

## **Attachment 4.7(b)(3)**

### **Request for Waiver of Statewidness**

Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act requires that the Title I plan be in effect in all political subdivisions of the state. The following is a summary of a program for which a waiver of statewidness is being requested.

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) operates and will continue to operate a statewide transition program. The waiver of statewidness allows for a specialized enhancement to the transition program. MDRS sponsors a jointly funded program with Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) through the local school districts and the local MDRS offices, which implements the position of a Transition Specialist in the school. This position is provided under an interagency agreement which provides for a 50% funding from each agency for the position to provide needed transition services that will expand the scope of the Transition Program for both the school district and the VR transition program. The local public agency (MDE school districts) has assured MDRS that it will make available to the designated state unit the non-Federal share of funds.

The following 13 school districts currently have interagency agreements with MDRS for the jointly funded Transition Specialist:

Canton Public School District  
Hancock County School District  
Jackson County School District  
Jones County School District  
Lamar County School District  
Lauderdale County School District  
Laurel School District  
Madison County School District  
Ocean Springs School District  
Oxford School District  
Petal School District  
Quitman County School District  
Wayne County School District

MDRS may enter into new agreements with additional school districts during Federal Fiscal Year 2015.

MDRS reimburses the school district for one-half the cost of salary, fringe benefits, travel, staff development and other possible items that are necessary to achieve the goals of this agreement. All expenditures are made by the school district with 100% non-federal monies, and are certified by the district when MDRS is invoiced for reimbursement by the school district.

Services provided by the Transition Specialist depend on individual student needs and as appropriate to each student. These services may include but are not limited to the following:

- Gathering formal/informal assessment information
- Conducting analysis of work sites and assignments for appropriate job match
- Assessing transportation needs
- Matching student's strengths and abilities to specific job duties
- Identifying natural supports in the work environment
- Assisting with preparation of transition portfolios

MDRS approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect and all state plan requirements will apply to all services approved under the waiver of statewideness. The Transition Specialist will coordinate all activities with, and provide monthly reports to, the MDRS vocational rehabilitation counselor and school personnel. MDRS manages the program by coordinating programmatic activities of the Transition Specialist and is in charge of providing program and administrative oversight.

Individuals seeking assistance from the Transition Specialist must be deemed eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. The Transition Specialist must adhere to all State Plan requirements prior to providing services to participants.

MDRS is also seeking permission to continue another project in only a limited part of the state. We are currently operating a transportation pilot project in Leflore County, Mississippi. This pilot project is a direct result of the agency's participation on the Mississippi Transportation Coalition and is part of our strategy to reach our number one goal to improve access to transportation for employment for individuals with disabilities. MDRS is operating the project in one of the most rural counties in the state where reliable transportation is nearly non-existent, especially outside normal working hours. MDRS is partnering with the Mississippi Transportation Coalition and the Mississippi Department of Mental Health with a private transportation company providing the rides. If the project proves successful, we may pursue establishing the project in multiple areas of the state to increase the likelihood of a coordinated transportation system in Mississippi.