

IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAPIDES AMERICAN JOB CENTER

A proud partner of the **americanjobcenter** network

A Message from the Director



We are excited about Workforce Operations returning to full normalcy, at the Rapides American Job Center. Customers, both job seekers and employers are returning to the Center to take advantage of the full array of services.

Center Staff are also excited about the visit of the Mobile Workforce Center on March 31, 2022 at 10:00am! We invite all to walk over to the Center for a quick walk-through tour from 9:00am - 10:00am as well.

Let us be your "One Stop" for all of your workforce needs!

Elaine Morace, Director
Rapides American Job Center

Rapides Workforce Development Board

Elaine Morace, WDB Director
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- Deborah Randolph
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LWC Mobile Workforce Center Visits Rapides Parish

The Mobile Workforce Center responds to mass layoffs and natural disasters to help affected individuals apply for new jobs, benefits and services. It is also deployed to help employers with onsite recruitment and hiring events.

Join the Rapides American Job Center (AJC) in welcoming the Mobile Workforce Center on March 31st, 10:00am at Rapides AJC in Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria, LA.



MJ Foster Promise Program

Named after former Louisiana Governor Mike J. Foster, the MJ Foster Promise Program is a new \$10.5 million annual state fund that will provide financial support for students to earn credentials (both academic and non-credit) that align to high-demand jobs in these growing industry sectors – information technology, healthcare, transportation and logistics, construction, and manufacturing – see the full list of approved qualified programs [here](#). This includes students pursuing associates degrees, a technical certificate, or HiSET/high school equivalency (Workready U).

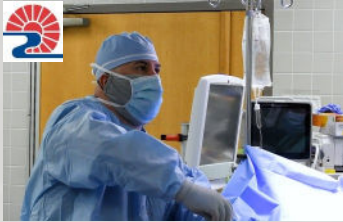
For eligibility, a student must:

1. Be 21 or older.
2. Meet a family income that does not exceed 300% of the Federal Poverty Level or be unemployed or underemployed for six months prior to receiving grant.
 - Household of 1 = \$38,640
 - Household of 2 = \$52,260
 - Household of 3 = \$65,880
 - Household of 4 = \$79,500
 - Household of 5 = \$93,120

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Rapides Surgical Weight Loss Clinic Opens and is Accepting Clients



Dr. Linger performing the surgery

Obesity is a fact in Louisiana. The state ranks in the top 10 least healthy states in the country for both adult and childhood obesity.

Estimates are nearly one out of four adults in Louisiana are obese. To help combat obesity, Rapides Surgical Weight Loss Clinic is now accepting patients. The clinic not only offers a surgical solution to weight loss, but it also promotes lifestyle change.

“Weight loss surgery has proven to be the most effective option for long-term weight loss,” said weight loss surgeon Matthew Linger, M.D. “Following surgery, many patients will see improvements in conditions such as type II diabetes, hypertension, obstructive sleep apnea, joint pain and in many other areas.”

Dr. Linger serves as the medical director of the surgical weight loss program and is assisted by surgeon Samantha Zeringue, M.D., physician assistant Rachael Raines, P.A., and coordinator Debbie Bullock, R.N.

Drs. Linger and Zeringue perform weight loss surgery using the da Vinci Xi robotic surgical system. The benefits of robotic bariatric surgery include fewer complications, less post-operative pain, less blood loss, shorter hospital stays and quicker recovery times. Dr. Linger performed the first robotic weight loss surgeries at Rapides Regional Medical Center on Jan. 20 and 21.

Patients of the Rapides Surgical Weight Loss program must meet certain criteria to be eligible for surgery. They must have a Body Mass Index (BMI) in excess of 40 or BMI of 35 if they have at least one other health condition such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease or obstructive sleep apnea.

Rapides Surgical Weight Loss Clinic is located at 501 Medical Center Drive, Suite 1B on the first floor of Rapides Women’s and Children’s Hospital. Appointments may be made by calling (318) 767-2281.

The program also includes a monthly support program for patients post-surgery. It is held the second Thursday of each month in the Trellis Room at Rapides Women’s and Children’s Hospital.

Free monthly informational seminars are held the second Tuesday of the month at 5:15 p.m. in the Cascade Room at Rapides Women’s and Children’s Hospital. To register, call (318) 769-3822.

