

**The Organizer's Handbook
for
Creating Action**

**A guide for Leaders of Louisiana Citizens for Action
NOW!**

2010 Edition

The Organizer's Handbook for Creating Action

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Acknowledgements: This Handbook is based on a model developed by the West Virginia State Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities. Its purpose is to provide advocates with the tools necessary to communicate with policy makers about the funding and implementation necessary for expansion of the Community and Family Support System Plan. Many people have helped in the creation of the ideas and resources provided in this document. Fran Smith has helped us learn the power that parents and adults with disabilities have to communicate with policy makers and has taught us the organizational skills needed to do so effectively. Kay Marcel, Debbie Braud, Sharyn Scheyd, Doris Machinski, and Frances Hilburn are a few of the many parents who helped pioneer Community and Family Support in Louisiana, and who have helped our understanding of the power of a group of informed people who have a common vision. They, and many other parents and adults with disabilities have dedicated countless hours sharing their stories and ideas with other parents, professionals, and policymakers. Those experiences have helped shape this Handbook. The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council has provided constant support for our LaCAN leaders and their activities and has made the funding possible for the production and printing of this publication.

The LaCAN Organizer's Handbook

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.....introduction

Louisiana's system of supports for people with disabilities has changed greatly over the past eighteen years. Prior to 1989, our state had few services for families who wanted their child with a disability to grow up in their home; likewise, there were few resources for adults with severe disabilities who wanted to live on their own, with the supports they needed to do so. In 1989 things began to change. A group of adults with disabilities and parents of children with developmental disabilities and advocates began to voice a new way of providing supports. No longer was there a quiet, lonely struggle of a few people seeking a way to live in a caring community or a family. Energy began to grow around a vision of a new type of system of services. Legislation was passed describing a way that Louisiana could provide individualized supports to people with disabilities and their families. Since 1991, hundreds of millions of dollars have been allocated to implement a system of individualized services and supports for people to live in their own homes and communities. This funding has been achieved through the persistent work of a strong, vocal, organized, and dedicated group of people.

The work is not over. As of October 2009 there are 6,047 children on a waiting list for the family support cash subsidy program; 9,190, people with developmental disabilities on the waiting list for services through the Home and Community Based Waiver; and thousands of children and adults with serious mental illnesses are living with no community services at all. The current person being enrolled to receive home and community-based NOW waiver services signed up more than 8 years ago in November 2001. Despite the tremendous number of people requesting community-based services, Louisiana continues to be a state with a heavy reliance on institutional services. In order for our service system to be turned around, our state must begin to examine its funding priorities and make some changes.

This Handbook was developed to help advocates organize for advocacy toward full implementation of Louisiana's Community and Family Support System. It is our hope that this will serve as a guide for you as you join together with friends, families and allies in working toward the vision of all people with disabilities living, working, learning and playing in their community.

I. The Community and Family Support System

A SUMMARY OF LOUISIANA'S COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT SYSTEM PLAN

BACKGROUND

The development of a family and individual support agenda in Louisiana came in 1988 when the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council sponsored their first Community Integration Conference. Family members and adults with disabilities heard presentations on personalized supports provided by state-of-the-art programs across the country.

With this information as a guide, a vision was created of a service system that provides supports to families as they care for their child at home, and for adults as they live in their own homes. Parents, adults with disabilities and advocates organized a group called Louisiana Citizens for Action NOW! (LaCAN) to share the vision across the state. Regional forums were held to present the vision statements and to gather comments from individuals who would use the proposed services. These visions were then drafted into legislation.

This legislation was passed in 1989. Act 378 called for the development of a plan for a comprehensive system of individualized supports, and provided for implementation of the plan by the Department of Health and Hospitals and the Department of Social Services. Act 378 specifies that an array of services will be made available to families and adults, and has specific time frames for implementation. This legislation called for implementation to begin July, 1991 and be completed by July, 1993.

Two basic principles are outlined in Act 378 and these principles are the foundation of the Community and Family Support System Plan. The principles are:

Children, regardless of the severity of their disability, need families and enduring relationships with adults in a nurturing home environment. As with all children, children with developmental disabilities need families and family relationships to develop to their full potential.

Adults with developmental disabilities should be afforded the opportunity to make decisions for themselves and to live in typical homes and communities where they can exercise their full rights and responsibilities as citizens.

PROVISIONS IN THE PLAN

Family Support Services

< **A cash subsidy of \$258 per month for families of children with severe disabilities.**

Children automatically eligible would be those ages birth to 18 who meet the Department of Education's Bulletin 1508 criteria for autism, deaf/blind, profoundly mentally disabled, severely mentally disabled, and multi-disabled. Children with the classification of emotional/behavior disorder, orthopedically disabled, other health impaired, and developmentally delayed for children under the age of nine would be screened to determine the severity of their disability. The plan estimated 3000 children would be eligible for the subsidy. A total of 1,911 families are currently receiving the monthly cash subsidy, but approximately 6,047 children remain on a waiting list.

< **A flexible array of services to support families of children with developmental disabilities.**

Children ages birth to 18 with a developmental disability would be eligible for services. The services are those that enable a family to keep their child at home and include, but are not limited to: communication services, counseling services, crisis intervention, day care, dental and medical care, equipment and supplies, home and vehicle modifications, home health services, homemaker services, parent education and training services, personal assistance services, recreation services, respite care, service coordination, sitter services, specialized diagnosis and evaluation, specialized nutrition and clothing, specialized utility costs, therapeutic and nursing services, and transportation services. The plan estimated 4500 children would be eligible for these services. *In 2008, family support services are being provided in a variety of ways. Act 378 provides flexible funds for children who are not Medicaid-eligible or for goods or services not reimbursable through Medicaid. The Offices for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) and Mental Health also use other state and federal funds to provide individualized family supports. The Medicaid New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) and the Children's Choice Waiver, also administered by OCDD, provide an array of services to children with developmental disabilities in their own homes. Children eligible for Children's Choice have access to all medically necessary Medicaid services and up to \$17,000 in waiver services and support coordination. The Medicaid Psychiatric Rehabilitation Option provides community supports to a limited number of children with severe emotional disturbance. In 2007 the Family Opportunity Act began offering Medicaid coverage to children with disabilities in families up to 300% of the Federal poverty level. The Residential Options Waiver (ROW) is another capped waiver option available for Children. Unfortunately, there are thousands more eligible children who are not yet receiving any services to assist their parents in keeping them at home.*

< **A system of independent service coordination (case management) to assist families in accessing needed services and supports.** *While this was a funded service for several years in the early nineties as a result of Act 378, independent support coordination is available only to Home and Community Based Waiver recipients and infants and toddlers eligible for*

Part C services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As a result of the Chisolm court settlement with DHH, all Medicaid eligible children on the waiver waiting list are now eligible to receive private support coordination services.

◁ **A designated agency in each region to provide information to families in need.** Each of these agencies would have a toll free number to facilitate easy access. *In response to the Community & Family Support System Plan, the Developmental Disabilities Council initiated funding of nine Families Helping Families Resource Centers to provide information and referral, education and training, and parent to parent support to families throughout Louisiana. In addition to the Developmental Disabilities Council, these centers currently receive funds from the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Children's Special Health Services, the Office of Mental Health, the Department of Education and others. In 2007 a tenth Families Helping Families Center opened to serve families living in St. Bernard, Orleans, and Plaquemines parishes.*

Community Support Services for Adults

◁ **A range of supports to assist adults with disabilities live in their own homes and communities.** These supports include, but are not limited to communication services, companion and/or roommate services, counseling services, crisis intervention, dental and medical care, equipment and supplies, home and vehicle modifications, home health services, homemaker services, personal assistance services, recreation services, respite care, service coordination, specialized diagnosis and evaluation, specialized nutrition and clothing, specialized utility costs, therapeutic and nursing services, transportation services and vocational and employment services.

◁ **The plan estimated 600 adults with developmental disabilities would receive services through supported living over a three year period. It called for these supports to be provided in the following manner:**

The Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities would implement 23 pilot projects over a three year period for adults with developmental disabilities. In addition, supports would be provided to 300 adults with developmental disabilities who choose to remain at home with their family, or already have a home and need additional supports to remain there. *Actually, supported living in Louisiana has developed a little differently than the plan specified. Since supported living services are financed through the Medicaid Home & Community Based Waivers, the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) was not able to limit supported living providers to a small group. Providers who agreed to receive training and technical assistance and participate in a supported living network through a Developmental Disabilities Council grant were awarded Act 378 funds to assist individuals with non-Medicaid reimbursable costs associated with setting up their home. These funds are now available to any individual in supported living, regardless of their provider. Act 378 funds are also available to adults who choose to remain with their families, but need supports to do so, and are awarded based on need.*

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services would administer three pilot projects implemented over a three year period for adults whose severe disability occurred before the age of 55.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services is currently serving 22 adults in two supported living programs through Resources for Independent Living in New Orleans and Baton Rouge. In 1998, the Developmental Disabilities Council received Act 378 funding to replicate this program in another area of the state. Council funds were transferred over to the Office of Adult and Aging Services to consolidate resources and enable better oversight over services.

