

APSE Louisiana Employment News



APSE

Volume 1, Issue 1



LA APSE and LSUHSC training survey results

JOB DEVELOPMENT and SYSTEMATIC TEACHING SKILLS *top the list of training needs*



In July Louisiana APSE in collaboration with LSU's Human Development Center conducted an anonymous online training needs survey with employment providers throughout the state of Louisiana. The survey was distributed to 55 employment providers, 11 advocacy groups and numerous state agency personnel such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Office of Citizens with Developmen-

tal Disabilities, and the Office of Mental Health. Fifty-six individuals completed the survey stating their top three challenges in delivering employment services across the various phases of employment support services.

The survey was developed through Survey Monkey and included 15 questions. The first question asked information about the respondent e.g., what employment experience they had and what position they held. The balance of the questions related to the respondent's employment practices and challenges and were developed by Louisiana APSE and the Human Development Center. After the topics were identified, a

pilot survey was conducted with APSE members and a random sample of employment providers. In this pilot survey, questions 2 - 14 were open-ended, meaning that the respondents had to list their most commonly faced issue or challenge. In the final survey, a menu of answers was developed for each question from the pilot survey. This menu of possible responses represented the most frequent answers recorded in the pilot survey e.g. the top six answers or those answers that represented 75% of the answers recorded.

The chart included on page 4 outlines the top three issues or challenges listed by the

(Continued on page 4)

Special Points of Interest

- TRAINING SURVEY SETS APSE'S TRAINING AGENDA
- LEARN ABOUT APSE'S NEW INITIATIVE—HR CONNECT
- INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE MAY INDICATE A NEED FOR BENEFITS PLANNING
- RESOURCE PAGES - CWIC CHART AND WISE/JOB FAIR SCHEDULE.

Louisiana represented at National APSE

APSE's national conference **Employment for ALL: A Celebration in the City of Festivals!** was held in Milwaukee Wisconsin June 30th – July 2nd. New to this year's conference was APSE's first conference sponsored "Community Conversation". These conference Community Conversations brought individuals interested in inclusive communities together to explore common values and potential actions around employment leadership. The gatherings were a great opportunity for partici-

pants to brainstorm and plan for the future.

Louisiana members in attendance at this year's conference were, LA APSE President, Jennifer Hebert, APSE regional delegate, Sue Kilam, LA APSE Treasurer and National APSE board member, Patty Ghiossi, along with members, David Legendre, Brian Oubre, Deborah, Louie and Nicole Macalusa. This conference hosted over 85 breakout sessions, and numerous facilitated discussions on important national employ-

ment issues and initiatives. Attending this event offered Louisiana participants the opportunity to network with community leaders across the nation.

Next year's APSE conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia. All individuals in Louisiana interested in employment are encouraged attend this great conference!

SAVE the DATE
June 8-10, 2010
Atlanta!

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OCDD to offer Webinars

The Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities is working with the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) to offer Louisiana-specific employment webinars beginning in the fall of 2009.

OCDD joined the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) in 2007. The SELN is a cross-state cooperative venture of state mental retardation and developmental disability (MR/DD) agencies that are committed to improving employment outcomes for adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities. Other member states include Michigan, Washington, Oregon,

Nevada, California, New Mexico, Texas, Missouri, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut and the District of Columbia.

The SELN helps state systems enhance their capacity to develop, implement, and support effective integrated employment initiatives designed to improve employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities. SELN is a joint program of the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI at University Boston, MA) and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS).

Proposed topics for the employment webinars include:

- 1) Importance of employment,
- 2) Person-centered Plans, Relationships and Networks,
- 3) Transitioning to Community Employment and
- 4) Finding and Creating Jobs.

Providers will be notified as soon as the Webinar schedule is developed.

For more information about SELN and the exciting work of its membership, visit www.selnmembers.org



“BUILDS LONG LASTING, SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOUISIANA’S CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES. “

Louisiana Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Comprehensive Employment Initiative

Louisiana Medicaid Infrastructure Grant applied for a Comprehensive Employment Systems grant in July.

Louisiana has received Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) funding from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) since 2001. Through 2009, Louisiana has been a basic MIG state to build internal Medicaid infrastructure and develop a Medicaid buy-in program, the Louisiana Medicaid Purchase Plan. In July 2009, Louisiana applied for a Comprehensive Employment Systems Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (CES/MIG) to build a comprehensive approach to removing employment barriers for individuals with disabilities in Louisiana. This CES/MIG, if awarded, will

form linkages between Medicaid services and other non-Medicaid programs. The infrastructure development included in this grant will continue to support the MIG’s

goal of removing barriers to employment and create lasting improvements by expanding the capacity of the State to support individuals with disabilities who wish to work. A comprehensive approach to services and supports is needed because while SSDI, SSI, Medicare and Medicaid all contain valuable work incentive provisions that can extend cash benefits and medical coverage; such incentives are under-utilized and, very often, poorly understood by both beneficiaries and professionals. Further, most programs work independently of one another.

