Rouge, on this 19th day of March, 2018.



GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA

**ATTEST BY THE
SECRETARY OF STATE**



SECRETARY OF STATE