The Office of Mental Health would administer a pilot project for adults with severe mental illness. *Project Life was first funded in 1991 in Shreveport to serve individuals transitioning out of state hospitals into the community. The Office of Mental Health received additional Act 378 funding in 1997 to serve individuals in three regions of the state transitioning out of state hospitals. There have been at least 184 individuals who have successfully transitioned into the community.*

Evaluation and Performance Indicators

Methods to generate feedback from those individuals receiving services were included in the Community and Family Support System Plan as follows:

< **Regional and state family support advisory councils.** These councils were to provide assistance to the Department of Health and Hospitals on the implementation of family support services. *Regional councils were initiated but disbanded after several years due to lack of participation and need. The State Family Support Advisory Council/Work Group continued to evaluate family support services and develop family support policy for recommendation to the Community & Family Support System Task Force through 2001. The DD Council assumed direct oversight of the Community and Family Support System in 2002.*

< **A state advisory council on supported living.** This council was to provide assistance on the implementation of supported living programs. *This council was short-lived, but the implementation of supported living was continuously monitored by the Supported Living Work Group of the Community & Family Support System Task Force through 2001. The DD Council assumed direct oversight of the Community and Family Support System in 2002.*

< **An annual evaluation based on consumer satisfaction and performance indicators.** *A consumer satisfaction survey on the cash subsidy program was conducted by the Developmental Disabilities Council through a third party evaluator. Results were overwhelmingly positive. A third party evaluation on implementation of the Community and Family Support System was conducted by the Human Services Research Institute in 2000. The report is available through the D.D. Council office.*

FUNDING

Implementation of the Community and Family Support System Plan requires a combination of flexible state funds and various Medicaid options. Recommended funding mechanisms for components of the Plan are the following:

Cash Subsidy - There is no Medicaid source for subsidy payments to families. Funds for the cash subsidy program are *state generated*.

Flexible Services - Services for children with developmental disabilities can be funded in a variety of ways. *Through the regular Medicaid program and EPSDT, eligible families can access traditional Medicaid services. The New Opportunities Waiver and the Children's Choice Waiver offer services for children such as respite care, attendant care, and environmental modifications. Beginning in early 2008, the Residential Options Waiver (ROW) will become another waiver option for children. Additionally, children receiving waiver services also receive regular Medicaid state plan services. Children with emotional/behavioral disorders are eligible for services through Medicaid Psychiatric Rehabilitation. In 2007 the Family Opportunity Act offers Medicaid coverage to children with disabilities living in middle- income families through a Medicaid buy-in program. Flexible state funds should always be available for necessary services that are not accessible through Medicaid.*

Independent Service Coordination - The Community and Family Support System Plan calls for state funds to cover independent service coordination for families not eligible for Medicaid funded case management. *Medicaid offers support coordination only to families receiving Medicaid waiver services, Medicaid eligible children on the waiver waiting list, and to infants and toddlers eligible for Part C services. Limited support coordination is available from the OCDD regional offices for people receiving individual and family support services.*

Designated Agencies in Each Region - State funds are necessary to fund these regional points of entry into the service system. *The Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers are funded by state dollars provided by the Developmental Disabilities Council and the Offices for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, Public Health and the Department of Education. The Legislature appropriated state dollars in 1998, and from 2001 to 2007 for Families Helping Families.*

Supported Living - A combination of Home and Community Based Waiver services, Medicaid state plan services, and the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Option are required to fund support services to adults living on their own. Additionally, flexible state funds are necessary to purchase those supports that are not reimbursable through Medicaid for adults living with their families or in their own homes and for those who do not meet the eligibility requirements for the above Medicaid programs. *All of these funding options are available, but the number of individuals supported by them is severely limited.*

HISTORY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT SYSTEM PLAN

1988

- ◀ First Community Integration Conference held and visions of a personalized system of supports were created
- ◀ Creation of LaCAN, Louisiana Citizens for Action NOW!
- ◀ Development of vision statements outlining principles of individualized supports
- ◀ Regional forums held to present vision statements and obtain comments from people using services
- ◀ Legislation developed stating principles of individualized supports

1989

- ◀ Passage of Act 378
- ◀ Creation of Advisory Committee on the Community and Family Support System
- ◀ Working committees comprised primarily of parents and adults with disabilities meet throughout the year to design components of Plan

1990

- ◀ Development of written plan outlining statewide system of community and family supports
- ◀ Plan presented to Department of Health and Hospitals and Department of Social Services

1991

- ◀ Presentation of Community and Family Support System Plan to Joint Health and Welfare Committee of Louisiana Legislature
- ◀ \$1.3 million allocated for FY 1991-92 to begin funding of Community and Family Support System
 - Cash subsidies for 600 families beginning January 1992
 - Funding of supported living services not reimbursable through Medicaid
 - Funding to begin supported living programs

1992

- ◀ Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver expanded to include supported living services for adults
- ◀ Legislative resolution passed calling for the implementation of TEFRA Option
- ◀ Formation of regional family support advisory councils
- ◀ \$2.7 million allocated to continue funding initial implementation of Community and

Family Support System for 1992-93

- Continuation of cash subsidies for 600 families
- Funds for services not reimbursable through Medicaid and/or independent service coordination for non-Medicaid eligible families
- Funds for supported living services not reimbursable through Medicaid
- Funds to continue supported living programs

1993

- ◀ Report issued outlining recommendations for adoption of TEFRA
- ◀ 1500 people receiving Home and Community Based Waiver Services
- ◀ \$2.8 million allocated to Community and Family Support
 - Same services continued

1994

- ◀ Legislative Fiscal Office issues Developmental Disabilities Study at request of chairman of House Appropriations Committee
- ◀ 350 new slots for Home and Community Based Waiver
- ◀ \$6.1 million appropriated for Community and Family Support
 - Continuation of prior year services
 - 500 additional cash subsidies are funded
 - Initial funding for adoption of the TEFRA Medicaid Option

1995

- ◀ Continuation budget for Community and Family Support
- ◀ \$15 million for implementation of TEFRA (In October, 1995 this appropriation was cancelled by the Joint Budget Committee)
- ◀ DHH makes massive cuts in Medicaid Program, including the Home and Community Based Waiver (Most cuts in waiver services are restored several months later)
- ◀ Medicaid Psychiatric Rehabilitation is cut by 60%

1996

- ◀ Continuation budget for Community and Family Support
- ◀ Targeted Case Management is eliminated for the developmental disabilities and mental health populations
- ◀ Medicaid Psychiatric Rehabilitation is cut an additional 60%
- ◀ Over 2,000 people receiving Home and Community Based Waiver Services

1997

- ◀ Continuation of 1996-97 services
- ◀ An additional \$9.9 MILLION is appropriated for Community and Family Supports
 - 340 new MR/DD Waiver slots brings total to 2,751
 - Comprehensive state funded support services for 460 persons on Medicaid waiver waiting list
 - Cash subsidies for 315 additional families
 - Additional funds for respite for families of children with severe emotional disturbance
 - New supported living program for 12 adults with chronic mental illness
- ◀ Implementation of hospital diversion plan shifts funds to Medicaid Psychiatric Rehabilitation

1998

- ◀ Continuation of 1997-98 services
- ◀ An additional \$11.5 million is appropriated for Community and Family Support
 - 700 new MR/DD Waiver Slots brings total to 3,451
 - Cash subsidies for 539 additional families brings total to 1979
 - Additional funds for family support services for children with emotional/behavioral disturbance.
 - Information and support for parents of children with emotional/behavioral disturbance
- ◀ Three pilot projects for single point of entry/information and referral through OCDD and Families Helping Families
- ◀ New supported living program for adults with severe physical disabilities
- ◀ Diagnosis and evaluation for 700 new waiver slots
- ◀ 15 new staff positions in OCDD and Medicaid to process new waiver slots
- ◀ Amendment passed calling for DHH to research the implementation of TEFRA in other states and submit to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget prior to January 1, 1999, a report for its review and approval on a proposed TEFRA option plan for implementation in FY '99-2000.
- ◀ \$350,000 appropriated by the Legislature for Families Helping Families to validate the waiver waiting list was vetoed by the Governor.

1999

- ◀ Continuation of 1998-99 services
- ◀ An additional \$23.5 million is appropriated for Community and Family Support
 - 800 new MR/DD Waiver Slots bring total to 4251
 - New funds for the implementation of the Medicaid option TEFRA*

*The implementation of TEFRA was halted three weeks prior to beginning on January 1, 2000 due to projected budget shortfalls in Medicaid.

2000

- ◀ Continuation of 1999-2000 services

*As an alternative to TEFRA, the administration recommended and the legislature appropriated \$7.6 million to initiate services in January 2001 under a new capped children's waiver called Children's Choice. LaCAN opposed this "trade off" for several reasons, one being the cap of \$7,000. The \$7.6 million was never spent, as the very first children to receive services under Children's Choice did not do so until June 2001.

