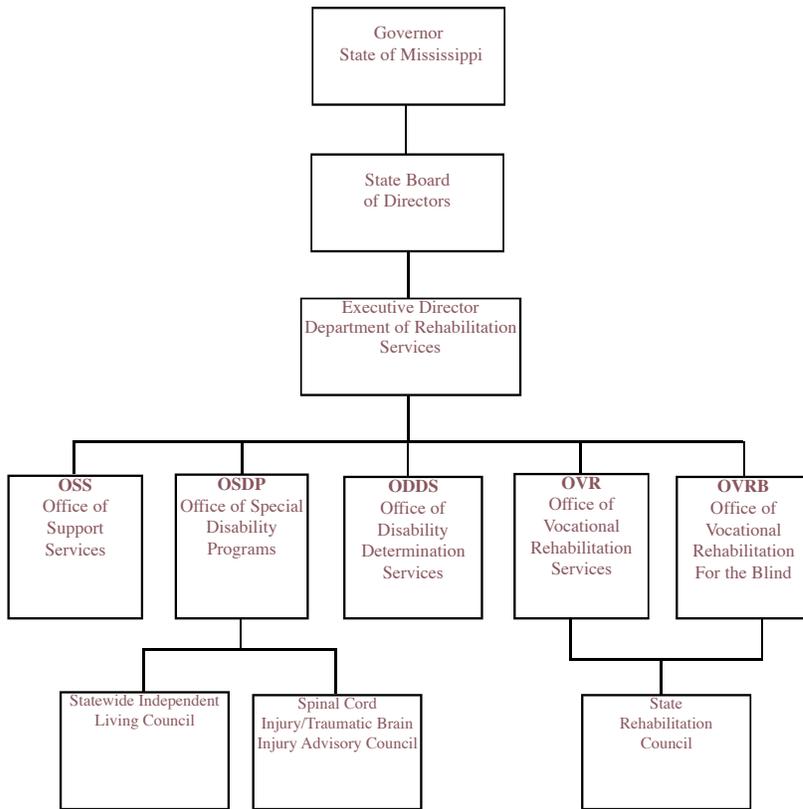
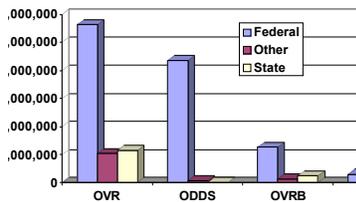


ORGANIZATION CHART



THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) is one of the largest agencies in state government committed solely to serving individuals with disabilities in Mississippi. Each year, nearly 100,000 Mississippians receive services from four offices within MDRS: the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVRB), the Office of Special Disability Programs (OSDP), and the Office of Disability Determination Services (ODDS). Funding comes primarily from federal sources with only 7.6% of the annual budget received from the state general fund. During 2004, the budget for MDRS totaled over \$95.5 million dollars. Approximately \$7.2 million in state general funds generated an additional \$67.7 million in federal funds and \$20.6 million in other funds. (See Chart)



THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) serves nearly 20,000 Mississippians each year. Services offered by OVR are designed to assist eligible individuals in overcoming the limitations imposed by physical or mental disabilities in order for that person to secure or maintain employment. Average increase in client earnings

after receiving VR services was \$10,000. The total increase in income for all VR clients was \$46 million. The total number of individuals served in 2004 was 19,325, an increase from the total number of individuals served last year. The total number of successful employment outcomes was 3,870.

An individual eligible for services is one who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment which constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment and can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services; and requires OVR services in order to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.
- Eligible clients work with local vocational rehabilitation counselors to develop an individualized program of services and goals, which will lead to employment. Each client is actively involved in choosing the goals and services which are right for him or her.

Some of the services that may be provided through OVR include:

- Counseling and guidance in adjustment to disability, vocational exploration, and planning for return to work
- Evaluation to determine individual vocational strengths and weaknesses, leading to plans for services and employment alternatives



A 1992 tornado left Jason Smith with mild retardation as well as the loss of his right arm and sight in one eye.

“I don’t like to be sitting at home watching television all day. I like to be working. It makes me feel good.”

