



LOUISIANA SECRETARY OF STATE



State as a Model Employer (SAME) 2021-2026 Agency Plan

PURPOSE

According to the 2017 Annual Disabilities Statistic Compendium, 30% of people with disabilities in Louisiana live in poverty as compared to 16% of people without disabilities. Executive Order JBE 18-08 recognizes 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.

The Secretary of State's office joins Governor John Bel Edwards in serving 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 workforce be comprised of persons living with a disability.

AGENCY PLAN

The Secretary of State's office is committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity and inclusion. All Secretary of State (SOS) employees have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect, and to make employment decisions that are in the best interest of the agency and the citizens of Louisiana. This includes recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting individuals with disabilities who are capable of performing the essential duties of a position either with or without accommodations.

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

1. The Human Resources Director or their designee will serve as the agency point of contact for initiatives under the Executive Order.
2. The agency will maintain a relationship with the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services' (LRS) point of contact on the SAME Taskforce. Through this partnership, the agency will provide information on available positions at the Secretary of State and ascertain the availability of potential candidates at LRS.

3. The Secretary of State's office will continue to include "Louisiana is a State as a Model Employer for individuals with disabilities" in all job postings for the agency and will utilize testing exemptions that benefit vocational rehabilitation clients, whenever appropriate.
4. A Secretary of State representative will strive to attend recruitment events targeting individuals with disabilities throughout the year to inform them of job opportunities at the Secretary of State.
5. The Human Resources Director will review, update and submit this plan to the SAME Taskforce each year.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

The Secretary of State's office is dedicated to providing training initiatives to all employees in regards to hiring, retaining, and working with individuals with disabilities. These training initiatives include but are not limited to:

1. Continue to provide training for all employees regarding disability awareness and disability etiquette.
2. Continue to provide additional training for supervisors and Human Resources pertaining to workplace accommodations, workplace rights, and interviewing people with disabilities.
3. Human Resources will continue to publicize free training and educational materials regarding the right to reasonable accommodations in the workplace for individuals with disabilities as available.
4. A Secretary of State representative will serve as a resource regarding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations, workplace etiquette, identifying potential discrimination or harassment, etc.

PROGRESS ON GOALS

The Secretary of State's office's survey participation rate decreased from 24.5% in 2019 to 20.7% in 2020. Our self-reported disability rate also decreased from 5.9% in 2019 to 4.52% in 2020. We feel many factors affected our ability to receive more survey responses and a more accurate representation of our workforce with a disability including the current COVID pandemic, hurricanes that affected our workforce and the 2020 presidential election. A large proportion of our workforce is directly involved with early voting, elections and any runoff elections required. As such, many lacked the time to respond to our survey. We do not feel the results of the survey are a true representation of our workforce.

We hope to accomplish more of our goals in 2021 and continue to educate our staff on disability awareness and etiquette. We will also look towards other ways to increase our survey participation rate for 2021.

FOLLOW-UP

SOS will continue to develop and implement strategies to ensure a successful implementation and recognition as being a State as a Model Employer for people with disabilities.

Secretary of State reserves the right to revise and customize components of this 5 year plan. Revisions will be submitted to the SAME Taskforce.

	2020		2019		2018	
	Employees=	774	Employees=	760	Employees=	731
Secretary of State	160	20.7%	186	24.5%	201	27.5%
Participants	35	4.52%	45	5.9%	39	5.3%
Yes - Disability	7	0.90%	11	1.4%	6	0.8%
Physical	0	0.00%	2	0.3%	2	0.3%
Intellectual	12	1.55%	14	1.8%	13	1.8%
Behavioral	9	1.16%	8	1.1%	3	0.4%
Sensory	15	1.94%	21	2.8%	15	2.1%
Disease	1	0.13%	2	0.3%	1	0.1%
doesn't want to report type	115	14.86%	134	17.6%	151	20.7%
No - Disability	10	1.29%	7	0.9%	11	1.5%
Does not want to disclose	4	0.52%	9	1.2%		
SSDI yes	19	2.45%	21	2.8%		
SSDI no	12	1.55%	15	2.0%		
SSDI unsure	4	0.52%	0	0.0%		
affects work A Great Deal	1	0.13%	2	0.3%		
affects work A Lot	9	1.16%	8	1.1%		
affects work Moderately	14	1.81%	19	2.5%		
affects work A Little	8	1.03%	16	2.1%		
affects work None At All	1	0.13%				
affects life A Great Deal	5	0.65%				
affects life A Lot	6	0.78%				
affects life Moderately	15	1.94%				
affects life A Little	7	0.90%				
affects life None At All						