2001

- ◀ Passage of Act 1147 which amends Act 378
- ◀ Disability Services and Supports System Planning Group and Consumer Task Force (DSSS/CTF) are formed to develop an Olmstead plan to reform Louisiana's long term care system
- ◀ Consumer Task Force submits Phase I plan recommendations to DHH
- ◀ Continuation of 2000-2001 services
- ◀ An additional \$2,474,000 is appropriated for Community and Family Support
- ◀ \$ 2,229,000 to increase reimbursement rates for MR/DD Waiver
- ◀ \$ 245,000 for funding to expand the OCDD and FHF Information and Referral Programs statewide.
- ◀ \$9,000,000 for 500 new Children's Choice Waiver slots
- ◀ \$124,000 for expansion of Community Living Ombudsman Program (CLOP)
- ◀ \$25,964,446 to increase waiver slots in the Elderly and Disabled Adult Waiver, Adult Day Health Care Waiver and Personal Care Attendant Waiver

2002

- ◀ DSSS/CTF planning process continues
- ◀ Bureau of Community Supports and Services submits amended MR/DD waiver to CMS
- ◀ Continuation of 2001 - 2002 services
- ◀ An additional \$20,150,000 for Community and Family Support
 - \$250,000 for FHF
 - \$13.8 million for MR/DD Waiver Re-Write Recommendations
 - \$6.1 million for 325 new MR/DD Waiver slots
- ◀ Additional funds for an interim rate increase for Supervised Independent Living Services (\$440,000 a month until the re-write recommendations are implemented)
- ◀ Additional funds to expand CLOP
- ◀ Passage of SCR 5 - Freedom of Choice for Private ICF/MR residents
- ◀ Children's Choice Cap is increased to \$15,000

2003

- ◀ An additional \$250,000 SGF for Families Helping Families Resource Centers bringing total funding to \$500,000
- ◀ Increased funding was appropriated to expand the menu of services and provide for higher rates in the newly approved New Opportunities Waiver
- ◀ \$8,030,000 for 400 new Elderly and Disabled Adult waiver slots
- ◀ \$547,500 for 25 new Personal Care Attendant waiver slots
- ◀ \$28 million to implement the Personal Care Medicaid State Plan Option

2004

- ◀ A study resolution was passed requesting the House and Senate Committees on Health and Welfare to study and develop implementation strategies for Money Follows the Individual
- ◀ A study resolution was passed directing DHH to study and develop a five-year plan to eliminate the disparity in DSP wages for those working in community programs versus those in state operational institutions
- ◀ \$3,735,600 for 66 emergency NOW waiver slots - the budget for the NOW waiver for 04/05 was set at approximately \$221 million (federal and state funds)
- ◀ \$1,119,266 for 150 new Elderly and Disabled Adult waiver slots
- ◀ \$381,375 for 25 new Personal Care Attendant waiver slots

2005

- ◀ \$2,642,694 for 100 additional New Opportunities Waiver slots
- ◀ Passage of Act 128 - Reauthorization of the OCDD Law
- ◀ Passage of Act 451 – DSPs perform certain non-complex medical tasks

2006

- ◀ \$8,407,500 for 200 additional New Opportunities Waiver slots
- ◀ Funding for 1350 additional Elderly and Disabled Adult Waiver slots
- ◀ Funding for 150 waiver slots for people with ALS
- ◀ Funding for 125 Adult Day Care Health Waiver slots
- ◀ Passage of Act 555 – All proceeds from the sale of OCDD property will be used to expand or enhance Home and Community Based supports
- ◀ Metropolitan Developmental Center was closed

2007

- ◀ Passage of Act 481 that provides a recurring source of funding for New Opportunities Waiver services
- ◀ Funding for 1500 additional New Opportunities Waiver Slots
- ◀ Funding for 200 additional Children's Choice slots
- ◀ Funding for 200 additional Supports Waiver slots
- ◀ Funding for 200 Residential Waiver slots
- ◀ Increased funding that allows OCDD to provide individual and family support services to all people with developmental disabilities with needs classified as priority 1 or 2.
- ◀ Funding to implement the Family Opportunity Act Program
- ◀ Continuation funding for the DSP wage "pass through" that was implemented in Spring 2007

2008

- ◀ Protection of the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) Trust Fund to support new NOW slots
- ◀ Funding for 2,025 additional New Opportunities Waiver Slots
- ◀ Mitigating the amount of rate cuts to providers of home and community-based services

2009

- ◀ Protection of the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) Trust Fund to support new NOW slots
- ◀ Passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 116 that requires OCDD to report on the status of filling waiver slots. OCDD continued to make offers for waiver slots
- ◀ Reduced the amount of rate cuts to providers of home and community-based services
- ◀ Prevented an individual cap on NOW services
- ◀ DHH submitting recommendations to reform the system by consolidating and closing developmental centers and recognizing better outcomes and cost efficiencies of using waiver services

For More Information....
On The Community and Family Support System or LaCAN

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II. Tools and Ideas for Team Organizing

Some Suggestions for Organizing a Grassroots Network in Your Area

Keep in mind the purpose of recruiting people: you are looking for people who understand the need for, and the value of, a system of family support and individualized supports for people with developmental disabilities.

You are looking for others who will ... make phone calls, write letters to policy makers, go to Baton Rouge to talk to legislators and attend legislative committee meetings. All of these efforts will focus on expanded funding for the Community and Family Support System Plan. Some people will be able to do more than others, and everyone can do something. Phone calls and writing letters are the most needed activity, and they do not require being away from home or a big commitment of time.

Avoid Mass mailings to recruit people. This approach is usually not very effective. Word of mouth seems to be the best way to find people; contacting people you know, and having them contact people they know, etc., etc. Keep a master list and before you know it, you will have a mailing list!

Local organizations (such as Families Helping Families, the local Arc, Early Intervention Programs, your local autism chapter, etc.) may publish newsletters and they would be happy to include a letter or article from you requesting support. The response will not be overwhelming, but you will generate some names.

Making short presentations to local groups works well. Personal contact is the most effective way of recruiting people, and you can talk informally about family support or individualized supports for adults and how they can help make this become a reality for people in Louisiana. Some ideas of groups to talk to in addition to the ones listed above include groups at your child's school, therapy sessions, church, etc.

Post a flyer at the offices of doctors, therapists, schools, Health Clinics, early intervention programs, etc. On the flyer, describe how the Community and Family Support System assists people with disabilities, and add your name and phone number so people can contact you.

Talk with other people in your area who have been involved with LaCAN in the past. They may have names to share.

In this section is a LaCAN flyer with a sign-up form for people in your region who want to be involved. Adapt it as you need to for your area. Share the names you receive with the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council (mail to or call:

D. D. Council, P. O. Box 3455, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3455; 1-800-450-8108), and families will receive mailings from the Council, including a quarterly newsletter, conference mailings, and other pertinent information.

Louisiana Citizens for Action NOW! (LaCAN)

What is LaCAN:

LaCAN (Louisiana Citizens For Action Now) is a statewide grassroots network of individuals, families, and advocates who have worked together since 1988 advocating for a system that supports individuals to live in their own homes rather than having to move to a facility to receive needed services. Specifically, they have advocated for implementation of Louisiana's Community and Family Support System Plan. Regional LaCAN teams include parents, individuals with disabilities, and advocates. These members are notified by email, phone, or mail to contact state agency officials, legislators or the Governor, when necessary.

LaCAN Major Accomplishments to Date:

- Passage of Act 378 in 1989 that establishes Louisiana's Community and Family Support System.
- Passage of Act 481 in 2007 which provides a recurring source of funding for New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) slots.
- Appropriation of hundreds of millions of dollars for Waiver Services and Individual and Family Support Services.

Results of Accomplishments to Date:

- Almost 2,000 families receive a monthly cash subsidy to assist with the extraordinary costs they incur to care for their children with severe disabilities.
- Hundreds of adults with severe disabilities across the state are living successfully in their own homes with individualized supports.
- Approximately 2,500 children and adults with developmental disabilities are receiving state funded supports in their own homes regardless of their Medicaid eligibility.
- The New Opportunities Waiver (formerly the MR/DD Waiver) has an expanded and more flexible menu of services with higher rates to better meet the individualized needs of its recipients.

How You Can Help!!!

You can help yourself, your family or people you know who services by joining the LaCAN team in your region and participating in its advocacy efforts. Increased membership is needed to be successful in gaining increased funding for individual and family supports and in changing the system. Waiting lists for all components of the Community and Family Support System are very long. If you feel frustrated when needed services and supports are not available, joining LaCAN is something you can do to help change this situation. LaCAN members embrace the philosophy of the Community and Family Support System and are willing to write, call or visit policy makers in the state to share their family's story.

LaCAN Membership Form - SAMPLE

Louisiana Citizens for Action Now (LaCAN) needs members who will contact Legislators and other policy makers when requested. Information will be provided to you continually and ongoing support of your activities will be available from your LaCAN Regional Team Leader.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phones: _____(HOME) _____(WORK) _____(FAX)

E-mail _____ Would you like to be added to our e-mail list? _____

/ **Check One**

- _____ Individual with a disability
_____ Parent/family member of an individual with a disability
_____ Provider/Advocate

/ **Check all that apply:**

I am willing to:

- _____ write letters to policy makers
_____ make phone calls to policy makers
_____ visit my legislators in their home offices
_____ travel to Baton Rouge for legislative hearings when my schedule allows

/ **Check all that apply**

I/my child:

- _____ receives clinical services from Children's Special Health Services
_____ receives cash subsidy
_____ is on the cash subsidy waiting list
_____ receives Medicaid NOW Waiver Services
_____ am/is on Medicaid NOW Waiver waiting list
_____ receives Psychiatric Rehabilitation Option Services
_____ receives services through the Children's Choice Waiver
_____ receives other service (please list) _____

Please mail or FAX this form to: LaCAN Membership
P. O. Box 3455
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3455
225-342-1970 (fax)

If you know of others who may be interested in joining LaCAN, please provide their names, addresses and phone numbers.