Jason Smith

- Physical and mental restoration services necessary for the individual to secure employment
- Training for those who may need to change employment or develop specialized skills to meet their vocational goals. Training may be provided in colleges, vocational-technical schools, or in direct placement on the job
- Assistive technology that allows individuals to prepare for employment or to actually be placed on the job
- Job placement with the counselor and client working together to secure rewarding and productive employment

Individuals served by OVR have a wide array of disabilities including: hearing loss or deafness; amputations; mental and emotional disorders; endocrine disorders; epilepsy; developmental disease and disorders; genitourinary conditions; traumatic brain injuries; orthopedic impairments; residuals from cancer; respiratory disabilities; speech impairments; and the like.



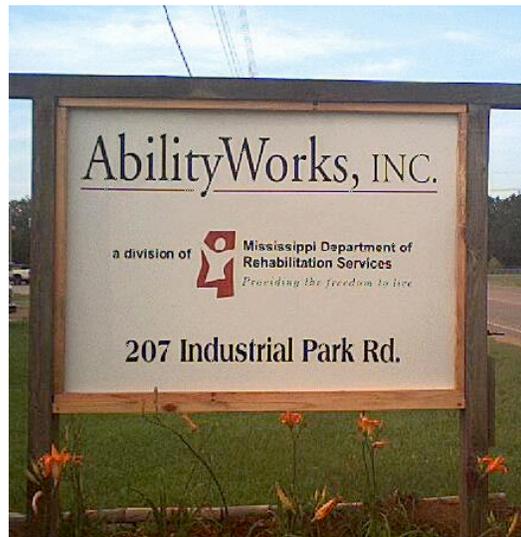
“Jason is a hard worker and we keep him pretty busy,” says Scott Beckham, general manager of McAlister’s. “I have seen him gain self confidence daily since starting to work here.”

Brandon, MS

Community Rehabilitation Programs (AbilityWorks, Inc.)

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation operates a network of seventeen (17) community rehabilitation programs (CRP), AbilityWorks, Inc., located throughout the state. These centers provide vocational assessment, job training, and actual work experience for individuals with disabilities. The CRP system's name was legally changed effective May 1, 2004 from the original Allied Enterprises, Inc. name to AbilityWorks. During 2004, AbilityWorks served a total of 2,539 MDRS clients and placed 762 of those clients into competitive employment. A total of 766 of these clients placed in employment remained employed to reach successfully rehabilitated status.

MDRS is committed to ensuring that all facilities are accredited by CARF, a national accreditation body for community rehabilitation programs. It is of the utmost importance for the assurance of quality service provision that the facilities attain the high standards required by this nationally recognized and respected accreditation body. Presently, all of the AbilityWorks locations are accredited for the specific programs of Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation Services and Employee Development Services: Brookhaven, Columbus, Corinth, Greenwood, Harrison County, Hattiesburg, Jackson, Kosciusko, Laurel, Meridian, Monroe County, Olive Branch, Oxford, Philadelphia, Starkville, Tupelo and Washington County



Allied Enterprises changes its name to AbilityWorks.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

The federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 created a nation-wide one-stop delivery system of employment services, known as the Workforce Investment Network (WIN) in Mississippi. MDRS is a mandated partner in WIA, or WIN in Mississippi, and plays an active role at the state and local levels. MDRS is represented on the State Workforce Investment Board and all four Local Workforce Investment Boards that govern the WIN system. MDRS has five certified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors and three Counselor Assistants located in three WIN Job Centers on a full-time basis. Additionally, MDRS has fifteen (15) VR Counselors co-located on a part-time basis in 15 different WIN Job Centers throughout the state. At WIN Job Centers where a VR Counselor is not co-

...2,539 clients were served through the Community Rehabilitation Program.

located, information and referral services pertaining to MDRS are available.

Through special grant programs, MDRS houses various other staff in the WIN Job Centers, including: five Benefits Planning, Assistance, and Outreach Specialists at five centers to counsel beneficiaries of Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance about the effect employment will have on their benefits, and two staff of the Mississippi Model Youth Transition Innovation to work with severely disabled youth who are transitioning from school to work. MDRS also operates WIA-funded programs for youth with disabilities in three of the four local workforce investment areas.

