

State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



JOEY STRICKLAND
SECRETARY

Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs

Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs State as a Model Employer (SAME) Plan - 2021

On March 19, 2018, Governor John Bel Edwards issued Executive Order JBE 18-08 State as a Model Employer (SAME) Task Force. Through this Executive Order, the State of Louisiana is committed to developing and maintaining a high performing public workforce that reflects the rich diversity of its citizens. This includes 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.

The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA) joins Governor John Bel Edwards in serving 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.

In accordance with the Executive Order, LDVA created a plan to describe the strategies and policies adopted to meet the goals and initiatives to recruit and retain the best employees for the State of Louisiana, including those with disabilities. LDVA remains steadfast in achieving its original initiatives described in the agency's 2018 plan.

2021 LDVA Initiative to Increase the Employment of People with Disabilities

- A. Sycondria Wilson, Human Resources Manager, was designated as the staff person responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of effective strategies to attract, engage, and advance people with disabilities.
 - Ms. Wilson will continue to work with LDVA staff and other state agencies to identify and establish procedures to achieve the agency's initiatives.
- B. LDVA included notices in recruitment material and job postings that LDVA is an "Equal Opportunity Employer" and "State as a Model Employer" to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
 - The Human Resources departments agency wide (which includes 5 nursing homes and the central office) will continue to include these notices in all recruitment materials and job posts.
- C. LDVA established and maintained monthly contact with the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) designated Point of Contact (Brenda Bohrer) to

identify resources and services that may assist LDVA in recruitment efforts targeting people with disabilities. LDVA provided information regarding job opportunities to LRS who will help to identify applicants who may be well-suited for identified vacancies. LDVA Human Resources worked with Civil Service and hiring managers in an effort to qualify the individuals for vacancies and to provide interview opportunities.

- LDVA will continue to use LRS as a resource for recruiting people with disabilities and provide vacancy notifications to Brenda Bohrer.
- D. LDVA was unsuccessful in its attempts to identify and attend one or more recruitment events targeting individuals with disabilities in order to network and to inform attendees of job opportunities at LDVA.
 - The agency will focus specifically on this initiative in 2021.
- E. LDVA was unsuccessful in identifying and meeting with contacts at secondary education institutions to identify ways to increase recruitment contacts with students with disabilities through tools such as student positions, internships, etc. to identify work experiences in which these students can participate.
 - The agency will focus specifically on this initiative in 2021.
- F. LDVA provided training to some of its employees regarding disability awareness and disability etiquette. The agency did not receive 100% participation from employees.
 - The agency will mandate these training courses in 2021 for all employees to achieve this initiative in 2021.

LDVA will continue to develop and implement strategies throughout the plan year to ensure successful implementation and recognition as being a State as a Model Employer for people with disabilities.



State as a Model (SAME) Five-Year Agency Plan 2020 - 2025

PURPOSE

The State of Louisiana has a vested interest in reducing discrimination against people living with a disability, eliminating barriers to meaningful employment and attracting the highest candidates into state employment opportunities. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) serves as a model employer for business by a commitment to improve hiring, recruitment and retention of individuals with disabilities, with the goal that 7% of the state work force be comprised of persons living with a disability.

AGENCY PLAN

LDWF is committed to providing a work environment that values diversity and inclusion among all employees, as well as offering equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age, veteran status, disability or other non-merit criteria.

All LDWF employees are expected to treat every individual in a courteous and respectful manner, and to make employment decisions that are in the best interest of the agency and the citizens of Louisiana. This includes recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting individuals with disabilities who are capable of performing the essential duties of a position either with or without accommodations.

To accomplish these goals, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Human Resources Director will serve as the agency point of contact.
2. The agency will maintain a relationship with the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services' (LRS) point of contact on the SAME Task Force. Through this partnership, the agency will relay information on available positions at LDWF and ascertain the availability of potential candidates at LRS.
3. LDWF will include the following statement in all job postings for the agency:

"The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is a State As a Model Employer (SAME) agency that supports the recruitment, hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities."
4. An LDWF representative will strive to attend recruitment events targeting individuals with disabilities throughout the year.

5. LDWF will identify and meet with contacts at secondary education institutions to identify ways to increase recruitment contact with students with disabilities through tools such as student positions, internships, and job boards.
6. The Human Resources Director will review, update and submit this plan to the SAME Task Force by October 31 of every year.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

LDWF is dedicated to providing training initiatives to all employees in regards to hiring, retaining, and working with individuals with disabilities. These training initiatives include but are not limited to:

- a. Provide training for all employees regarding disability awareness and disability etiquette with additional training for supervisors and Human Resources pertaining to workplace accommodations, workplace rights, and interviewing people with disabilities.
- b. Human Resources will publicize free training and educational materials regarding the right to reasonable accommodations in the workplace for individuals with disabilities as available.
- c. Human Resources and the General Counsel will serve as a resource regarding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations, workplace etiquette, identifying potential discrimination or harassment, etc.

FOLLOW-UP

Human Resources will continue to develop and implement strategies throughout the plan year to ensure that State Civil Service remains a leader in the SAME initiative for individuals with disabilities.

The SAME Agency plan will be posted on the Intranet and accessible to all LDWF employees.

LDWF reserves the right to revise and customize components of this 5 Year Plan. Revisions will be submitted to the SAME Task Force.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries		2020 Employees= 324	759	2019 Employees= 141	781	2018 Employees= 352	864
Participants		324	42.7%	141	18.1%	352	40.7%
Yes - Disability		50	6.6%	24	3.1%	40	4.6%
Physical		10	1.3%	4	0.5%	5	0.6%
Intellectual		3	0.4%	1	0.1%	2	0.2%
Behavioral		14	1.8%	10	1.3%	16	1.9%
Sensory		4	0.5%	1	0.1%	7	0.8%
Disease		26	3.4%	12	1.5%	10	1.2%
doesn't want to report type		3	0.4%	2	0.3%	7	0.8%
No - Disability		259	34.1%	116	14.9%	299	34.6%
Does not want to disclose		15	2.0%	1	0.1%	13	1.5%
SSDI yes		8	1.1%	6	0.8%		
SSDI no		26	3.4%	12	1.5%		
SSDI unsure		16	2.1%	6	0.8%		
affects work A Great Deal		0	0.0%	1	0.1%		
affects work A Lot		3	0.4%	2	0.3%		
affects work Moderately		13	1.7%	5	0.6%		
affects work A Little		22	2.9%	12	1.5%		
affects work None At All		12	1.6%	4	0.5%		
affects life A Great Deal		3	0.4%				
affects life A Lot		4	0.5%				
affects life Moderately		13	1.7%				
affects life A Little		21	2.8%				
affects life None At All		9	1.2%				