LaCAN Leader Expectations and Responsibilities

**Being a LaCAN Leader is not a job; it's a mission.
LaCAN Leaders do what they do on behalf of others,
They are not afraid to ask for what is right.**

I. Develop the Grassroots Network

- Conduct LaCAN presentations at the annual Family Forum; parent support groups; other conferences and workshops; resource fairs; and any opportunity where family members and self-advocates are present in order to recruit new members.
 - Make copy of application – let people keep brochure
- Recruit new members at every opportunity where you meet or talk to family members or self-advocates.
- Send LaCAN brochures to new families contacting FHF
- Network with local OCDD office and providers to increase recruitment
- Include LaCAN in every FHF newsletter
- Include LaCAN in every FHF staff member's job description
- Mark contact logs at FHF Centers to reflect discussion about LaCAN with families when they call the center.
 - Fill out applications on the phone, or
 - Follow-up with email thanking members for sign-up and their agreeing to receive LaCAN email:
 - Attach email to copy of their application and keep on file
 - Send out applications for those who don't want to join on the phone
- Call newly recruited members promptly and mail orientation packets to them.
- Send new members information on their legislators and LaCAN Leader contact information.
- Submit a quarterly membership report to Council staff to include recruitment activities, new recruits, and current membership list.

II. Maintain the Grassroots Network

- Build relationships and maintain regular contact with your regional team members through phone calls, emails, snail mail, etc. to keep them updated and prepared to take action on pertinent disabilities issues.
 - Sending birthday cards to members
 - Special mailouts to workshops
 - Meet members for lunch to get to know them
 - Have quarterly get-togethers with members
 - Engage LaCAN members in special projects: free garage sale, Christmas parties, employment, community project involvement
 - Lunch bunch, book club
 - Maintain email/mail lists
- New Members
 - Welcome packets to new members
 - Phone call for follow-up
 - Ask new members if they know of anyone else who is interested in joining
- Educate your members

- Maintain the regional LaCAN email/ mailing list and share an updated copy quarterly with FHF and the DD Council.
 - Check with members to see if their addresses/ email addresses have changed
- Ask members to do a “re-sign up” if necessary.
- Establish and maintain a partnership with the regional FHF Director. Provide an update on LaCAN at the FHF regular staff meetings.
- Maintain regular communication with DD Council staff.

III. Lead the Grassroots Network

- Together with FHF, plan and conduct a legislative round table discussion in your region.
 - Allow key legislator to pick the date he/she is available
 - Invite other legislators and have constituents assist – concentrate on 4 key committees
 - Pick location, plan food and other logistics
 - Invite whole membership list of families and self advocates
 - Handpick families on how to tell their story before RTD
 - Bring pictures of family members with compelling stories.
- Networking with members:
 - Make phone calls to members for special events
 - Find flexible, committed people, especially for Capitol visits
 - Use volunteers to maintain relationships and help call members
 - Regular contact with members will help spur response to action alerts from members
- Carry out directives in action alerts from the state LaCAN leadership.
 - Check email every 24 hours unless the DD Council is notified
 - Immediately respond to action alerts from the state LaCAN leadership during the legislative session
 - Establish weekly contacts with your regional FHF Director during the legislative session - coordinate plans to carry out directives along with the Director
- Follow up with members to ensure that they also respond to action alerts timely.
 - Activate your volunteer network to assist you in making calls.
 - Contact those members without email to let them know about the alert.
 - Call those who you know will act on action alerts first.
 - Develop key writing corps to legislators
 - Use alerts – cut and paste to save time
 - Keep labels handy for members without email
 - Follow-up with your volunteers making calls

IV. Use the Grassroots Network

- Schedule personal visits by LaCAN members to all legislators in your region prior to the session (Leaders do not need to attend every meeting).
 - Assign members from each legislator’s district to communicate with their own legislator on specific issues and possibly testify at committees that their legislator sits on
 - Participate in a pool of support people to accompany family members and self-advocates visiting their legislators when needed

- Provide a Legislative Visit Report to the Council on each legislative meeting, including any commitments the legislator made and possible needs for follow-up with specific legislators
- Identify people to be on standby to travel to Baton Rouge for testimony and support.
 - Coordinate transportation with FHF
 - Assist members in preparing testimony and educate them on what they can expect when attending legislative committee meetings
 - Have 30 second speech ready to go at all times (“elevator” speech – who you are, who you’re with, what you want, how you can help them)
- Attend key legislative committee meetings as requested.
- Maintain contact with legislators throughout the year.
 - Send cards to legislators
 - Acknowledge other things the legislator is doing
 - Send newspaper clipping with notes, say hello at other community events, etc.
 - Write letters to the editors that are complimentary of the legislator.
 - Send pictures of families.
 - Build relationships with delegations and caucuses.
 - Bring treats to legislators’ offices
 - Develop relationship with legislative staff members.
- Visits to Capitol:
 - Drop by during session
 - Visit committee meetings
- LaCAN Day:
 - Orient new members to the Capitol
 - Arrive early – parking is limited
 - Talk-up/”sell” visit to the Capitol
 - Prepare members for LaCAN day – let them know what to expect.
 - Shorten length of time you’re at the Capitol.
 - Have alternative activities planned and going on while waiting at the Capitol.
 - Bribe members with food and coffee (Starbucks/doughnuts).
 - Check your insurance to address liability concerns.
 - Find member who can drive and reimburse for gas if needed

V. General

- LaCAN Leaders report to the DD Council, but will receive on-site supervision from their regional FHF Director. Leaders will be interviewed and hired by DD Council staff in collaboration with the LaCAN Coordinator and the regional FHF Director.
- Leaders will be evaluated annually by DD Council staff with input from the regional FHF Director.
- Leaders must submit a monthly report to the DD Council to document their monthly activities and their time sheets to the FHF Director for verification.
- Leaders must abide by all FHF policies and procedures, if employed by the Center
- Attend LaCAN’s Annual Kick-off Training for LaCAN Leaders and FHF Directors.

Families Helping Families Director LaCAN Responsibilities

YEAR ROUND

I. Supportive Relationship with your LaCAN Leader:

- Establish a partnership where responsibilities are shared with the regional LaCAN Leader.
- Develop a sense of ownership of LaCAN among the center staff.
- Maintain the regional LaCAN mailing list and keep an accessible copy at all times.
- Either assume the duties of the LaCAN Leader when this position becomes vacant in your region or appoint a staff member to do so.

II. Legislative Awareness:

- Attend LaCAN's Annual Kick-off Training for LaCAN Leaders and FHF Directors.
- Require staff to attend a yearly LaCAN training (in your region or a neighboring one).
- Obtain a list of regional legislators from your LaCAN Leader.
- Ensure all staff know who their personal state senator and state representative are.
- Have LaCAN as a standing agenda item at your regular staff meetings for updates by the LaCAN Leader or yourself.
- Carry out the directives in memos and other communications from the state LaCAN leadership (i.e., letter writing, phone calls, legislative visits, etc.).
- Work with DD Council staff in forming a network of support people to accompany family members to visit their legislators as needed.

III. Recruitment and Membership:

- Ensure that LaCAN presentations are made at parent support group meetings, conferences, workshops, and meetings conducted by staff where families are present to recruit new members.
- Assist state LaCAN leadership in recruiting a regional LaCAN Leader.
- Ensure every staff member is trained on the appropriate use of the LaCAN recruitment script when taking phone calls from families or individuals.
- Ensure that LaCAN brochures are available in the FHF Center.
- Ensure that LaCAN brochures are disseminated at workshops, annual Family Forums, trainings, parent meetings, etc.
- Schedule a LaCAN presentation at the annual Family Forum for the LaCAN Leader.

DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

- Ensure your center's schedule of events can accommodate requests for immediate action by state LaCAN Leaders during the legislative session.
- Establish weekly contacts with the regional LaCAN Leader.
- Establish a mechanism that will ensure that the FHF staff is informed of the often daily LaCAN updates from state leaders and acts on these alerts.
- Carry out the directives in memos and other communications from the state LaCAN leadership (i.e., letter writing, phone calls, legislative visits, etc.).
- Identify people to be on standby to travel to Baton Rouge for testimony and support
- Attend key legislative committee meetings as requested.
- Along with staff, provide assistance to the LaCAN Leader in calling families who do not have email.

PRE LEGISLATIVE SESSION ACTIVITIES

What Your Team Can Do

Get to know the key legislators in your region. Critical legislators will be members of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees, the House and Senate Health and Welfare Committees, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. (Names and addresses of these legislators are listed at the end of this section.)

Meeting with legislators: Always make an appointment. It is best for two to three people to go to the meeting (This gives you support as well as showing the legislator that this is more than an issue for just one family.) Be sure to show pictures of your child (or bring your child if you think that would be comfortable for him/her), and tell how expansion of Community and Family Support will help your child and your family. Expect the meeting to last only 20 minutes or less, so be prepared with what you want to say. Focus on the supports you need and how Community and Family Support can help. Ask your legislator for his/her support.

Always follow up a meeting with a short thank you letter. It will reinforce your message, and the legislator will remember you when you contact him/her during the session.

Have a few people available to act as a scribe. Some team members may be hesitant about writing a letter to their legislator (their mind may go blank), or simply may not be able to due to a family crisis, etc. People offering to be a scribe can spend a few minutes over the phone listening to the person's story, and quickly draft a letter for the person to sign.