During State Fiscal Year 2004, MDRS continued implementation of two subgrants with the Mississippi Development Authority-Employment Training Division, the state's administering entity for WIA. In the subgrants, MDRS received funds to continue two projects that began in 2004 and established three new projects regarding agency activities within the WIN system.

Those projects include:

- 1) A project to address accessibility issues for people with disabilities visiting WIN Job Centers;
- 2) A project to design and implement a model individualized case management system for use in the WIN system;
- 3) A project to oversee the activities of MDRS within the WIN system and foster coordination between all projects in the subgrants;
- 4) A project to pilot a Disability Program Navigator (DPN) position in the Madison County WIN Job Center to help people with disabilities access appropriate services in the WIN system; and,
- 5) A project to pilot a DPN position in the Gulfport WIN Job Center to work with youth with disabilities as they transition from school to work.



Christy Hays was born with a congenital hearing loss.

“Thanks to the assistance I received from Vocational Rehabilitation I now have a wonderful job.”

Christy Hays

Deaf Services

The MDRS Deaf Services Program continues to promote excellence by striving to assist new RCD's (Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf) to reach the required communications skills level on the Signed Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI), an American Sign Language assessment developed by the Rochester Institute of Technology. Adequate communication skills are a pre-requisite to meaningful counseling and guidance with people who are Deaf and use manual communication. This skill, along with other specialized training for RCD's has been a vital factor in the successful rehabilitation of 627 persons with most significant disabilities during this past year.

In addition, six (6) staff interpreters are available to assist consumers and staff members and use American Sign Language to insure accessibility throughout the rehabilitation process.



Rell Webber, State Coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, and Christy Hays discuss her need for upcoming interpreter services. Christy works in the photo department at Wal-Mart and will receive interpreter services during her initial year of employment.

Madison, MS

Transition Services (School-to-Work for Secondary Students with Disabilities)

Students transitioning from school to work experience difficult vocational decisions. These career choices are among life's most difficult decisions and are especially so for students with disabilities. To help provide a seamless transition from school to work, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors work directly with school personnel, students, and their families to assure that there is an integrated program of education and vocational training available to students who are eligible for VR services.

In addition to maintaining an Interagency Agreement with the Mississippi Department of Education, MDRS maintains 142 Cooperative Agreements between our local District Offices and local School Districts. These agreements clarify and define procedural guidelines and methods of working cooperatively to provide transition services to students.

Through direct service funds by forty-two (42) VR Counselors throughout the State, provide transitional services such as vocational evaluation, work adjustment training and a Career Exploration and Employability Skills Program. These services are available as a part of their educational experience in coordination with school officials in their final year of high school.

The Transition Program served approximately 2709 students in FY 2004 and placed 454 in successful employment outcomes.

Supported Employment (SE)

The Supported Employment Program serves individuals with the most significant disabilities who require intensive support services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment. Competitive employment is based on the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Supported Employment is for individuals for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, or has been traditionally interrupted or intermittent as a result of severe disability.

Each MDRS District has a Supported Employment team consisting of a specialized VR/SE counselor, and a Vocational Training Instructor who oversees the work of Job Trainers working on site with clients. These teams work in tandem with the Department of Mental Health's Mental Retardation/ Developmental Disabilities programs, school districts, and other programs in their respective areas to ensure that a full array of services is available to support clients in their goal of successful employment in the community.

Multiple services are available to clients and typically include all or a combination of the following: individualized assessment, person centered planning, job matching, development of natural supports in the workplace, job development, job placement assistance, job trainer, assistive technology assessment and devices, counseling and guidance, development of sponsorship for extended services.

During 2004, 945 individuals received Supported Employment services

and 176 resulted in successful employment outcomes.

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FOR THE BLIND

Each counselor within the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVRB) serves a four or five county area, visiting each county periodically to interview clients, accept new referrals, and conduct job placement and job development activities. These counselors work within the same administrative structure as the counselors in the general OVR program, but specialize in working with persons who are visually impaired. Their goal is to ensure opportunities for inclusion into the workforce, community, and home for individuals with blindness or visual impairment. In Fiscal Year 2004, OVRB served 2,105 clients and achieved successful employment outcomes for 585.

