

State as a Model Employer (SAME)
Annual Report for 2019 & Agency Plan for 2020



DEQ
LOUISIANA

I. History

According to the 2017 Annual Disabilities Statistics Compendium, 30% of people with disabilities in Louisiana live in poverty as compared to 16% of people without disabilities. Further, only 33% of people with disabilities are in the workforce as compared to 72% of individuals without disabilities. Recognizing that the State of Louisiana has a vested interest in reducing discrimination against people living with a disability, eliminating barriers to meaningful employment and attracting the highest candidates into state employment opportunities, Governor John Bel Edwards issued Executive Order JBE 18-08 which established the State as a Model Employer Task Force. Accordingly, the Executive Order declared that the state should serve as a model employer for business by a commitment to improve hiring, recruitment and retention of individuals with disabilities, with the goal that 7% of the state work force be comprised of persons living with a disability.

To that end, the SAME Task Force is working closely with representatives from across all departments within the Executive Branch in order to establish a series of best practices for improving the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities within state service. By developing and implementing these best practices, the state intends to increase the breadth and depth of diversity among individuals within state service.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) has created this Five Year Plan in accordance with the provisions outlined in Executive Order JBE 18-08, and in order to improve the recruitment and retention of individuals who identify as disabled.

II. Analysis and Discussion of Survey Data

In late August through early September of 2018 and 2019, LDEQ employees were invited to participate in a web-based survey which was designed to determine the percentage of employees at the LDEQ that identify as disabled. Participation in this survey was voluntary and respondents were assured that their participation, as well as their identities, would remain anonymous. Data from the 2018 survey were used as a baseline to formulate the LDEQ's initial Agency Plan. Data from subsequent surveys will be used to guide the ongoing development of the LDEQ's SAME Agency Plan.

A total of 724 employees received the 2018 poll, with 342 employees responding. The response rate was 47.2%. According to the survey, 62 of the 324 respondents, or 8.6% of LDEQ employees, reported a disability.

A total of 683 employees received the 2019 poll, with 295 employees responding. The response rate was 43.2%, with 59 (8.6%) employees reporting a disability. 3.2% of respondents reported behavioral disabilities; 2.6% of respondents indicated that their disabilities were the result of disease; and 1.6% of respondents reported physical disabilities. The remainder reported intellectual, sensory, or chose not to specify the nature of their disability.

III. Annual Report for 2019

The LDEQ continues to make progress toward its initial goals, which were outlined in its Agency Plan in October 2018. This Agency Plan includes the identification of an agency-wide liaison: Doug Bordelon, PhD (Human Resources Division). Dr. Bordelon worked with staff within the LDEQ and at other state agencies to establish guidelines and best practices that would allow the LDEQ to work toward/attain its annual goals. The text below includes an overview and an analysis of the LDEQ's progress toward its 2019 goals.

- Increasing the overall percentage of LDEQ employees who identify as disabled.
 - According to the initial survey data that was collected in 2018, the 8.6% (our baseline statistic) of the staff at the LDEQ identify as disabled. Our goal has been to incrementally increase this overall amount by 1% over the next 5 years. A follow up survey that was conducted in August-September of 2019 revealed that we remain at 8.6%. By implementing proactive recruitment strategies, namely working with LRS and other allied organizations, and by attending job fairs, we expect to increase representation (hiring and retaining) of employees who identify as disabled. We continue to work toward increasing the baseline statistic of 8.6% by 1% over the next four years.
- The LDEQ will implement communication and other strategies that are aimed at informing applicants as well as LDEQ employees of the Department's philosophy toward employment of people who identify as disabled.
 - Effective January 2019, we required the following verbiage in all LDEQ job advertisements: "Louisiana is a State as a Model Employer for individuals with disabilities." During new hire orientation and through the conspicuous posting of policies, we routinely educate and remind employees that the LDEQ has no tolerance for discriminatory attitudes and behavior that is aimed at employees who identify as disabled.

- Designing and delivering training as a means for fostering a climate of awareness and respect toward employees, applicants, and citizens who are disabled.
 - The LDEQ agency-wide liaison completed the Windmills training in March of 2019. The agency-wide liaison is currently designing supplemental training for LDEQ supervisors and managers on various issues and topics related to disability awareness, workplace accommodations, workplace rights, and disability issues in interviewing. The agency-wide liaison has begun to develop curriculum that is focused on recruitment and customized employment strategies for its HR Division's administrative team. The LDEQ continues to work toward developing/implementing agency-wide training strategies.

IV. Agency Plan for 2020

A. The LDEQ reserves the right to revise and customize components of this 5 Year Plan in order to optimize performance outcomes.