Remember: Form letters are not effective. Legislators have told us that they immediately disregard form letters. They prefer personal stories, legibly written (typed is okay). Include a picture if you can.

Invite area legislators to a family's home. This has been tried in some areas with much success. Again, do it before the session begins. Invite legislators to a family's home to meet with a few people (five or six parents is all you would need). Mingle informally over refreshments, talk to the legislators and tell them what it is like to have a child with a disability - the financial, physical and emotional needs of families. Tell them how Community and Family Support can help. Ask for their support.

Use the media by generating human-interest stories on people in your community and using news releases about area events that your team may be involved with.

Share your successes with other teams by letting Kay or Kevin know what you are up to; we'll share it with others.

Outline of a Sample Letter to Policy Makers

Letters are an important way of educating policy makers (legislators, the governor, state agency officials) about the needs of families and people with disabilities. Be sure to state your personal view in the letter, and it should be legibly written or typed. Addresses for the governor and other important policy makers are located later in this section.

Your return address
Telephone Number

Date

The Honorable _____
Office (for example, Governor of Louisiana,
House of Representatives, Senate)
Address (use legislators home address when
the legislature is not in session)

Dear Governor/Senator/Representative _____:

First Paragraph: Explain who you are, such as "I am writing to you as the parent of Jennifer, who is five years old and has severe developmental disabilities." Include information about your child and your family that will help the policy maker understand your needs. If you can, send a photograph of your child or your family.

Second Paragraph: Describe how the Community and Family Support System will help you, for example: "My family would benefit from individual and family support services that would help us keep Jennifer at home (or whatever services you may need).

Third Paragraph: Tell the policy maker what he/she can do to help, such as "I urge you to support expanded funding for the DD Home and Community Based Waivers (or LaCAN's specific legislative agenda items)."

Fourth Paragraph: Let the policy-maker know that you would be interested in hearing about his/her view concerning Community and Family Support. Thank him/her for their consideration of your concerns.

LaCAN Legislative Visit Report

Region: _____ Leader: _____ Date: _____

Legislator Visited: _____

Topic(s) discussed: _____

People meeting with the Legislator:

Comments made by the Legislator:

Questions the Legislator had:

Does the Legislator need to be contacted to answer any questions? _____
If Yes – which questions?

Commitments the Legislator made:

Road Map for Planning Legislative Round Table

IMMEDIATELY

- _____ **Set Date Now** – Try to coordinate with key legislators in your region (members of Key Committees – Appropriations, Finance, Health and Welfare)
- _____ Secure accessible location.
- _____ Invite all other legislators in your region to the Round Table
- _____ Identify and begin preparing individuals who will tell their compelling stories.
- _____ Start Publicizing Event – send emails or letters to LaCAN members briefly describing the event telling them to mark the date on their calendars and to recruit a friend to bring with them. If possible, offer door prizes to the member who brings the most friends!

(NOTE: Inform members that specific individuals have been identified to provide “mock testimony” at the event, but attendance by all members is encouraged and needed since important information will be shared and area legislators will be attending).

- _____ Inform Kevin and Kay about the date, time, and location so they can also publicize it through the statewide email list.

DO ASAP

- _____ Provide information (talking points, What Makes a Good Story, etc.) to individuals who will speak at the round table.
- _____ Plan for food (i.e., lunch or snacks).
- _____ Prepare and copy handouts you plan to distribute.
- _____ Send follow-up letter to legislators who have verbally accepted invitation

ONGOING

- _____ Periodically check-in with individuals who will speak at the round table to offer encouragement and support to prepare their “testimony.”
- _____ Continually remind your LaCAN members about the event. Whenever you send out an alert message, include a P.S. reminding them about the event and about bringing a friend.
- _____ Two weeks prior to the event confirm legislators’ attendance with their legislative aides
- _____ Three (3) weeks prior to the event, send a stamped postcard or some other medium to your membership to serve as an RSVP.
- _____ Contact Kay or Kevin with any questions.

SAMPLE AGENDA

2010 LaCAN Round Table Discussions with Legislators

Date: TBA

Location: TBA

Times:	9:00 – 9:05 a.m.	Welcome & Introductions
	9:05 – 9:45 a.m.	Issue Discussion
	9:45 – 10:15 a.m.	“Making Your Case”
	10:15 – 12:30 p.m.	Preparing Presentations
	12:30-1:30 p.m.	Lunch
	1:30-2:30 p.m.	Round Table Discussion with Legislators and Feedback
	2:30-3:30 p.m.	General Legislator Feedback

LaCAN Legislative Round Table Discussions

Why You're Here

For empowerment and to increase your ability to effectively advocate for yourself and others

To identify tools and techniques to help you make a difference

To enhance your family's life and other lives across Louisiana

An added bonus....

To educate legislators on the New Opportunities Waiver and why a permanent, recurring source of revenue for waiver services is needed; and why funding for additional slots is needed in next year's budget

The Plan

Each table (round tables if at all possible) will have one or two legislators (depends on number of legislators who attend and number of tables set-up for participants)

First person opens discussion with talking points

Two parents each tell personal stories of being on waiting list

Fourth person tells personal story of receiving waiver supports and how that improves their family's quality of life

Last person gives remaining talking points

LaCAN Leaders and FHF Directors are available to answer questions if needed

Legislators then provide feedback to everyone at their table

We will go through this process three times (if you have at least 3 tables), with the legislators changing tables to hear from different people each time and everyone having the opportunity to put into practice the tips the legislators tell them

Time Limits (Suggestion: Have some type of sound – bell, buzzer – to indicate time is up and legislators move to next table; you may also want to give a signal when about 2 minutes remain)

- Each Round Table – about 20 minutes
- Introductory Talking Points – 2 minutes
- Personal Stories – 3 minutes each
- Closing Talking Points – 2 minutes
- Legislator – 5 minutes each

SAMPLE

Round Table Seating Chart

Duane Ebarb – talking points
Denise Wolcott (adult) – story
Lia Fryday (child) – story
Jane Doe (child) - story
Nann McMullen – talking points
Diane Pitts

Beth Anne Merida – talking points
Joyce Naquin (child) - story
Joann Knight (child) – story
Jim Sprinkle (adult) - story
Kristen Reed – talking points
Kim Detillier

Jeanne Gauthier – talking points
Wanda Grogan (adult) – story
Yvonne Bell (child) – story
Sabrina Hagan (child) – story
Ellodie Boyd – talking points
Alicia Banks

Maryal Mewherter – talking points
Deatra Matthews (child) – story
Al Hitt (child) – story
John Pray (adult) – story
Mylinda Elliot – talking points
Susan Benoit

Mary Jacobs – talking points
Katie Jones (child) – story
Jennifer Salter (child) – story
Sherry Raby (adult) - story
Yolanda Clark – talking points

Doris Douglas – talking points
Carol Welch (adult) – story
Mary E. Christian (child) – story
Stephanie White (adult) - story
Jamie Tindle – talking points
Heidi Kidder

- Intro to waiver & waiting list - 2 mins.
- 1st Personal Story – 3 mins.
- 2nd Personal Story – 3 mins.
- 3rd Personal Story – 3 mins.
- Closing – Talking Points – 2 mins.
- Legislators Respond – 5 mins. each

Personal Story for Round Tables

Examples of compelling stories:

- Elderly parent caring for an adult child...
- Parent with health problems that prevent them from providing all of the support their child needs...
- Family struggling financially but both cannot work because there is no one to care for the child after school and during school holidays....
- Parent who quit work, or turned down salary increases, so that their child could have access to Medicaid in order to have medical insurance...

Each person's story can begin as follows:

I have/My child has been on the waiting list __years. At the pace that the waiting list has been moving over the past 6 years, I have no hope that my child/I will ever receive services.

Next the person should briefly describe: A) their specific situation; B) the supports that they/their family member needs that the waiver could provide, and C)how receiving those services could improve their quality of life.

For example:

A) I am 63 years old and my son, Joel, is 40 years old and has severe cerebral palsy and requires total care for his physical needs. I have a slipped disc in my back and should not be lifting him at all. So when he is home from his day program in the afternoon/evenings, weekends or holidays, he must stay in his bed and I still have to lift him some in order to change him and feed him. He cannot bathe unless someone else is available. He gets 5 hours a week family support from OCDD that pays for a worker to come in to help with his care, but only for 5 hours a week. And, sometimes a relative can come over to help with his care.

I do not have surgery to correct my disc because I would not be able to even do the things I do now for him for at least 8 weeks and, in fact, the doctor says for the surgery to be a success I should not ever lift him again.

B) If Joel were to receive a waiver slot, we could be assured that he would have access to needed personal care services provided from a Direct Support Professional when he needs such support. He would no longer have to spend long days in bed.

C) Personal care services for Joel would allow me to have the surgery I need, and ensure that Joel does not have to leave our home to receive 24 hour residential services in an institution.

Each Person Can End by:

Thanking the legislator for their time and listening to their story.

What Makes A Good Story?