Statewide Facility System

Three facilities around the state serve blind individuals and assist them in making personal and vocational adjustments to blindness. The goal of these facilities is to increase and improve the independence and self-reliance of those with severe visual impairments.

The Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center for the Blind provides traditional intensive evaluation, training, and adjustment services on the campus of the University of Mississippi Medical Center. This training capitalizes on remaining sight

with the use of magnifying devices and software as a part of training. During Fiscal Year 2004, the McBryde Center provided training to 169 individuals.

The REACH Center for the Blind in Tupelo, formally called Allied Personal Adjustment Center, began the provision of structured discovery training in 2003. This method involves the use of sleep shades (blindfolds) for all students at all times, increasing self-reliance and reducing recidivism. During Fiscal Year 2004, the REACH Center provided training to 27 individuals.

With the initiation of the REACH Center, Mississippi becomes the only state in the nation with two centers operating under the two prevailing methods of training for individuals with blindness of visual impairment.

By means of a contract relationship, MDRS works closely with Mississippi Industries for the Blind placing persons who are blind in competitive, integrated employment. Over the past year, MIB has averaged placing one person per month in competitive, integrated employment.

Independent Living Services for the Blind

Independent living and training services for the blind enable individuals with blindness to meet their independent living goals. Through these programs, eligible clients receive peer group counseling, assistive technology evaluation, adjustment services, orientation and mobility training, personal adjustment instruction and training in techniques for daily living. Eligible consumers

may receive home, office or community instruction, aids and appliances, transportation, and therapeutic treatment even though their potential for returning to work may be limited.

During 2004, the Independent Living Program for the Blind provided services to 786 consumers who are legally blind and either over age 55 or diagnosed with a significant secondary disability.

Itinerant Teacher Program

Itinerant Teachers are specially trained to provide services to consumers who are blind or visually impaired. Working with the area counselor, teachers provide itinerant services in the consumer's home, community or work environment. Teachers work closely with counselors to coordinate services, evaluate client needs, develop living-needs plans and instructional materials, and provide on-site training. During 2004, these services were provided to 67 consumers in Mississippi.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides full-time self-employment opportunities for about 40 legally blind Mississippians. These BEP entrepreneurs, more commonly known as blind vendors, operate a variety of businesses including vending machine routes, snack bars and even cafeterias on military bases. This year we continue our military food service contracts at Columbus Air Force Base in Columbus, Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, and the Naval Construction Battalion in Gulfport

and we have made significant progress toward securing the contract at the Naval Air Station at Meridian. The blind vendors operating the three active contracts provide thousands of meals daily to military personnel. In 2004 BEP established a vending machine facility at the Mississippi Military Department located on Riverside Drive in Jackson. A pair of interstate vending machine pavilions located on Interstate-55 near West and Vaiden were completed this year and an agreement has been reached with the Department of Transportation to construct vending machine pavilions at the interstate highway Welcome Centers. Construction of these facilities should begin in State fiscal years 2005-06. This year four trainees completed the BEP training course at the Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center in Jackson. Three of the four trainees were placed as blind vendors and the fourth moved out of the state.

OFFICE OF SPECIAL DISABILITY PROGRAMS

Independent Living Services

Independent Living Services are provided through a Federal grant program which MDRS administers through its Office of Special Disability Programs. Independent Living Services are designed to assist individuals with the most significant disabilities. Individuals with a significant disability are those with a severe physical, mental, cognitive or sensory impairment whose ability to function independently in the home or community is substantially limited.

Independent Living Services improves their ability to function, continue functioning or move toward functioning independently in the home or community. The Office of Special Disability Programs has 18 counselors specializing in providing Independent Living Services. Some Independent Living Services that are provided to eligible consumers include but are not limited to, home modifications, vehicle modifications, and durable medical equipment. During Federal Fiscal year 2004, over 2,200 individuals with significant disabilities were served through the Office of Special Disability Programs.

State Attendant Care Program

In 1985, the Mississippi Legislature created the State Attendant Care Fund. This program provides personal care services to individuals with significant (severe) disabilities. The provision of a personal care attendant allows an individual to function as independently as they can in the home or community. Many times, individuals receiving these services, are able to continue in competitive employment.