Future of HealthC. A.R.E Program

The Future of HealthC.A.R.E. (Career, Academic Readiness and Exploration for Students) Program Grant funding opportunity is open. Accredited postsecondary institutions, nonprofits or governmental entities are invited to apply for this funding opportunity. Letters of Intent submissions are due by Monday, April 25, 2022, no later than 1 p.m. CT. If applicants are invited to submit a Full Proposal, submissions will be due by August 8, 2022.



The purpose of the Future of HealthC.A.R.E. (Career, Academic Readiness and Exploration for Students) Program Grant is to increase the number of qualified students from the Foundation’s nine-parish service area enrolling in healthcare training programs or entering into the healthcare workforce. The funding opportunity will support the efforts of nonprofit organizations, public and private school districts, and accredited colleges and universities to develop and implement K-12 strategies to accomplish one or more of the following objectives:

- 1) Increase awareness and exposure to healthcare occupations.
- 2) Prepare students for the academic rigor of healthcare training programs.
- 3) Increase or build technical skills needed to work in healthcare occupations.

The grant term will be up to 68 months, beginning November 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2028. All funded projects can include a planning and start-up period starting November 1, 2022, and ending no later than May 31, 2023. The Foundation will consider multiple applications per organization for this opportunity. This is a competitive grant application process and available grant funding from The Rapides Foundation is limited. Grant funding must align with project needs and must be used to implement K-12 strategies that will lead to one of the three objectives.

All funded projects must be offered in The Rapides Foundation’s nine-parish service area. Applicants are encouraged to partner with other organizations. Applicants should thoroughly review the Request for Proposals and other key documents to see full details, application process and proposal requirements, which can be found by visiting www.rapidesfoundation.org and clicking on the “Grants” tab.

For questions related to this funding opportunity, contact **Kiydra Harris**, PharmD, Program Officer at 318-767-3007 or kiydra@rapidesfoundation.org

Log on to The Rapides Foundation.



318.487.5532

Want to Jumpstart or Advance your Career?



LSUA Continuing Education offers flexible, self-paced non-credit certificate programs to help you start a new career or advance within your current occupation. Each course is developed by a team of experts and comes with dedicated student advisor to support you as you train for jobs in high demand fields and prepare for nationally recognized certifications.

These programs are approved on State Eligible Training Provider List. *(click on the course name to view more information)*

- ◆ IT Foundations Bundle (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ CompTIA™ A+ Certification Training (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ CompTIA™ A+ with ITIL Foundation Certification Training (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ CompTIA™ Network+ Certification Training (Voucher Included)
- ◆ CompTIA Security+ Certification Training (Voucher Included)
- ◆ CompTIA Certification Training: Network+, Security+ (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ CompTIA Advanced Security Practitioner (CASP) (Voucher Included)
- ◆ CompTIA Certification Training: ITF+ and A+ (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ CompTIA Certification Training: ITF+, A+, Network+, Security+ (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ CompTIA Certification Training: A+, Network+, Security+ (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ Certified Ethical Hacker (Voucher Included)
- ◆ Certified Information Security Manager (CISM) (Voucher Included)
- ◆ Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)
- ◆ Certified Legal Secretary
- ◆ Certified Administrative Professional with Microsoft Office Master 2019 (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ Certified Administrative Professional with Microsoft Office Specialist 2019 (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ Certified Bookkeeper
- ◆ Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) (Voucher Included)
- ◆ Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) + Certified Electronic Health Records Specialist (CEHRS) (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ Freight Broker/Agent Training
- ◆ Human Resources Professional
- ◆ Human Resources Professional with Payroll Practice and Management

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RoyOMartin Grows Trees and People



You deserve a place where your talent is recognized and rewarded. When your strengths meet their opportunities, great things can happen. You'll work with and learn from the best in the industry, in a fulfilling career with exceptional benefits. Across the country, RoyOMartin is known as a top employer because they invest in potential. Ready for a job you'll love? It's time to talk.

Open Position Spotlight

Responsibilities include safely operating production equipment used to make plywood; troubleshooting mechanical issues; producing a quality product and required efficiencies consistently; and cross-training on different machine centers. The starting pay is \$15.50 per hour, with the ability to earn up to \$23.00 per hour through on-the-job training.



This position is a professional who oversees the human resources day-to-day functions and responsibilities and manages the hiring process for the Chopin site. Responsibilities include managing employee orientation and onboarding, recruiting and staffing administrative processes, referral program. The candidate will also prepare analytic reports; create standard operating procedures; manage FMLA cases, and employee personnel folders; and organize, assist, and participate in site events.