The major objectives of this grant application are to develop a comprehensive employment system that:

- Maximizes employment for people with disabilities;
- Protects and enhances workers healthcare, other

benefits, and needed employment supports; and,

- Builds long lasting, sustainable infrastructure to support meaningful employment opportunities for Louisiana’s citizens with disabilities.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Louisiana MIG will need to involve a significant number of programs, services, and agencies working in partnership with the common goal of a comprehensive approach that supports the individual with a disability who wants to work.

It is anticipated that award determination will be made sometime late fall with project activities starting as early as January 2010.

Adapted from: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/TWWIA/Downloads/2009migContinuationSolicitation.pdf>



National APSE - Launches new initiative HR Connect

APSE national is excited to announce the creation of **APSE HR Connect**. HR Connect will offer consultation services to help businesses reach out to and partner with one of the strongest labor & customer pools in the country - The Disability Community. James Emmett states "HR Connect is designed to help the business community develop strategic outreaches to the disability community. We provide consultations to businesses and corporations to help them develop: recruiting, hiring and training strategies and to bring on and to work with people with disabilities."

This is an exciting addition to APSE's efforts. Below are a

few excerpts from APSE's interview with James Emmitt, program director:

APSE: How do you see HR Connect's role in the APSE Mission of advancing equitable employment for people with disabilities?

James Emmett: "I think for so long in the supported employment and vocational rehab world, we have not done enough to offer our services which are incredibly valuable through supported employment to the business community. I can see HR Connect having a huge impact as the model on how we help businesses demonstrate the bottom

line value of supported employment. That will open up many jobs and turn many companies in actively recruiting people in the disability community where in the past they might have shut their doors to people with significant disabilities."

APSE: How can APSE members become involved in HR Connect?

James Emmett: "APSE members can contact me, if they want to become involved in HR Connect and talk about specific interests and working together to strategically approach any type of business."



Providing consultation to businesses and corporations

For more information about HR Connect - <http://www.apse.org/business/index.cfm>

or email

James Emmitt at james@apse.org

Louisiana WIPA & MIG sponsored training events Pathways to Employment

This summer the Louisiana Medicaid Infrastructure Grant supported three 2-day training events through the Louisiana Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Coalition. The training events were developed for providers of employment services, service coordinators and others interested in becoming an employment network or supporting employment for individuals with disabilities. The training events were well received by those in attendance - "I've been through several informational meetings on the Ticket to Work but this one helped me understand how all of the programs worked together." - is just one of the many positive comments about the training. These two-day trainings were facilitated by Health and Dis-

ability Advocates, Chicago, IL and focused on the following four training objectives.

- Overview of the Ticket to Work Program including its payment system and the responsibilities of an Employment Network e.g., helping agencies determine how best they could use the Ticket,
- Explanation of how income from employment impacts continued eligibility for Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income, Medicare and Medicaid and where Medicaid Buy-In Program may be needed,
- Assisted participants to gain a "conversational knowledge" of Social Security Administration work incentives in order to foster important discussions with beneficiaries on the impact of employment on bene-

fits and submit appropriate referrals to the Louisiana WIPA,

- Explanation of the Social Security Administration (SSA)-funded supports and resources available, including WIPA, Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS), Area Work Incentive Coordinator (AWIC) and Work Incentive Liaisons (WILs), so that staff could utilize these supports & resources to obtain better, sustained employment outcomes SSA beneficiaries.

The trainings were held in



"This training should be mandatory for anyone working with people with disabilities. If everyone understood this information, more people would be working today."

three locations, Hammond, Ruston and Lake Charles. 48 individuals attended these small group training sessions. Efforts are currently underway to continue these training opportunities and to offer strategies for implementing the information learned. As one participant stated "This training should be mandatory for anyone working with people with disabilities. If everyone understood this information, more people would be working today."