Independent Living Waiver

In 1994, through a cooperative agreement with the Mississippi Division of Medicaid, MDRS implemented the Independent Living Waiver, a home and community-based services program. This program allows MDRS to provide personal care services to eligible individuals who have severe orthopedic and/or severe neurological impairments that render the individual dependent upon others, the use of assis-

tive devices, or a combination of both to accomplish the activities of daily living. In addition, individuals served must be medically stable. Medical stability is defined as the absence of any of the following: (a) An active, life threatening condition (e.g. sepsis, respiratory, or other condition requiring systematic therapeutic measures); (b) IV drip to control or support blood pressure; and (c) Intracranial pressure or arterial monitoring. Recipients must be able to communicate effectively with caregivers, personal care attendants, case managers, and others involved in their care. Without this service, these individuals would be at risk of nursing home placement.

Traumatic Brain Injury and Spinal Cord Injury Waiver

In 2001, through a cooperative agreement with the Mississippi Division of Medicaid, MDRS implemented the Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury Waiver, a home and community-based services program. This program allows MDRS to provide personal assistance services, home modifications, specialized durable medical equipment/supplies, and respite services to individuals determined eligible. Waiver services are limited to individuals with traumatic brain injury and traumatic spinal cord injury. Traumatic brain injury is defined as an insult to the skull, brain, or its covering resulting from external trauma, which produces an altered state of consciousness or anatomic, motor, sensory, or cognitive/behavioral deficits. Traumatic spinal cord injury is defined as a traumatic injury to the spinal cord or cauda equina with evidence of motor deficit, sensory deficit, and or/bowel and bladder dysfunction. The lesions must have significant

involvement with two of the above three. In addition, individuals served must be certified as medically stable by their primary care physician. Medical stability is defined as the absence of any of the following: (a) An active, life threatening condition (e.g. sepsis, respiratory, or other condition requiring systematic therapeutic measures); (b) IV drip to control or support blood pressure; (c) Intracranial pressure or arterial monitoring. The recipient's primary care physician must provide certification of traumatic injury and medical stability.

Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury (TBI/SCI) Trust Fund Program

In 1996, the Mississippi Legislature established the TBI/SCI Trust Fund. The goal of this program is to enable individuals who are severely disabled by a traumatic spinal cord injury or a traumatic brain injury to resume the activities of daily living and re-integrate into the community with as much dignity and independence as possible. These funds are 100% special funds generated by surcharges on moving traffic violations and violations of the Implied Consent Law. During 2004, a total of 634 persons received services through the TBI/SCI Trust Funds.



Students across the state received helmets from the Ride and Roll Safety and Injury Prevention Program sponsored by the Brain Injury Association and the Traumatic Brain Injury and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund.

OFFICE OF DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES

The Office of Disability Determination Services (DDS) is 100% federally funded through an agreement with the Social Security Administration (SSA). Disability claims for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are processed for Mississippians with disabilities through the Mississippi DDS.

The Social Security disability program has a long history of extending protection to individuals with disabilities by providing benefits for workers and their dependents, Medicare coverage, and Supplemental Security Income payments. Disability benefits are meant to partially replace previous earnings and also include payment for the spouse and children.

The guidelines for determining disability are determined by law and Social Security Administration regulations. Medical evidence is gathered from attending physicians and other treatment sources. Other examinations may be purchased at no cost to the claimant if more specific information is needed.

The first consideration in determining eligibility for benefits is to determine whether the impairment is medically severe and to what degree the impairment limits the applicant's work related functioning. If the applicants cannot return to work, further decisions are made regarding his/her ability to do other kinds of work. Factors considered in vocational decisions include the applicant's job skills, age, and education.

The DDS also processes periodic reviews of the previously allowed claims as required by the Social Security Administration. Before these benefits can be ceased, it must be shown that there has been work-related medical improvement since the last favorable decision.

On January 26, 2004 the Mississippi DDS became the first in the nation to roll out the electronic folder for case processing. The DDS receives cases electronically from the 2 SSA offices throughout the state. Medical and non medical evidence is scanned or downloaded into the electronic folder and a DDS examiner and medical consultants review medical evidence on line and complete electronic ratings forms. When cases are closed, all electronic forms and closure documents are uploaded into the electronic folders. The electronic process is designed to provide improved customer service to Americans with disabilities.