From an advocate's point of view, a good story:

1. **Is the one you love to tell.** Think about the stories you've told your family and friends when describing the situation you're trying to change. What examples do you use? What facts or incidents draw the most emotional response from them?
2. **Captures a central idea.** Don't try to cover too many incidents in one story. Focus on one issue and use real-life details to make it come alive.
3. **Has a main character that people want or -- should want -- to help.** The more your audience knows about you or your child as individuals, the stronger the emotional connection and the more likely you'll be able to affect real change.
4. **Presents a struggle, conflict or challenge.** Conflict is a struggle between two incompatible needs, wants or situations. Your story might illustrate a conflict between your child's need for waiver services and the Governor and legislature's refusal to appropriate funds to pay for those services.
5. **Has a "climax" or high point.** Your story should build up to an example that makes your listener say, "that's unfair" or "that's too ridiculous to be true." For example, if you chose to put your child in a community home or large private ICF/DD, you could do that today and the state would pay for that 24 hour/day care, however you can't get the 6 hours/day supports you need. Ridiculous? Yes. True? Unfortunately, also yes.
6. **Contains vivid images.** Use words to draw mental pictures that help listeners connect to your story at an emotional level. Don't be afraid of strong words. Words like "cold," "dark," "hates," "terrified," "cringed" and "panics" create a negative emotional response. Positive words can cause emotional reactions just as easily. Think about how you feel when you hear the words "giggle," "sunny," "beautiful," "artistic," and "loving."
7. **Is detailed.** The more details you can provide, the better the official will understand - and sympathize with - your position. A note of caution: Make sure the details and images you include are relevant to the story you're telling.
8. **Addresses the five W's and an H...who, what, when, where, why and how.** Policymakers need the basic facts.
9. **Has a beginning, middle and an end.** Think about an ongoing television series. You might not be a regular viewer but within a few minutes of watching, you know the characters and the situation they're confronting. By the end of the show, you'll see the story unfold and the conflict resolved.
10. **Is short and to the point.** Policymakers are very busy. You need to be able to tell your story in three minutes or less so stay focused!

Adapted from the Minnesota Developmental Disabilities Council's "Making Your Case" Advocacy Training

NOTE: Following the Round Table Discussion, this letter should be sent to all newspapers in your region. Participants at the Round Table will identify who will send the letter to which papers.

Sample Letter to Editor

(Date)

Dear Editor:

I wish to publicly thank *(list all the representatives and senators who attended the Round Table Discussion)* for taking time out of their busy schedules recently to participate in an advocacy training for individuals with disabilities and families who have children with disabilities. This training was sponsored by the Region ____ LaCAN Team and designed to help participants practice their advocacy skills. LaCAN is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization supported by the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council.

Families shared with these legislators information about their children, the love and joy their children provide to them, and the daily challenges they face trying to meet their child's extraordinary needs while they wait at least 11 years to receive needed supports from the state's Medicaid home and community-based waiver program. The adults with disabilities shared their personal struggles as well. The legislators listened attentively and then provided feedback to the participants on how effectively they delivered their "story" and how they might improve their advocacy.

Everyone was very appreciative for the knowledge and advice these legislators gave and the time they gave to this event. Legislators have many responsibilities and receive many invitations making it impossible for them to attend all events. So the fact that these legislators chose to participate in this training event meant a great deal to all those present.

Each of these legislators is to be commended for their service. Individuals with disabilities and their families are fortunate to have such knowledgeable and compassionate elected officials representing them in Baton Rouge.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Address

City, LA Zip

Phone Number (newspapers require this information to verify the letter)



Save this Date and Plan to Attend

A Rally at the State Capitol
in Baton Rouge

Disability Rights Day

The Right to Receive Services

April 23rd 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Join other Individuals with Disabilities
And Family Members

**A Waiting List
is
NOT a Service!**

For information about Transportation
to Baton Rouge and to sign up for a T-shirt, contact
Families Helping Families
of Northwest Louisiana
221-0315 or 888-989-0315

Sample Rally Invitation Letter to Legislators

Date

The Honorable _____
Address
City, LA Zip Code

Dear Representative/Senator _____:

I, along with many others from your area, will be participating in the **3rd Annual Disability Rights Day rally at the State Capitol on April 28th, 2010 from 1:30 – 2:00 p.m.** We will be there to bring attention to the need for a recurring source of revenue for home and community based waiver services for the over 9,000 people who are waiting for them. We hope that you will make plans to join us on the steps of the Capitol during the rally.

Enclosed is a rally flyer with more information. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. We will be looking for you on April 28th; we will be under the sign that says Region ____.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Region __ LaCAN Leader
Address
City, LA Zip
Phone Number
Email Address

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

What to Expect on Committee Days

Key Legislative Committees:

- 4 key committees that are the focus of LaCAN:
 - House Appropriations
 - Normal Meeting Days: Monday and Tuesday
 - Meeting Location: House Committee Room 5
 - Senate Finance
 - Normal Meeting Day: Monday
 - Meeting Location: Senate Committee Room A
 - House Health & Welfare
 - Normal Meeting Days: Wednesday and Thursday
 - Meeting Location: House Committee Room 5
 - Senate Health & Welfare
 - Normal Meeting Day: Wednesday
 - Meeting Location: Hainkel Room

NOTE: It is possible that committees may meet on additional days that are not listed above. Your LaCAN Leader will keep you informed on scheduling. You can also refer to the Louisiana Legislature's website at www.legis.state.la.us or call the Developmental Disabilities Council office at 800-450-8108 for current information.

Public Testimony at Committee Meetings:

- Public testimony days for House Appropriations and Senate Finance are the two definite and some of the most critical committee days for LaCAN. Members are asked to make every effort to attend. Other important committee days will be shared with LaCAN Leaders as soon as news of their scheduling arises, and they will relay this information to you.
- When you arrive, your LaCAN Leader will help you fill out cards of support or opposition to turn in to the committee. This is how the committee counts how many people are supporting or opposing different issues so it is important that all LaCAN members fill out the cards the same way.

Transportation & Parking:

- You may be asked to make a trip to the Capitol to attend an important committee meeting with just a day or two advance notice. If you are interested in carpooling or need assistance with transportation, please contact your LaCAN Leader immediately.
- Allow enough time to find parking. Parking spaces, including wheelchair accessible spots, are limited around the Capitol. If you are someone who has difficulty walking long distances, you are welcome to drive to the back of the Capitol under the portico to be dropped off. Your ride can then find a parking place and meet you in the Capitol.

General Information:

- Please note that committee days are often scheduled by the House and Senate on short notice. As such, the LaCAN leadership will not be able to give our members much advance notice of committee meetings.

- Do not expect committee meetings to begin on time, but get there early in order to get a seat.
- Expect committee meetings to go through the lunch hour – without a break. A cafeteria and a snack shop are located on the ground floor.
- Expect to sit through many other issues before the committee gets to the issue you are there to hear. People often bring something to read or work on while waiting.
- Certain committee days, particularly public testimony days, bring many people to the Capitol. Committee rooms can become crowded. When this happens, please listen for an announcement of an overflow room which usually has much more space and is more comfortable. Feel free to ask a sergeant-at-arms of their availability.
- Be sure to not bring food or drink in the committee rooms. Also, make sure that your cell phones, pagers, and other electronic communication devices are silenced or turned off.
- Speaking to legislators on committee days can be difficult. You might encounter them in the hallway or in the committee room before the meeting begins or after it ends. In either case, be prepared to make your case quickly, efficiently, and accurately. Legislators tend to operate on very tight time schedules. Think “3-Minute Elevator Speech!”
- Capitol visits can be very rewarding both personally and professionally. It is important to remain professional and polite at all times. Showing any kind of disrespect can ruin any future chances of making a positive impact on a legislator down the road.
- After speaking to a legislator at the Capitol, they may ask that you follow-up with information. They could even request that you provide it to their staff. Their staff will relay the information on to them in a timely manner.

Addendum: For LaCAN Members Asked to Testify:

- LaCAN Leaders and DD Council staff will assist in helping you prepare your testimony if you are asked to testify. It is certainly normal to be nervous, especially if you are testifying for the first time. Therefore, try to remember that you are the expert for you and your family and that the legislators are relying on you to learn how they can help you.
- Legislators will allow you to tell your story via testimony. However, it is important to read your story and not trail off on another topic. It may seem that some legislators are not paying attention or their attendance may be clearly lacking. Just proceed with your story because it is being added to the committee’s records.
- Legislators may ask you questions while you testify for which you do not have an answer. When this happens, you should respond by admitting that you do not have the answer at that moment but that you will find it and get back with them. It is best to be honest, and this will ensure that you maintain their respect and trust.

How To Set Up A Telephone Tree

The key to setting up a successful telephone tree is to make sure you have volunteers committed to calling a specific number of people each time the telephone tree is activated. By doing this you reach each part of your region and no one person makes all the phone calls. What follows is an example of the structure of a telephone tree. Use this method, make sure each contact person realizes their responsibility, keep the list current and feel confident that your telephone tree is working!

- 1) The LaCAN leadership sends an email alert out to the LaCAN list serve.
- 2) The LaCAN leader and the FHF director call one another to confirm notification and activate tree.
- 3) The LaCAN leader and FHF director place calls to their assigned branch captains. If the primary contact person cannot be reached, the alternates should make their calls plus any calls assigned to the primary contact.)