Candidates must be at least 18 years of age to apply. Must have a high school diploma or equivalent and demonstrate verbal and written communication skills and computer proficiency. A background in an industrial environment is preferred. The ideal candidate should be able to demonstrate excellent interpersonal and teamwork skills. Additionally, he/she must successfully complete the WorkKeys assessment. The starting pay for production team members at RoyOMartin-OSB is \$16.43 an hour, with the potential to earn up to \$30.00 an hour through on-the-job training.



Want to check out more positions and join their team? Apply [here](#).

Community Partners



Rapides Parish Police Jury
(318) 473-6660



Louisiana Workforce Commission
(318) 487-5532



Louisiana Technical & Community College System
(318) 487-5443



Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (on site)
(318) 487-5335



National Association for Hispanic Elderly
(318) 221-7611



Alexandria Housing Authority
(318) 442-8843

Helpful Organizations for Employers



US Department of Labor



Louisiana Workforce Commission



Cenla Regional Chamber of Commerce



Louisiana Small Business Development Center



Secretary of State



Rapides Sales & Use Tax Department



Employer.gov

Click the logos to access the organization's website.





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COVID-19 Vaccine & Booster Shots Locations

**Rapides Regional
Medical Center**
211 4th St. Alexandria, LA
(318) 769 - 5931

**Christus St. Francis
Cabrini Hospital**
3330 Mansonic Dr.,
Alexandria, LA
(318) 487 - 1122

LSU of Alexandria
8100 Highway 71 S.,
Alexandria, LA
(318) 427 - 4468

Boyce Pharmacy
513 Ulster Ave., Boyce, LA
(318) 793 - 2400

Ray's Pharmacy
5822 Monroe Hwy, Ball LA
(318) 640 - 1174

Rapides Parish Health Unit
5604 Coliseum Blvd.
Alexandria, LA
(318) 487 - 5282

**Woodworth Community
Health Center**
9375 Hwy 165 S,
Woodworth, LA
(318) 484 - 9588

Boyce Pharmacy
513 Ulster Ave., Boyce, LA
(318) 793 - 2400

**Rapides Primary
Health Care**
1217 Willow Glen River
Rd., Alexandria, LA
(318) 487 - 4400

Pearson Drugs #7
1806 Water St.,
Lecompte, LA
(318) 776 - 5649



Vaccine availability is
subject to change.

Appointments are
required at most locations.
To stay updated with
vaccine locations and
availability, click the
CDC logo.

Emergency Power Station Kits (EPSK)



Cenla Community Action Committee, Inc., in partnership with Home Depot is providing Emergency Power Station Kits to safely power the necessities of home in the event of a storm or temporary power outage to eligible clients.

These power stations are safer than gas-powered generators and can provide power to run a C-Pap and or Oxygen Machine, charge cellphones, power a light source as well as provide power to a mini refrigerator to keep insulin at safe temperature.

Applicants must:

- (1) Meet income Eligibility Requirement (subject to change and are based upon state requirement at the time of application).
- (2) Have a health related need that requires the use of power to prevent condition from worsening.
- (3) Must attend training on how to use the EPSK safely and efficiently.
- (4) Must sign a "hold Harmless Waiver"

Kits include: One portable power station, one solar charging panel and one portable Light

Disclaimer: Only one EPSK per household. These kits are not to be used as a replacement for your home's major source of energy.

Call **318-314-3471** for more information and to see if you qualify.

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- ◆ Certified Medical Administrative Assistant with Certified Electronic Health Records Specialist + Medical Terminology (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ Certified Medical Administrative Assistant with Medical Billing and Coding (Vouchers Included)
- ◆ HVAC/R Technician (Voucher Included)
- ◆ Medical Billing and Coding (Vouchers Included) (GES 1014)
- ◆ Pharmacy Technician (Voucher Included)
- ◆ Professional Bookkeeping with QuickBooks Online (Voucher Included)
- ◆ Professional Bookkeeping with QuickBooks Online with Payroll Practice and Management (Voucher Included)
- ◆ Senior Professional in Human Resources
- ◆ SSCP Systems Security Certified Practitioner

For more information, contact **Ashley Nelson** at (318) 427-4441 or (318) 599-9779 or



Get your taxes prepared for free!

If you had a household income of \$57,000 in 2021, you may be eligible for free tax preparation services. In the last three years, this program put approximately \$13 million back in the hands of hardworking families in Central Louisiana through free tax preparation assistance. Filing runs from February 2022 to April 18, 2022.