The first class of Vocational Consultants to complete a 2 month in-house training program receive certificates. The training program was developed to provide staff with advanced skills in determining what degree the claimant's physical and/or mental limitations(s) will impact their ability to work.



Jermane Devine received a spinal cord injury in an automobile accident when he was 11 months old.

“My counselor gave me the guidance and encouragement I needed to find employment.”

Jermane Devine

SELECTED SOCIAL SECURITY SERVICES

The Division of Selected Social Security Services administers the following programs:

- ◆ Ticket To Work
- ◆ Mississippi Partners for Informed Choice (M-PIC)
- ◆ Social Security Administration/Vocational Rehabilitation Reimbursement
- ◆ Model Youth Transition Innovation Project (MYTI)
- ◆ Disability Quality Assurance



Jermane Devine received job search assistance and job training before becoming the assistant manager at the Goodwill Industries retail store.

Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is the centerpiece of legislation signed into law by former President Bill Clinton as part of the Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. This legislation increases choices in obtaining rehabilitation and vocational services for beneficiaries receiving social security disability benefits; removes barriers that required people with disabilities to choose between health care coverage and work.

Pearl, MS

The ticket legislation is the Ticket to Work Program requires the Social Security Administration (SSA) to issue tickets to beneficiaries with disabilities. These tickets may be used to obtain vocational rehabilitation services, employment, or other support services from a SSA approved provider of their choice. Nationally, the Ticket to Work Program was implemented in three phases that began in February 2002 and was completed in October 2004. Tickets were released in Mississippi, a second-round Ticket state, from November 15, 2002 through September 2003. Approximately 155,000 Tickets were issued to eligible Mississippians during the rollout period. Currently, MDRS is the only locally approved Employment Network (EN) offering services under the Ticket to Work Program statewide. As of November 2004, eight hundred fifty-eight (858) clients receiving vocational rehabilitation services have assigned their Tickets to MDRS.

Mississippi Partners for Informed Choice

In November 2000, MDRS was awarded a five-year cooperative agreement for the Mississippi Partners for Informed Choice/Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach (MPIC/BPAO) program from the Social Security Administration (SSA) as a result of the Ticket to Work and WIA.

The goal of the M-PIC/BPAO program is to better enable individuals with disabilities to make informed choices about work and their benefits. The M-PIC Project is recognized as one of the best BPAO projects in the nation.

MDRS Benefits Specialists through outreach activities and referrals provide direct planning and assistance support to SSA beneficiaries. From its inception in March 2001 through September

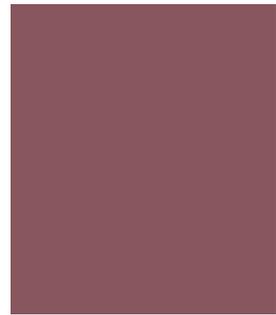
2004, Benefits Specialists have made 1,411 outreach contacts and/or presentations and served 2,720 beneficiaries.

The M-PIC program has Benefits Specialists who:

- ◆ Provide work incentives planning and assistance to SSAs beneficiaries with disabilities;
- ◆ Provide accurate information to qualifying individuals to help them understand the impact of earnings on SSA benefits;
- ◆ Advise SSAs beneficiaries with disabilities on how and when to utilize their Tickets;
- ◆ Help identify SSA employment supports that will aid SSAs beneficiaries with disabilities in entering or re-entering the workforce;
- ◆ Conduct outreach efforts to those beneficiaries (and their families) who are potentially eligible to participate in federal or state work incentives programs; and
- ◆ Work in cooperation with federal, state, and private agencies and nonprofit organizations that serve beneficiaries with disabilities.

SSA/VR Reimbursement Program

The Social Security Administration administers a Vocational Rehabilitation Reimbursement program to help individuals with disabilities go to work. SSA's role in the process is to assure that individuals with disabilities are referred to the offices of Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind and given the opportunity to receive services. Under this program, SSA reimburses MDRS for the cost of VR services if the individual performs work at a specified earnings level and all



MDRS is awarded a \$500,000 per year youth demonstration cooperative agreement...