APSE Louisiana Employment News

Survey Results - Top Barriers or Challenges

	Challenges faced	Number 1 Issue/challenge	Number 2 Issue/Challenge	Number 3 Issue/challenge
2	In completing Assessments	Job Seeker has undeveloped interests of talents	Job Seeker has no work experience	Lack of file information or incorrect file information available
3	In Job Development	Transportation	Lack of employment opportunities	Family expectations – too high or too low
4	In assisting employees Learn their jobs	Getting the job seeker to cooperate/ follow-through	Supported employee doesn't want help or staff's presence on the job site	Time Constraints – not enough time to do the job effectively
5	Creating/developing Natural Supports	Co-workers lack of understanding about disabilities or Co-workers' attitudes	Staff's lack of understanding about natural supports	Developing jobs in companies with little or no natural support potential
6	Working with Employers or Co-workers	Supported individual has challenging behaviors that make relationships difficult	Learning how to network with all levels of staff/ supervision	Assisting Co-workers support the supported employee effectively
7	Measuring Employee Satisfaction	Communication issues with job seeker and/or employer	Difficult to measure satisfaction, varies with each individual	Supported Employees tell us what we want to hear , not what they think
8	Assisting with SSA Benefits & Finances	Job Seeker's family lack of understanding about work incentives	Staff lacks understanding about work incentives	Family gives poor information/won't cooperate
9	Most frequently used Assistive Technology/ adaptations/Strategies	Checklists, notepads Lists	Pictures or Icons	Audio prompts, clocks, recorders
1 2	Source of Job Leads	Personal contacts, friends, colleagues	Current or past employers'	Internet postings, searches
1 3	Where you go to get Technical Assistance, help	My Program's staff, co-workers	Agencies such as LRS, OCDD etc.	Internet resources
1 4	Assisting individual with Benefit Planning	Job Seeker or Family lacks information or understanding about work incentives	Job seekers reluctant to participate because of previous bad experiences	Staff lack information or understanding about work incentives
1 5	Top Staff training needs	Job Development	Systematic Skills instructions	Creating natural supports



Survey Results - Top Barriers or Challenges

(Continued from page 1)

employment service system respondents in the survey. Answers were weighted by assigning 3 points to the number top challenge, 2 points for the second most important challenge, and 1 point for the third most important challenge.

In addition to the above questions, respondents were asked to identify the percent-

age employment sites with formal job analyses or task analyses as well as the percentage of employment positions developed that required modifications in job descriptions, work schedules or routines. The table below represents the top two answers to these questions

The purpose of this survey was to identify common supported employment practices,

and determine the biggest challenges employment providers face in delivering employment services.

Louisiana APSE will use this information to design future regional workshops for employment providers in Louisiana. For more information about this survey and to receive a copy of the survey report, email your request to ApseLouisiana@gmail.com

“BIGGEST BARRIER TO DEVELOPING APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENTS IS THAT THE JOB SEEKER HAS UNDEVELOPED INTERESTS OR TALENTS AND JOB SEEKER HAS NO WORK EXPERIENCE.

Job or Task Analyses	Top Answer	Second Answer
Job Analyses written per position	None of positions (37.2%)	1 – 20% of positions (34.9%)
Task Analyses written per position	None of positions (39.0%)	1 – 20% of positions (39.0%)
Modifications in Position	Top Answer	Second Answer
Modifications in Job Descriptions	1 – 20% of the positions (30.2%)	21 – 40% of positions (23.3%)
Modifications in Work Schedule	1 – 20% of the positions (38.1%)	21 – 40% of positions (19.0%)
Modifications in Routines	1 – 20% of the positions (37.2%)	21 – 40% of positions (20.9%)



Benefits Planning may be needed due to Minimum Wage increase

Effective July 24, 2009, the federal minimum wage increased to \$7.25 per hour. This change reflects the third and final federal minimum wage increase as amended under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The adjacent chart outlines the affect this may have on individuals working and Substantial Gainful Activity (2009 SGA is \$980.00). It is important for providers to take a pro-active stance and meet with benefit’s planners. Individuals working should enjoy this increase in wage without losing needed benefits. Providers are urged to contact LA WIPA immediately if individuals they support may be negatively affected by this wage increase.

A referral to LA WIPA can be made by calling 1-888-942-8104 or by completing a referral form online at www.work-pays.org.

Minimum wage increase to \$ 7.25						
Hrs / wk	Weekly Pay	Pay periods per month		Bi-weekly pay	Pay periods per month	
		4	5		2	3
20	\$ 145.00	\$580.00	\$725.00	\$290.00	\$580.00	\$870.00
25	\$ 181.25	\$725.00	\$906.25	\$362.50	\$725.00	\$1,087.50
30	\$ 217.50	\$870.00	\$1087.50	\$435.00	\$870.00	\$1,305.00
40	\$ 290.00	\$1,160.00	\$1,450.00	\$580.00	\$1,160.00	\$1,740.00

You may also email referral forms to David Gallegos at dgallegos@advocacyla.org or print and fax to: 504-522-5507



Louisiana Rehabilitation Services & Medicaid Infrastructure Grant is sponsoring

OCTOBER 2009 LOUISIANA JOB FAIRS **for persons with disAbilities**

Are you thinking about work?