B. Designation of Agency-wide Liaison

The LDEQ has designated Human Resources Manager Doug Bordelon, PhD (Doug.Bordelon@la.gov / 225-219-1325) as the Agency-wide Point of Contact and Liaison for implementing the directives established in this Agency Plan. The Agency-wide Liaison will:

- i. Review the duties of all job vacancies within the LDEQ in order to match those vacancies with suitable candidates at LRS.
- ii. On a routine basis, meet with the LRS Single Point of Contact in order to relay information on available positions at the LDEQ and also to ascertain the availability of candidates at LRS.
- iii. Coordinate information between LRS, and other allied organizations, with the LDEQ's hiring managers and supervisors.
- iv. Serve as a subject matter expert and advisor on customized employment strategies.
- v. Attend disability job fairs and other functions in order to promote employment opportunities at the LDEQ.
- vi. Establish and maintain contact with counselors within higher education, community/technical colleges, and high schools in order to develop and promote an internship program for students with disabilities.
- vii. As necessary, notify agency personnel of training opportunities and other resources related to the employment of individuals with disabilities.

C. Annual Goals

i. Staff Composition

At the inception of this initiative, the August-September 2018 survey indicated that 8.6% of the LDEQ's workforce is composed of employees who identify as disabled. The 2019 data revealed that the LDEQ's workforce remains at 8.6%. We will continue to work toward increasing this level by 1% per year over the next four years.

ii. Posting Requirements

In order to promote awareness, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace:

- a. All hiring managers shall continue to include the following verbiage in all job advertisements: "Louisiana is a State as a Model Employer for individuals with disabilities."
- b. The LDEQ will continue to ensure that information regarding employment policies that prohibit employment discrimination and harassment directed at individuals with disabilities remains on its intranet, internet, and all facilities.

iii. Training Requirements

In order to foster a climate within the LDEQ that conveys respect and increases awareness, the LDEQ, in conjunction with other agencies, will:

- a. As resources become available, all current LDEQ employees are required to complete training in disability awareness and disability etiquette. Newly hired employees to the LDEQ should complete this training within the first 30 days of their hire date.
- b. As resources become available, the LDEQ shall require all its managers and supervisors to receive supplemental training on the topic of workplace accommodations, workplace rights, and interviewing as it pertains to people with disabilities.
- c. As resources become available, the LDEQ shall require its supervisory and administrative officers within Human Resources Division to receive supplemental training on recruitment and customized employment strategies.

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- d. On an as-needed basis, design and deliver customized training related to disability awareness.
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Louisiana State As a Model Employer Survey Data

September 30, 2019

DEQ	2018		2019		Participating State Agencies	2018		2019	
	Employees=	724	Employees=	683		Employees=	36395	Employees=	35330
Participants	342	47.2%	295	43.2%	Participants	10255	28.2%	9281	26.3%
Yes - Disability	62	8.6%	59	8.6%	Yes - Disability	2000	5.5%	1953	5.5%
Physical	9	1.2%	11	1.6%	Physical	506	1.4%	459	1.3%
Intellectual	8	1.1%	5	0.7%	Intellectual	50	0.1%	67	0.2%
Behavioral	28	3.9%	22	3.2%	Behavioral	636	1.7%	620	1.8%
Sensory	8	1.1%	6	0.9%	Sensory	222	0.6%	250	0.7%
Disease	17	2.3%	18	2.6%	Disease	849	2.3%	861	2.4%
doesn't want to report type	3	0.4%	2	0.3%	doesn't want to report type	126	0.3%	95	0.3%
affects A Great Deal			3	0.4%	affects A Great Deal			64	0.2%
affects A Lot			4	0.6%	affects A Lot			129	0.4%
affects A Moderate Amount			12	1.8%	affects Moderate Amt			434	1.2%
affects A Little			24	3.5%	affects A Little			684	1.9%
affects None At All			16	2.3%	affects None At All			607	1.7%
SSDI yes			13	1.9%	SSDI yes			362	1.0%
SSDI no			22	3.2%	SSDI no			923	2.6%
SSDI unsure			24	3.5%	SSDI unsure			640	1.8%
No - Disability	259	35.8%	222	32.5%	No - Disability	7703	21.2%	6879	19.5%
Does not want to disclose	21	2.9%	14	2.0%	Does not want to disclose	552	1.5%	449	1.3%

Percentages are based on the total number of employees reported by the agency/agencies.

The sum of the numbers listed in the categories of disabilities may be greater than the number listed in the Yes- Disability category due to respondents listing more than one disability category.

State Agencies included Office of the Governor, Division of Administration, Board of Regents, Children & Family Services, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Culture, Recreation & Tourism, Economic Development, Louisiana Dept. of Education, Environmental Quality, Department of Health, Gov. Office Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness, Insurance, Louisiana Workforce Commission, Natural Resources, Office of Financial Institutions, Dept. of Public Safety & Corrections, Louisiana Dept. of Revenue, Secretary of State, State Civil Service, Dept. of Transportation & Development, Louisiana Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Wildlife & Fisheries and Louisiana Community & Technical College System.