Eligible individuals may also use [MyFreeTaxes](https://www.myfreetaxes.com) to file their taxes for free at home. You can file your taxes for free online using Tax Slayer's easy and accurate tax preparation software with no cap on income. This is a great option for a variety of people, including young adults. If you have any questions while filing call the MyFreeTaxes.com helpline at 1-855-698-9435.

By Appointment Only
Please contact **Yolanda Vanzant**
318-443-7203 ext.5

Please Bring: Current Picture ID, All W-2's from 2021, 1099, 1098, etc. (if any), A copy of 2020 return if available, SSN for you and ALL your dependents, Valid E-mail address, Voided Check or Bank Routing number and Checking/Savings account numbers.

continued from page 1 - MJ Foster

To view the most updated poverty thresholds and for households of six or more, visit the [U.S. ASPE webpage](https://www.aspe.hhs.gov) for more information.

3. Have earned a high school diploma or equivalent or co-enroll in a qualified program of study and in a program to earn high school credential.
4. Have not previously earned an undergraduate degree at the associate level or above.
5. Be a Louisiana resident and U.S. Citizen.
6. Commit to reside in Louisiana one year after completion and to perform 20 hours of community service, an internship, or a mentorship annually to maintain the award.

To view the participating colleges and learn more about the program, [click here](#).

*Incarcerated individuals and those who have been convicted of any crime of violence as defined in RS 14:2 are prohibited from receiving M.J. Foster Promise funds.



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Unemployment Rates in Central Louisiana by Parishes

- Allen Parish - 4.4%
- Avoyelles Parish - 4.1%
- Catahoula Parish - 4.1%
- Grant Parish - 3.3 %
- La Salle Parish - 2.6%
- Natchitoches Parish-3.7%
- Rapides Parish - 3.1%
- Vernon Parish - 3.6%
- Winn Parish - 4.0%

The data above is the preliminary unemployment rates in Central Louisiana for January 2022. Not seasonally adjusted. Source: Labor Market Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program

Job Openings Advertised online in Central Louisiana by Parishes

- Allen Parish - 171
- Avoyelles Parish - 296
- Catahoula Parish - 33
- Grant Parish - 41
- La Salle Parish - 123
- Natchitoches Parish - 351
- Rapides Parish - 3,085
- Vernon Parish - 472
- Winn Parish - 77

This data above shows the distribution number of job openings advertised online in Central Louisiana by parishes on March 18, 2022. Source: Online advertised jobs data

Occupations with the Highest Number of Job Openings Advertised in Alexandria, MSA

- Registered Nurses - 465
- Physicians, All Other - 121
- LPN & LVN - 78
- Nursing Assistants - 75
- Critical Care Nurses - 40
- Customer Service Rep - 40
- Respiratory Therapists - 33
- Radiologic Technologists & Technicians - 33
- Medical & Health Services Managers - 33
- Retail Salespersons - 32

Source: Online advertised jobs data. March 18, 2022

Rapides Parish School Board District-Wide Career Fair



The RPSB will hold its District-Wide Career Fair on Saturday, April 2, 2022 at 9am - 12pm, at Bolton Community Center, 315 Bolton Ave., Alexandria, LA.

RPSB is in need of elementary and secondary teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, educational diagnosticians, schools psychologists, paraprofessionals, custodians, bus operators, bus attendants, food service personnel, and physical plant personnel. Applicants should bring their resume.

For more information, contact **Wanda Stevenson** at wanda.stevenson@rpsb.us or call (318) 487-0888

Glass Act Recycling is Officially Open!



Glass Act Recycling is a non-profit organization in Alexandria, the first glass recycling center in Central Louisiana.

Founded by Annie Collins who believes that recycling glass can relieve our landfills and the environment of glass that takes over 1 million years to decompose. Recycled glasses can alternatively be crushed into sand and repurposed into useful products for the community.

You can drop-off your glasses on Fridays & Saturdays from 10am - 2pm at 5215 Leo St., Alexandria (behind Walk On's).

Learn more about [Glass Act Recycling](#)

SPERO

Special Program for the Enhancement of Resources and Opportunities for Students with Developmental Disabilities

LSUA is happy to announce that the SPERO program will be launched, as planned, in Fall 2022. The university is now accepting applications from prospective students.

SPERO program aims to bring hope to the lives of young people with developmental disabilities—by providing them with the resources and opportunities that will help them lead more independent lives and take up meaningful and rewarding employment in their communities.

Application form and instructions can be downloaded [here](#). Please be aware that a limited number of students will be accepted for Fall 2022.