Mississippi Model Youth Transition Innovation Project (MYTI)

In September 2003, MDRS was awarded a five-year, \$500,000 per year, youth demonstration cooperative agreement by the Social Security Administration. Along with MDRS, mandated partners in the Mississippi Model Youth Transition Innovation Project (MYTI) include the Department of Education, the Division of Medicaid, and the Department of Labor.

Entering into the second year, MYTI is currently serving 38 students in the Harrison County and Gulfport School Systems between the ages of 10 and 25. The students are being served through interventions such as customized employment while using discovery, vocational profiles, student budgets, employment plans, and benefits planning in assisting with the transition process. The project will address the elimination of the barriers that affect transition at the local, state, and federal levels through the use of these interventions and collaboration with other entities. The project further addresses new and innovative interventions such as student budgets and Individual Development Accounts. The goals of MYTI are to reduce



(photo - left to right) Rebecca Doyle, Co-Executive; Carlos Hicks, Superintendent of Gulfport School District; June Burr, SPED Director of Harrison County School District; Henry Arledge, Superintendent of Harrison County School District; Candy Murphy, SPED Director of Gulfport School District; Matt Nalker, Executive Director of Arc of Mississippi; Patty Horton, Project Director.

dependency on Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, to accrue savings to the Social Security Trust Fund using interventions, to increase employment experiences and outcomes for students, and to identify different uses of public resources to achieve positive outcomes for students with disabilities.

Disability Quality Assurance Program

The Disability Quality Assurance (DQA) Unit provides oversight to ensure quality of the disability determination process for the Office of Disability Determination Services (DDS).

DQA conducts a scientifically accurate random sample based on the formula used by the Disability Quality Branch (DQB) from the SSA Regional Office in Atlanta. This random review is applied to initial level cases only that are automatically pulled by the VERSA computer system used to process these claims. In-house accuracy is measured for the agency through the results of the review on these claims and is intended to highlight areas of weakness for improvement. Reconsideration and Continuing Disability Review samples are based on variables as requested from the DDS Administration. High risk and special study reviews are based on prior quarter accuracy and DQB returns. Currently, in place of the high risk and special study end-of-line samples, the DQA is conducting in-line reviews of multi-level claims at various stages of development to determine the appropriateness of different medical development issues. In addition, the DQA

conducts training sessions in areas identified through the review process.

During the past Federal Fiscal year ending in September 2004, DQA reviewed 6,082 cases from their end-of-line sample. Since February 1st of this year 2,830 cases have been reviewed by the DQA for in-line studies to help with the processing of claims in Operations and to support continuing efforts to “build bridges” and assist the DDS branches in meeting the agency’s need to maintain certain levels of accuracy.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Rapid changes in technology are constantly expanding opportunities for those with disabilities to participate in their communities and in the work place. MDRS has assumed the lead in assuring that Mississippi citizens with disabilities have the maximum access to this technology. The Assistive Technology Division of MDRS includes an Assistive Technology Coordinator, Administrative Assistants, Rehabilitation Technology Specialists, and Rehabilitation Technologists, enabling the agency to provide evaluations and assessments for customers of MDRS throughout the state. Types of services are based on the individuals’ needs. Such services may include: agriculture accommodations; augmentative/alternative communication; auditory accommodation; adaptive computer access; home modifications; environmental control; job site accommodations; vision aids; seating and mobility; adaptive driving; and vehicle modifications.

Project START

Project START (Success Through Assistive/ Rehabilitative Technology) is a federally funded grant program created to increase the awareness of, and access to, assistive technology for individuals with disabilities. The project focuses on providing training, information, and technical assistance in all parts of the state. In State Fiscal Year 2003, Project START subgrants provided 1,035 assistive technology evaluations. Also, through the increasing equipment loan program, Project START loaned 104 pieces of equipment to individuals with disabilities, schools, and organizations for people with disabilities. Together with its subgrantees, the project conducted 42 training sessions, 1,884 instances of technical assistance, and served a total of 9,098 consumers and service providers. The project will continue to work with underserved and minority populations to assure that assistive technology information and services are available to individuals with disabilities at their home, school, and in the workplace.