LaCAN leader calls:

Parish 1 Branch Captain

Anna Advocate (telephone number) [Primary]

Bernard Busy (telephone number) [Alternate]

Parish 2 Branch Captain

Catherine Calls (telephone number) [Primary]

David Does (telephone number) [Alternate]

Parish 3 Branch Captain

Eugene Energy (telephone number) [Primary]

Fran Fun (telephone number) [Alternate]

FHF director calls:

Parish 4 Branch Captain

Grey Goes (phone number) [Primary]

Haley Hurries (phone number) [Alternate]

Parish 5 Branch Captain

Janice Jumps-on-it (phone number) [Primary]

Kevin Kan (phone number) [Alternate]

Parish 6 Branch Captain

Lana Letter (phone number) [Primary]

Matt Meetings (phone number) [Alternate]

4) Parish Branch Captain calls their people. Alternate calls people if primary person cannot be reached.

Parish 1

Anna Advocate (phone number) calls:

person 1 (phone number)

person 2 (phone number)

person 3 (phone number)

person 4 (phone number)

Parish 2

Catherine Calls (phone number) calls:

person 1 (phone number)

person 2 (phone number)

person 3 (phone number)

person 4 (phone number)

Parish 3:

Eugene Energy (phone number) calls:

person 1 (phone number)

person 2 (phone number)

person 3 (phone number)

person 4 (phone number)

Parish 4:

Greg Goes (phone number) calls:

person 1 (phone number)

person 2 (phone number)

person 3 (phone number)

(repeat method for as many parishes, areas as needed)

In each parish, person then calls their list of people.

Information on Important Issues

New Opportunities Waiver (NOW)

Home and community-based waiver programs are based on federal criteria which allow services and supports to be provided in a home or community-based setting for people who would otherwise require institutional services.

Due to the demand for these services, there is a waiting list for the NOW of people who meet the Louisiana definition of developmental disabilities. The waiver is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. There are currently approximately 7,021 people receiving NOW services and over 9,000 people on the waiting list. Approximately 1,200 people are added to the waiting list each year.

The application process does not begin until a slot is available. At that time, medical and financial determinations are done to validate that the individual has a developmental disability and meets the financial and medical/psychological requirements for institutional care in an ICF/DD (Intermediate Care Facility for People with Developmental Disabilities).

Services and supports provided through the NOW are those that allow an individual to live independently in their home and community or at home with their family. These include such things as assistance with bathing, transferring from wheelchair to bed, household chores, and transportation to work for individuals with physical disabilities and assistance with paying bills, taking medicine, and learning to use public transportation for individuals with cognitive disabilities. Respite is listed as the most needed service by families supporting children or adults in their homes. A complete list of services available through the NOW is below.

Funding for the NOW and all home and community-based waivers is a mix of Federal (70%) and State (30%) funds and is monitored and regulated by the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and administered in Louisiana by the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and Medicaid.

NOW services

- Individualized and Family Support (direct support/assistance, respite)
- Center-Based Respite
- Community Integration Development (facilitating natural supports & inclusion)
- Environmental Accessibility Modification
- Day Habilitation and Transportation
- Supported Employment and Transportation
- Facility-Based Employment
- Professional Services (psychological, nursing, etc.)
- Personal Emergency Response System
- Skilled Nursing Service
- Specialized Medical Equipment and Supplies
- Supported Living
- Substitute Family Care
- Transitional Expenses (out of an institution)
- Host Home (services provided in a private home by the homeowner or renter) *
- Companion Care (services provided by a person who lives as a roommate with the person) *

*services that will be added to the NOW shortly

This fact sheet was developed by the La. Developmental Disabilities Council. For more information on the New Opportunities Waiver, contact the Council at 800-450-8108.

Other Waivers for People with Developmental Disabilities

Children's Choice Waiver

- Serving children under the age of 18 living with their families
- Capped at \$17,000
- Limited array of services

Supports Waiver

- Adults
- Capped at \$26,000
- Mainly a vocational supports waiver, with a limited number and amount of other services

Residential Options Waiver (ROW)

- Children and Adults
- Individual cost cap based on ICAP determined level of need, not to exceed cost of services in same level private ICF/DD
- Wide array of services
- Approved by CMS on October 1, 2009

This fact sheet was developed by the La. Developmental Disabilities Council. For more information on the New Opportunities Waiver, contact the Council at 800-450-8108.

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

Facts about Family Opportunity Act Medicaid

What is Family Opportunity Act Medicaid?

Family Opportunity Act Medicaid provides health coverage to uninsured or underinsured children with disabilities in families with too much income to qualify for regular Medicaid or LaCHIP. Currently, the LaCHIP and Medicaid programs offer coverage for children in families with income up to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Family Opportunity Act Medicaid opens coverage up to children with disabilities in families with a higher income range, allowing families up to 300 percent of the gross federal poverty level to buy in to the Medicaid Program.

When did the program begin?

The program began on October 1, 2007 and applications are now being accepted.

What services are available through Family Opportunity Act Medicaid?

Enrollees receive the full range of services covered by Louisiana Medicaid. This includes hearing, vision and dental services; medical equipment; medical transportation; occupational, physical and speech therapy; prescription drugs; rehabilitation services; hospital and primary care physician visits; and much more.

Who qualifies for services?

- Children through age 12
- Must have a physical or mental condition(s) that meets the federal definition for childhood disability. The Medicaid Medical Eligibility Determination Team (MEDT) will review clinical information and make a decision.
- Total income for child, parents and siblings under age 19 must be equal to or less than 300 percent of the gross federal poverty level for the family size.

Can a child have other health insurance and receive benefits from Family Opportunity Act Medicaid?

Yes. The other health insurance will be used first, and Medicaid will be the secondary payer. If a family is offered employer-sponsored insurance, they must take it when the coverage is under a group health plan and the employer contributes at least 50 percent of the total annual premium.

What is the premium cost?

Premiums depend on whether a child is uninsured or has health insurance for which the household pays a premium.

- Uninsured - \$35 monthly premium
- Other Health Insurance - \$15 monthly premium

Is there a waiting period to begin receiving services?

No. For Family Opportunity Act Medicaid coverage there is no waiting period.

What are the income limits?

Families can have a gross (not take home) income of up to 300 percent of FPL. The chart below shows the maximum monthly income to qualify for Family Opportunity Act Medicaid.

Number in Family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Gross Monthly Income	\$2,553	\$3,423	\$4,293	\$5,163	\$6,033	\$6,903	\$7,773	\$8,688

How do I apply?

Application forms are available online at www.medicaid.dhh.louisiana.gov, by calling the Medicaid office at #1-888-342-6207 or through parish Medicaid offices and local Medicaid Application Centers.

**Questions? Call Louisiana Medicaid Customer Service
at #1-888-342-6207. The call is free.**

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Capitol Station
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

President of the Senate

Joel T. Chaisson, II
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Tony Keck, Deputy Secretary
Department of Health and Hospitals
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Mr. Jerry Philips, Undersecretary
(Authority over Medicaid)
Department of Health and Hospitals
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Bureau of Health Services Financing
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Ms. Kathy Kliebert, Assistant Secretary
Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities
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(225) 342-0095
(225) 342-8823-fax

, Assistant Secretary
Office of Mental Health
P. O. Box 4049, Bin #12
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Ms. Sharon Howard, Assistant Secretary
628 North 4th Street, Bin: #4
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Governor's Office of Disability Affairs

Brandon Burris, Executive Director

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Baton Rouge, LA 70804

(225) 219-7550

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Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs

, Executive Director

P. O. Box 80374

Baton Rouge, LA 70898

(225) 342-7100

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Important Addresses and Telephone Numbers for Use During the Legislative Session

During the legislative session, you will need to contact your legislator while he/she is in Baton Rouge. Use the addresses and telephone numbers below when writing and calling. The PULS line is open when the legislature is in session and gives up-to-the-minute updates on the status of bills.

Contact Your Legislators During Sessions:

Representatives: The Honorable Jane Doe
Speaker's Office
P. O. Box 94062
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
(225) 342-6945
(225) 342-8336-fax

Senators: The Honorable Jane Doe
Senate Office
P. O. Box 94183
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
(225) 342-2040
(225) 342-0617-fax

To have messages delivered to legislators or contact them at their desks, call the numbers listed above. To write legislators at the state capitol, write or fax to the addresses above.

Legislative Information

The House of Representatives provides a service to answer questions about legislation and activities in both the House and the Senate during the session, such as description and status of proposed legislation, when committees meet and their agenda.

Public Update Legislative System (PULS):
(225) 342-2456 in Baton Rouge
1-800-522-2737 for in-state calls outside of Baton Rouge

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Resources

Families Helping Families

The Developmental Disabilities Council is currently funding the ten Families Helping Families Resource Centers listed below. These organizations are designed to provide information and referral to families. They organize workshops on educational and other issues, provide support and assistance in the writing of IEP's and inclusion in the classroom, as well as offering individual support to parents and adults with disabilities in need. These organizations publish a newsletter, and can be a resource to families and to you as you build your team.

Region I

FHF of Southeast Louisiana, Inc.

Carol Calix, Executive Director
4118 Franklin Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70122
504-943-0343 or 1-877-243-7352
504-940-3242
Email: info@fhfsela.org
Website: www.fhfsela.org

Region II

FHF of Greater Baton Rouge, Inc.

Jamie Tindle, Executive Director
778 Chevelle Drive
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806
225-216-7474 or 1-866-216-7474
225-216-7977 Fax
Email: info@fhfgbr.org
Website: www.fhfgbr.org

Region III

Bayou Land Families Helping Families, Inc.