The SPERO program is largely funded through grants and donations. LSUA is particularly grateful to Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Louisiana and the Coughlin Saunders Foundation (Alexandria, Louisiana) for their financial support of the program; and to Congresswoman Julia Letlow (Louisiana 5th Congressional District) for her help in securing federal dollars for the program. LSUA is also grateful for the many generous donations that private individuals have made to SPERO.

Donate to SPERO

For additional information about the SPERO program, visit [LSUA SPERO](#).

DID YOU know?

HiRE Helping Individuals Reach Employment. HiRE is the Louisiana Workforce Commission's improved self-service system.

This system offers a full range of features and services to assist job seekers and employers in their workforce development needs.

Once you create a HiRE login, you'll have access to the services and tools described [here](#).

Register [here!](#)

For more information, contact **James Irby** at 318-427-5547 or jirby@lwc.la.gov



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Benefits to Employers

Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC)

WOTC is one tool in a diverse toolbox of flexible strategies designed to help move people into gainful employment and obtain on-the-job experience. It joins other tax credits, education, and workforce training and development programs that help American workers with barriers to employment prepare for good jobs; ease their transition from job to job; benefit from the creation of effective regional economic development strategies; and create high performance workplaces.

For more information, [click here.](#)

Fidelity Bonding

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) offers bonding services for hard-to-place job seekers under the Fidelity Bonding Program. The federal bonding program provides insurance to employers that protects against employee dishonesty and acts as an incentive to hire at-risk applicants, including Returning Citizens (ex-offenders). Fidelity Bonding covers theft, forgery, larceny and embezzlement. Bond insurance issued ranges from \$5,000 - \$25,000 for a 6-month period with **no deductible**. The bond can be issued to employers once the applicant has received a job offer with a scheduled start date.

For more information, [visit here.](#)

Labor Market Information

Latest Unemployment Rates

	January 2022	December 2021	November 2021
Rapides Parish <small>(not seasonally adjusted)</small>	3.1%	2.7%	3.0%
Louisiana <small>(seasonally adjusted)</small>	4.3%	4.8%	5.1%
United States <small>(seasonally adjusted)</small>	4.0%	3.9%	4.2%

Source: LWC Monthly Employment Bulletin

Industries with Highest Job Openings Advertised Online in Alexandria, LA MSA

Rank	Industry	Job Openings
1	Health Care and Social Assistance	965
2	Retail Trade	258
3	Public Administration	144
4	Manufacturing	123
5	Admin. & Support & Waste Mgmt. & Remediation Services	120
6	Accommodation and Food Services	107
7	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Svcs	105
8	Educational Services	65
9	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	44
10	Unclassified	913

The table above shows the top ten job openings advertised online for the industries selected in Alexandria, LA Metropolitan Statistical Area on March 17, 2022. Source: Online advertised jobs data.

We thank and acknowledge the Contributors:

Rapides American Job Center - Elaine Morace
 Orchard Foundation - Tammy Moreau
 United Way of Cenla - Yolanda Vanzant
 LSUA CoB - Dr. Randall Dupont
 RoyOMartin - Jessica Stewart
 SPERO LSUA - Dr. Eamon Halpin
 Cenla CAC - Sally Cowan LCTCS - Erin Landry
 RRMCC - Sarah Clancy RPSB - Naomi Jones
 Glass Act - Evelyn Jones LWC - Eric Irby
 Louisiana Workforce Commission

WIOA Mandated Partners (on-site)

Cenla Community Action Committee, Inc.
318-314-3480

CLTCC
318-487-5443

Job Corps Center Alexandria
318-487-6773 x102

Louisiana Workforce Commission-Employment Services
318-487-5532

National Farm Worker Program
318-435-8885

Native American Programs
985-851-5408

Trade Adjustment Assistance
318-487-5539

Unemployment Insurance
1-866-783-5567

Wagner-Peyser
318-487-5532

WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker & Youth
318-767-6030

WIOA Mandated Partners (off-site)

AYUDA & Institute for Indian Development
318-767-6040

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services
318-487-5335

Louisiana State University Alexandria
318-427-4441

National Association for Hispanic Elderly
318- 221-7611



Ava Cates, Secretary

Rapides American Job Center

5610 - B Coliseum Blvd.
Alexandria, LA 71303

(318) 487-5532

Mon -Thurs - 7:00 am - 5:30 pm • Friday - 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

@RapidesAmericanJobCenter



Craig Smith, President

Media Contact
Nannette Hill-nhill@lsua.edu
LSUA - SBDC Coordinator
Rapides American Job Center
One-Stop Operator