Do you want to learn how work will affect your Social Security Benefits?

If you are interested in learning about the Ticket to Work Program or other Work Incentives, you can attend a FREE Work Incentive Seminar Event (WISE) at the 2009 Louisiana Job Fair in your area. WISE events are community events held by local organizations for beneficiaries to learn more about available work incentives through accessible, informal, learning opportunities.

<p>BATON ROUGE Thursday, October 22, 2009 Doors open to public 9:00 am till 2:00pm Louisiana Technical College 3250 N. Acadian Thruway East Baton Rouge, LA 70805</p>	<p>SLIDELL Thursday, October 1, 2009 Doors open to public 9:00 am till 12:00 pm Knights of Columbus #2732 1578 W. Hall Ave. Slidell, LA. 70458</p>
<p>LAFAYETTE Wednesday, October 21, 2009 Doors open to public 9:00 am till 12:00 pm Heymann Performing Arts Center 1373 S. College Road Lafayette, LA 70503-290</p>	<p>LAKE CHARLES Wednesday, October 7, 2009 Doors open to public 9:00 am till 12:00 pm Business and Career Solutions Center 4250 5th Ave. Lake Charles, LA 70607</p>
<p>METAIRIE Tuesday, October 20, 2009 Doors open to public 9:00 am till 12:00 pm Eastbank Regional Library 4747 W. Napoleon Ave. Metairie, La 70001</p>	<p>SHREVEPORT Wednesday, October 7, 2009 Doors open to public 9:00 am till 12:00 pm Christ United Methodist Church 1204 Crabapple Drive Shreveport, LA 71118-4097</p>
<p>MONROE Wednesday, October 21, 2009 Doors open to public 9:00 am till 12:00pm Monroe Civic Center 401 Lea Joyner Expressway Monroe, LA 71201</p>	<p>PINEVILLE Wednesday, October 21, 2009 Doors open to public 9:00 am till 12:00pm City of Pineville, Main Street Community Center 708 Main Street Pineville, LA 71360</p>
<p>HOUMA Thursday, October 29, 2009 Doors open to public 9:00 am till 12:00 pm Evergreen Cajun Center 4695 W. Main Street Houma, LA 70360</p>	<p>WISE Event REGISTRATION Please register on-line at http://www.cessi.net/WISE/ by calling 1-877-743-8237 (V/TTY)</p>



Community Work Incentives Coordinators

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CWIC, Alexandria

Allen, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, Grant, La Salle, Many, Natchitoches, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, Sabine, St. Landry and Vernon