H.S. McMillan, MDRS executive director, and Steve Powell, ProjectSTART director, discuss the oversized soccer balls that give children with disabilities a chance to play soccer. MDRS, Region 8 Mental Retardation Commission and Burger King sponsored a Tri-County TOPSoccer Jamboree at Freedom Ridge Park in Ridgeland, MS. The Jamboree offered mentally and physically challenged children and young adults an opportunity to participate in fun and meaningful soccer related activities.

REGIONAL/DISTRICT OFFICES

In order to provide the best service to clients of MDRS, the state has been divided into four (4) regions and nine (9) districts. District managers report to the regional manager over their area. Each district includes general counselors and assistants, as well as specialized staff for blind and deaf counseling services, independent living, supported employment services, and transition services. Service information can be obtained through any of these offices or by calling toll-free 1-800-443-1000.

District Offices

District I

51 County Rd. 166
Oxford, Ms 38655
VR/VRB: (662) 234-6086
OSDP: (662) 234-2723

District II

2620 Traceland Dr.
Tupelo, MS 38801
VR/VRB: (662) 842-1010
OSDP: (662) 840-9947

District III

207 Industrial Park Road
Starkville, MS 39760
VR/VRB: (662) 323-9594
OSDP: (662) 324-9646

District IV

1003 College Drive
Meridian, MS 39304
VR/VRB: (601) 483-3881
OSDP: (601) 483-5394

District V

17 J. Merle Tatum Industry Rd.
Hattiesburg, MS 39404
VR/VRB: (601) 545-5619
OSDP: (601) 544-4860

District VI

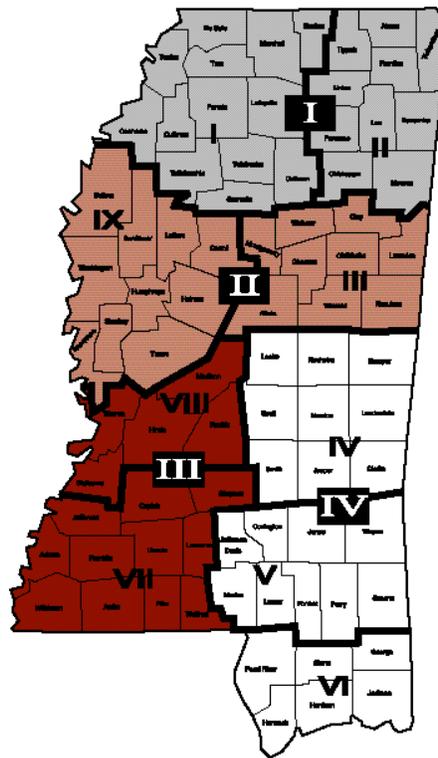
625 Courthouse Road, Suite 113
Gulfport, MS 39506
VR/VRB: (228) 897-7601
OSDP: (228) 897-7612

District VII

1400-A Harrison Drive
McComb, MS 39649
VR/VRB: (601) 249-2498
OSDP: (601) 249-4646

District VIII

300 Capers Ave. Bldg. 4
Jackson, MS 39203
VR/VRB: (601) 351-1560
OSDP: (601) 351-1525



and
300 Capers Ave. Bldng. 3
Jackson, MS 39203
VR/VRB: (601) 351-1496
OSDP: (601) 351-1490

District IX

706 Highway 49-82 Bypass
Greenwood, MS 38935
VR/VRB: (662) 453-6172
OSDP: (662) 455-2706

Regional Offices

Region I

8480 West Sandidge
Olive Branch, MS 38654
(662) 893-6917

Region II

2503 Browning Rd.
Greenwood, MS 38930
(662) 459-9795

Region III

300 Capers Avenue, Bldg. 3
Jackson, MS 39203
(601) 351-1495

Region IV

625 Courthouse Rd., #13
Gulfport, MS 39506
(228) 897-7600

OSDP/I North

1281 Hw. 51 N.
Madison, MS 39110
(601) 853-5357

OSDP/II South

1281 Hw. 51 N.
Madison, MS 39110
(601) 853-5356

*Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind = OVR/OVRB

*Office of Special Disability Programs = OSDP

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