

VIRTUAL EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE

AUGUST 13, 2025

WE WILL ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE:

- When should I start planning for employment for my child with a disability?
- Are there gainful employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities?
- How will employment impact my benefits?
- What happens if I need equipment or technology to be able to work?
- What programs help people with disabilities gain education and employment?

Register Here:





[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/
WN_tzTcYPzVQoyTBIw_fe6T7Q](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_tzTcYPzVQoyTBIw_fe6T7Q)

Presented By:




VIRTUAL EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE

AUGUST 13, 2025

| | |
|---|--|
| 9:00- 9:10am | Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jacki Pierce, Executive Director Bayou Land Families Helping Families• Bambi Polotzola, Executive Director Statewide Independent Living Council• Jeannie B Doiron, Program Manager Disability Rights Louisiana |
| 9:10-9:50  | “What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up?” Jeannie B. Doiron, CFSP Disability Rights Louisiana This presentation will display the effective ways we can support people with disabilities to discover the path to a desired career. Moderator: Jacki Pierce |
| 9:50-10:00 | Break |
| 10:00-10:50  | Louisiana Rehabilitation Services Nicole Miller, LRS Program Manager Participants will gain knowledge on the vocational rehabilitation process. They will also learn about available services and programs designed to help individuals with disabilities in their desire to obtain, maintain, or advance in competitive integrated employment. Moderator: Jeannie B. Doiron |

| | |
|--|--|
| 10:50-11:00 | Break |
| 11:00-12:00   | Exploring Employment: Opportunities for Everyone Erica Null Pellegrin, Director of Community Engagement, Terrebonne Arc Zelie Guidry, CESP (Certified Employment Support Professional), Employment Solutions of Acadiana Exploring employment opportunities for people with disabilities is crucial for fostering an inclusive workforce in our local communities. By recognizing individual strengths and providing tailored support, we can help you navigate the job market effectively. This includes offering resources like resume building, interview coaching, and connecting with employers committed to diversity. Together, we can create pathways that empower individuals with disabilities to thrive in their employment pursuits. Moderator: Bambi Polotzola |
| 12:00-1:00 | Lunch |
| 1:00-1:50 | Breakout Sessions |
| 1:00-1:50  | Postsecondary Education Opportunities in Louisiana & LaPIE Mary Breaud, Ed.D. Nicholls State University, Associate Professor of Education and Faculty Advisor for Bridge to Independence The work of LaPIE and the Postsecondary Inclusive Education Committee are working for students with Intellectual Disabilities to explore and be a part of Postsecondary programs after high school at universities and community colleges throughout the state. This session will provide information on how these programs were deleted and how LaPIE and the PIEF work together to create and enhance the programs. Moderator: Jacki Pierce |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>1:00-1:50</p>  | <p>An introduction to Social Security Disability Benefits Counseling & Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) - Zane Richardson, CWIC</p> <p>You will gain an understanding of the importance of benefits counseling and what WIPA can do for you as a beneficiary of Social Security disability benefits. You'll learn the differences in the Security disability benefits programs, the various work incentives available to beneficiaries, how to successfully manage your benefits while working, and how ABLE accounts can help.</p> <p>Moderator: Jeannie Doiron</p> |
| <p>1:00-1:50</p>  | <p>Pathways to Success</p> <p>Ashley Navarre, MPA, Lighthouse Louisiana</p> <p>This demonstration project serves 30 parishes across Louisiana, helping youth and adults with disabilities prepare and maintain careers in telecommunications, customer service, and other technology-driven fields.</p> <p>Moderator: Bambi Polotzola</p> |
| <p>2:00-2:50</p> | <p>Panel: Self-Advocacy in the Workplace</p> <p>This panel discussion will spotlight self-advocacy in the workplace and highlight how to lead in a way that others want to follow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darren Broussard, LPC • Ruth Cook • Myron Wright <p>Moderator: Jeannie B. Doiron</p> |
| <p>2:50-3:00</p> | <p><i>Break</i></p> |
| <p>3:00-3:50</p> | <p>Panel: Employer/Employee Dynamics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This panel discussion will give examples of good workplace relationships • Susan Riehn & Wallace Johnson, Families Helping Families of SWLA • Kristine Russell & Mary Katherine Szush, Lafourche Parish District Attorney's Office • Patricia Yoruw & Gary Seeger, New Horizons <p>Moderator: Jacki Pierce</p> |
| <p>3:50-4:00</p> | <p><i>Closing/Evaluation</i></p> |