Kim Detillier, Executive Director
204 East Bayou Road
Thibodaux, Louisiana 70301
985-447-4461 or 1-800-331-5570
985-447-7988 Fax
Email: blfhf@bellsouth.net
Website: www.blfhf.org

Region IV

FHF of Acadiana, Inc.

Kathy Allen, Executive Director
510 West University Avenue
Lafayette, Louisiana 70506
337-984-3458 or 1-800-378-9854
337-984-3468 Fax
Email: fhfacad@cox-internet.com
Website: www.fhfacadiana.com

Region V

FHF of Southwest Louisiana, Inc.

Susan Benoit, Executive Director
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Lake Charles, Louisiana 70601
337-436-2570 or 1-800-894-6558
337-436-2578 Fax
Email: fhfswla@xspedius.net
Website: www.fhfswla.org

Region VI

FHF at the Crossroads of La., Inc.

Jim Sprinkle, Executive Director
2840 Military Hwy., Suite A
Pineville, Louisiana 71360
318-641-7373 or 1-800-259-7200
318-640-4299 Fax
Email: fhfxroads@aol.com
Website: www.familieshelpingfamilies.net/

Region VII**FHF of Region 7**

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318-226-4541 or 1-877-226-4541
318-226-4518 Fax
Email: fhfregion7@bellsouth.net
Website: www.fhfregion7.com

Region VIII**FHF of Northeast Louisiana, Inc.**

Aliscia Banks, Executive Director
Laura Nettles, Co-director
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Monroe, Louisiana 71203
318-361-0487 or 1-888-300-1320
318-361-0417 Fax
Email: info@fhfnela.org
Website: www.fhfnela.org

Region IX**Northshore Families Helping Families, Inc.**

Donna Slocum, Executive Director
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Covington, Louisiana 70433
985-875-0511 or 1-800-383-8700
985-875-9979 Fax
CSHS 985-345-8300 or 1-877-537-8700
Email: dslocumnfhf@bellsouth.net
Website: www.fhfnorthshore.org

Region X**FHF of Greater New Orleans, Inc.**

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Harahan, Louisiana 70123
504-888-9111 or 1-800-766-7736
504-888-0246 Fax
Email: info@fhfgno.org
Website: www.fhfgno.org

Regional Program Offices for Community and Family Support Services

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Orleans, St. Bernard, Plaquemines

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1010 Common St., 5th Floor
New Orleans, LA 70113
(504) 599-0245 (800)889-2975

Metropolitan Human Services District
1010 Common St.
New Orleans, LA 70113
(504) 568-3130

Children's Special Health Services
200 Henry Clay Avenue, Suite 214
New Orleans, LA 70118
(504) 896-1340

Office for Citizens with Developmental
Disabilities
690 E. First Street
Thibodaux, LA 70301
(985) 449-5167 (800)861-0241

Office of Mental Health
c/o Terrebonne Mental Health
106 Moss Lane
Houma, LA 70360
(985) 857-3615

Children's Special Health Services
2535 Veteran's Boulevard
Thibodaux, LA 70301
(985) 447-0896

Region II

Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana

Capital Area Human Services
District/Developmental Disabilities
4615 Government Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
(225) 925-1910

Children's Special Health Services
353 N. 12th Street, Room 95
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
(225) 242-4890

Capital Area Human Services
District/Mental Health
4615 Government Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
(225) 925-1910

Region IV

Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St.Landry, St. Martin, Vermillion

Office for Citizens with
Developmental Disabilities
214 Jefferson Street, Suite 301
Lafayette, LA 70501
(337) 262-5610 (800)648-1484

Dr. Joseph Henry Tyler, Jr. Mental
Health Center
Tyler Mental Health
302 Dulles Drive
Lafayette, LA 70506
(337) 262-4100

Children's Special Health Services
220 W. Willow, Bldg. A
Lafayette, LA 70501
(337) 262-5616

Region III

Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. John, Terrebonne, St. Mary*

LaCAN Organizer's Handbook

Region V

Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Jefferson Davis, Cameron

Office for Citizens with Developmental
Disabilities

3501 Fifth Avenue, Suite C2
Lake Charles, LA 70605
(337) 475-8045 (800)631-8810

Office of Mental Health
Lake Charles Mental Health
4105 Kirkman Street
Lake Charles, LA 70607
(337) 475-8022

Children's Special Health Services
3236 Kirkman St.
P.O. Box 3170
Lake Charles, LA 70602
(337) 480-2561

Region VI
Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant,
LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon, Winn

Office for Citizens with Developmental
Disabilities
429 Murray Street, Suite B
Alexandria, LA 71301
(318) 484-2348 (800)640-7494

Office of Mental Health
Alexandria Mental Health
P.O. Box 7473
Alexandria, LA 71306
242 W. Shamrock
Pineville, 71360
(318) 484-6850

Children's Special Health Services
5604 A Coliseum Blvd.
Alexandria, LA 71303
(318) 487-5282

Region VII
Bienville, Caddo, Webster, Sabine,
Claiborne, Red River, Natchitoches,
DeSoto

Office for Citizens with Developmental
LaCAN Organizer's Handbook

Disabilities
3018 Old Minden Road, Suite 1211
Bossier City, LA 71112
(318) 741-7455 (800)862-1409

Office of Mental Health
Shreveport Mental Health
1310 N. Hearne Avenue
Shreveport, LA 71107
(318) 676-5111

Children's Special Health Services
1035 Creswell Avenue
Shreveport, LA 71101
(318) 676-7488

Region VIII
East Carroll, West Carroll, Caldwell,
Franklin, Jackson, Morehouse, Ouachita,
Union, Richland, Madison, Lincoln*,
Tensas

Office for Citizens with Developmental
Disabilities
122 St. John Street, Room 342
Monroe, LA 71201
(318) 362-3396 (800)637-3113

Office of Mental Health
c/o Monroe Mental Health
P. O. Box 1843
4800 South Grand St.
Monroe, LA 72102
(318) 362-3339

Children's Special Health Services
1650 Desiard St.
Monroe, LA 71211
(318) 361-7282

Region IX
Tangipahoa, St. Tammany*, Livingston,
Washington, St. Helena

Florida Parishes Human Services Authority
21454 Koop Drive

Mandeville, LA 70471
(985) 871-8300 or (800) 866-0806

Florida Parishes Human Services Authority
21454 Koop Drive
Mandeville, LA 70471
(985) 626-6488

Children's Special Health Services
15481 W. Club Deluxe Rd.
Hammond, LA 70403
(985)543-4165

Jefferson Parish Human Services
Authority/Community Services for Persons
with Developmental Disabilities
3300 W. Esplanade Ave., Ste. 213
Metairie, LA 70002
(504) 838-5357

Jefferson Parish Human Services
Authority/Mental Health
2400 Edenborn Ave.
Metairie, LA 70001
(504) 838-5257

Region X
Jefferson*

- * If you live in this parish and your child is served by Children's Special Health Services, your regional office is as follows: *Jefferson* and *St. Tammany* parishes use the Region I office in New Orleans; *St. Mary* parish uses the Region IV office in Lafayette; *Lincoln* parish uses the Region VII office in Shreveport.
- ** If you live in this parish and you receive services through Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, your regional office is Region I.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) Regional Offices

**Note that the assignment of parishes served by some regional offices was changed in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita*

New Orleans – Region 1

6620 Riverside Drive, Ste. 101
Metairie, LA 70003
(504) 838-5180 (office)
(504) 483-5413 (fax)
(800) 737-2957

Parishes Served: Jefferson, Orleans,
Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St.
James, St. John, St. Tammany

Baton Rouge – Region 2

3651 Cedarcrest Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70816
(225) 295-8900 (office)
(225) 295-8966 (fax)
(800) 737-2959

Parishes Served: Ascension, East Baton
Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston,
Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa,
Washington, West Baton Rouge, West
Feliciana

Thibodaux – Region 3

1442 Tiger Drive
Thibodaux, LA 70301
(985) 447-0809 (office)
(985) 449-5006 (fax)
(800) 590-5762

Parishes Served: Assumption, Lafourche,
Terrebonne

Lafayette – Region 4

825 Kaliste Saloom Road
Brandywine VI, Ste. 350
Lafayette, LA 70508
(337) 262-5353 (office)
(337) 262-5727 (fax)
(800) 520-0587

Parishes Served: Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia,
Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary,
Vermilion

Lake Charles – Region 5

3616 Kirkman Street
Lake Charles, LA 70607
(337) 475-8038 (office)
(337) 475-8037 (fax)
(800) 520-0589

Parishes Served: Allen, Beauregard,
Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis

Alexandria – Region 6

400 Murray Street, Second Floor
Alexandria, LA 71301
(318) 487-5335 (office)
(318) 487-5366 (fax)
(800) 520-0578

Parishes Served: Avoyelles, Catahoula,
Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon,
Winn

Shreveport – Region 7

1525 Fairfield, Ste. 708
Shreveport, LA 71101
(318) 676-7155 (office)
(318) 676-7176 (fax)
(800) 737-2966

Parishes Served: Bienville, Bossier, Caddo,
Claiborne, DeSoto, Lincoln, Natchitoches,
Red River, Sabine, Webster

Monroe – Region 8

122 St. John Street, Room 311
Monroe, LA 71201
(318) 362-3232 (office)
(318) 362-3223 (fax)
(800) 737-2973

Parishes Served: Caldwell, East Carroll,
Franklin, Jackson, Madison, Morehouse,
Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union, West
Carroll