



# State as a Model Employer (SAME) Pathway to Implementation



## Executive Summary

The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) shares in the vision of our Governor and is dedicated to helping our state reach the goal to "serve as a model employer for business by a commitment to improving hiring, recruitment, and retention of people with disabilities" as outlined in Executive Order JBE 18-08. The agency is committed to erasing obstacles in creating and maintaining meaningful employment specifically among individuals with disabilities in our workforce. Our vision is to become an example for other agencies, entities, industries, and small business in creating a more disability inclusive workplace.

The Executive Order directed each state agency that reports to the Governor to:

- A. Designate a staff person responsible for overseeing the agency's initiatives relative to the order,
- B. Implement strategies for employment of people with disabilities,
- C. Increase awareness of the State's disability supports and services through Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS),
- D. Ensure continued development and implementation of policies, strategies and services,
- E. Submit a plan annually by October 31 describing strategies and policies adopted by the agency, as well as progress in implementing items A, B and C.

## Current Landscape

GOHSEP has received and reviewed the Agency's results from the Survey for State Employees conducted by the SAME Task Force in September of 2020. From the responses to the survey, we are above the goal of 7% of our workforce being comprised of persons living with disabilities as outlined in the Same Taskforce Report August 1, 2018. We will continue to utilize the data from this annual survey to develop strategies and policies that will help us recruit and retain employees with disabilities.



## Policy Evaluations

In the next 12 months, GOHSEP will evaluate and make appropriate changes to at least the following two agency policies:

1. HR-0001 Process for Filling Vacancies, Appointments, and Promotional Opportunities
  - Will add language to formally adopt the mission of the State as a Model Employer Task Force Executive Order
  - 2019 – This language was added to all of our vacancy announcements and promotional opportunities, and the template for these has been updated to include this language in all future announcement and/or promotional opportunities.
  - 2020 – This language continues to appear on all of our vacancy announcements and promotional opportunities.
  
2. HR-0004 Mandatory Training
  - GOHSEP, in coordination with the SAME Task Force, will research and recommend specific training requirements for the following three groups: Employees, Hiring Managers/Supervisors and HR Managers.
  - 2019 – In January of 2020, GOHSEP will add CPTP Disability Awareness and CPTP Disability Etiquette to our mandatory training requirements for all employees.
  - 2020 – This training will remain mandatory for all current and future employees of our agency.

## Training and Education

As mentioned above, GOHSEP will utilize the online CTPT online courses to train and provide staff education. In addition, we will continue to inform staff and stress the importance of employee participation in the annual Survey for State Employee as conducted by the SAME Task Force. It is our goal to increase our agencies employee participation in this process for the annual survey.



## GOHSEP Survey Results

	2020		2019		2018	
<b>GOHSEP</b>	Employees=	237	Employees=	240	Employees=	367
Participants	105	44.3%	95	39.6%	122	50.8%
Yes - Disability	27	11.4%	23	9.6%	22	9.2%
Physical	5	2.1%	6	2.5%	6	2.5%
Intellectual	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Behavioral	11	4.6%	10	4.2%	5	2.1%
Sensory	3	1.3%	2	0.8%	2	0.8%
Disease	12	5.1%	12	5.0%	10	4.2%
doesn't want to report disability type	1	0.4%	1	0.4%	3	1.3%
<b>No - Disability</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>38.8%</b>
Does not want to disclose	6	2.5%	2	0.8%	7	2.9%
SSDI yes	6	2.5%	3	1.3%		
SSDI no	15	6.3%	11	4.6%		
SSDI unsure	6	2.5%	9	3.8%		
affects work						
A Great Deal	1	0.4%	0	0.0%		
A Lot	0	0.0%	1	0.4%		
Moderately	4	1.7%	3	1.3%		
A Little	11	4.6%	10	4.2%		
None At All	11	4.6%	9	3.8%		
affects life						
A Great Deal	1	0.4%				
A Lot	1	0.4%				
Moderately	6	2.5%				
A Little	11	4.6%				
None At All	8	3.4%				

## Agency Points of Contact

*Executive Order JBE 18-08 Section 5 A: Designate a staff person within 30 days of this order who will be responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of effective strategies to attract, engage, and advance people with disabilities.*

In accordance to Section 5 A of the Executive Order, GOHSEP's Director, James Waskom, has appointed the following Points of Contact:

Amy Dawson  
 Emergency Management Program Manager  
 225-922-2667 Office  
[Amy.Dawson@la.gov](mailto:Amy.Dawson@la.gov)



Beverly James  
 Employee Relations Administrator  
 Grants and Administration  
 (225) 358-5288 Office  
 (225) 454-9410 Cell  
 (225) 922-2666 Fax  
[Beverly.James@la.gov](mailto:Beverly.James@la.gov)

The Agency Points of Contact will:

1. Maintain a relationship with the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) POC serving on the SAME Task Force. Through this partnership, GOHSEP will seek out recommendations and guidance on identifying resources and services that may assist in recruitment and retention efforts, targeting people with disabilities.
2. Review the results of the annual Same Task Force Survey to determine if current policies and strategies are yielding the intended results of the Executive Order or if additional policies or strategies are needed
3. Annually update and submit this plan to the Same Task Force by October 31<sup>st</sup> of every year.

## Recruiting

*Executive Order JBE 18-08 Section 5 B: Implement strategies for employment of people with the most significant disabilities, including utilizing the state's supported employment program, customized employment strategies, and civil service testing exemptions, when appropriate and in accordance with standards established by the Department of Civil Service.*

To recruit more eligible job applicants for positions that are available, GOHSEP will provide the LRS POC with notification emails of current job postings effective November 1, 2018. All agency job announcements are also posted to the State Civil Service website. We will also seek out and develop relationships with other agencies that provide employment assistance to people with disabilities.

- GOHSEP has developed and maintained a collaborative partnership with LRS. This partnership resulted in our agency hiring at least one employee that was a LRS client.

Effective November 1, 2018 GOHSEP will include "Louisiana is a State as a Model Employer for People with Disabilities" in all job postings for our agency.

- This language was added to all of our job postings, and the posting template was updated for all future job announcements.

GOHSEP will develop and implement training for hiring managers regarding skills and resources for interviewing people with disabilities this includes developing language and appropriate questions for hiring managers to ask applicants to ensure that all interviews are accessible and reasonable accommodations are made for applicants with disabilities.



## Retention

*Section 5 C. Increase awareness of the state's disability employment supports and services and utilize the resources, services, and funding available through Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and Louisiana Workforce Commission to provide opportunities for work based learning experiences, internships and trainings to high school and college students with disabilities including youth with significant disabilities.*

GOHSEP will identify and meet with contacts at secondary education institutions to identify ways to increase recruitment contacts with students with disabilities through tools such as student positions, internships, and job boards. We will target those institutions that have Programs for Successful employment.

- GOHSEP has conducted research and planning on educational institutions and state agency partnerships that have been successful in the past such as DOTD and Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC). GOHSEP plans to meet with BRCC to determine if a similar internship program would be a good fit for our agency.

## Evaluating Accommodation Requests

In accordance with agency policy, if a GOHSEP employee or non-employee has a request for an accommodation in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended, the individual should follow the procedures outlined below:

1. Request in writing an accommodation with supporting documentation as applicable, i.e. doctors certification.
2. Submit the request to the immediate supervisor with a copy to the Human Resources Office.

The immediate supervisor in consultation with the Human Resources Office and the GOHSEP Executive Council will review the accommodation request and notify the individual of GOHSEP's response.



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