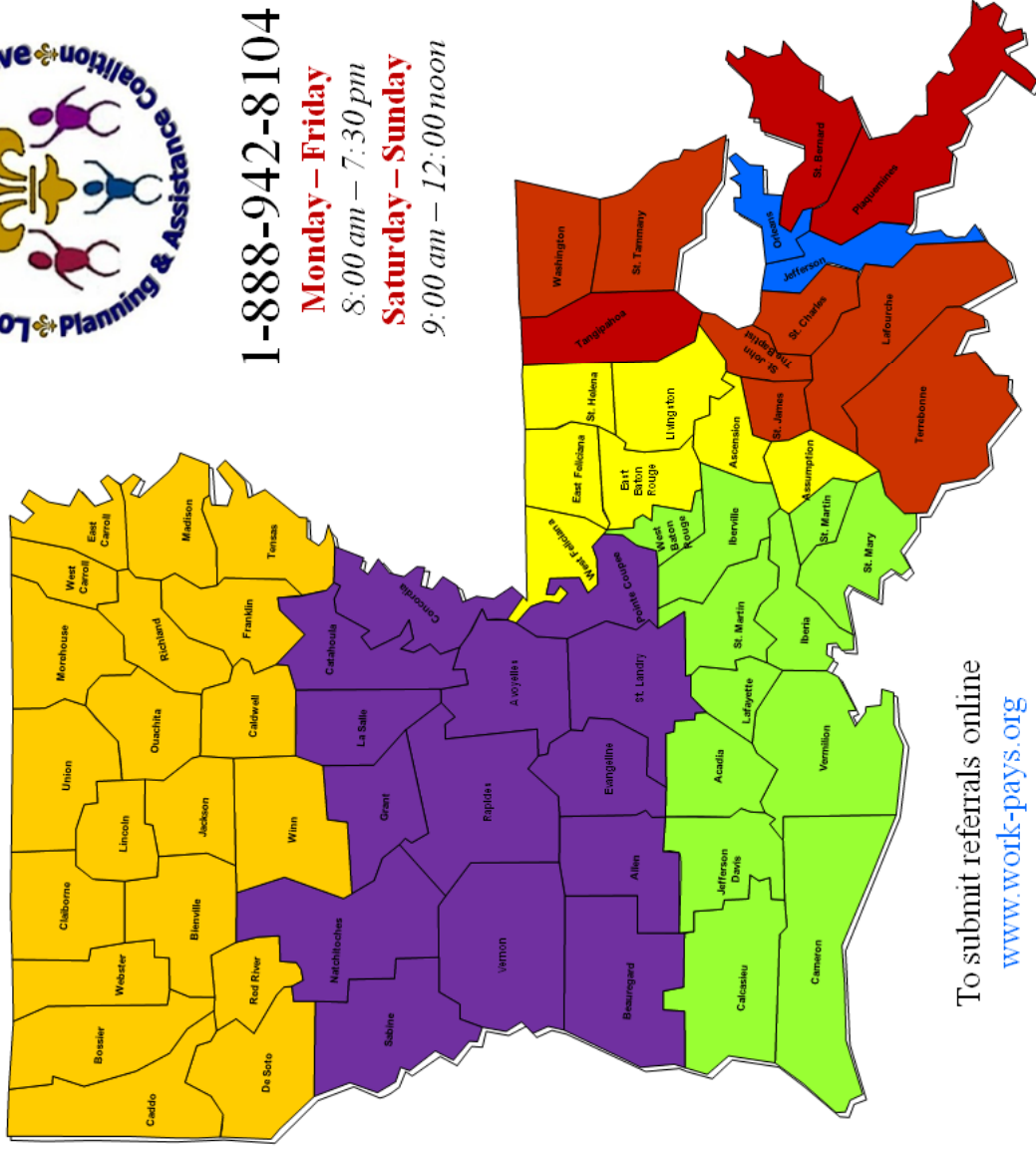
1-888-942-8104

Monday – Friday

8:00 am – 7:30 pm

Saturday – Sunday

9:00 am – 12:00 noon



To submit referrals online

www.work-pays.org

Visit LSUHSC - Human Development LAWIPA Website at <http://www.hdc.lsuhs.edu/lawipa/index.htm>



Advancing Employment, Connecting People

APSE

100 Central Avenue
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National APSE Website
www.apse.org

Louisiana APSE Website
(coming soon...)
Email LA APSE
ApseLouisiana@gmail.com

Louisiana APSE Board

President
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Secretary
Sam Slavich
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APSE is a growing national non-profit membership organization, founded in 1988 as the Association for Persons in Supported Employment, now known as APSE.

APSE is the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities. APSE's new initiative, HR Connect, offers consultation services to help businesses reach out to and partner with one of the strongest labor and customer pools in the country: the disability community.

APSE has chapters in 35 states and the District of Columbia. Our members come from all 50 states and Puerto Rico, as well as several foreign countries.

APSE supports the only annual national conference focused solely on the advancement of integrated employment.

To join APSE on-line visit

<http://www.apse.org/members/memberApplication.cfm>

State Chapter membership is included in your National dues

About this Issue

Louisiana APSE is excited to launch its first newsletter!

This is our fall edition—look forward to our winter edition coming in December/January.

Employment News will include resources that can be printed and used by employment providers - the inclusion of the CWIC map and WISE schedule is this issue's resource.

Ideas for future articles?
Contact Louisiana APSE at
ApseLouisiana@gmail.com

Join our mailing list?
Email APSE with the contact information for future inclusion.

Acknowledgements

APSE would like to thank the Developmental Disabilities Council for assisting in the development of our local chapter. LA APSE would also like to thank the Human Development Center at LSUHSC - New Orleans for all its assistance in conducting APSE's first training survey and this first issue.

www.APSE.org



Organizational Goals

Promote employment opportunities for all people, through local, regional, and national networks.

- Help establish and expand equitable employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Advocate with federal, state, and local legislators for legislation promoting integrated employment.
- Work with federal, state, and local policy makers to increase funding for integrated employment.
- Raise awareness within the business community as to the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities.

Advocate for social change to help those with severe disabilities achieve a lifestyle that approximates that of individuals without disabilities