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Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF  
REHABILITATION SERVICES

# Project START Annual Report

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## MISSION STATEMENT

It is the express mission of Project START to empower Mississippians with disabilities through education, awareness and access to Assistive Technology.

## VISION STATEMENT

Mississippi Project START (Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology) was established to provide information about assistive technology to consumers and other interested parties so they may make informed decisions about available assistive technology services.



**Chris M. Howard**  
*Executive Director*

## LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Dear friends,

I am pleased to present the 2018 Annual Report for the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services' (MDRS) Project START, also known as the Mississippi Technology Act Program. START stands for Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology.

Project START is a program administered by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services which provides Mississippians with disabilities access to assistive technology. Assistive Technology includes mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, accessibility software, technology for low vision and blindness, and augmentative and alternative communications devices.

For many children and adults with disabilities, access to and acquisition of assistive technology can make a tremendous difference in their ability to fully participate in employment, school, and recreational activities. The right tools—very specialized devices—allow individuals with disabilities to live, learn, work, and play independently.

Please see what great things we have done together this past year, and know that your continued support of Project START is vital to our mission and to what we can accomplish in the next year.

Sincerely,

Chris M. Howard, Executive Director  
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

# LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

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It is my pleasure to share with you our annual report highlighting the accomplishments of Mississippi's Assistive Technology Act Program, Project START. Working with and providing services for Mississippians with disabilities is a true blessing. Each day Project START strives to ensure every individual has the opportunity to live their life to the fullest through the assistance of assistive technology.

I would personally like to thank Mr. Chris Howard, Executive Director of Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, and his dedicated employees for their hard work and support of our program. Also, thank you to our Advisory Council for their guidance and support, and last but not least, our dedicated staff who work tirelessly every day to assist Mississippians with a disability.

As the new director of Project START, I am excited about some additions to our program for the coming year and invite you to visit our website at [msprojectstart.org](http://msprojectstart.org) for more information about our services and upcoming events. You can contact us at any time through our website or by calling our office at 601.853.5249 or 1.800.852.8328 or emailing me directly at [jtucker@mdrs.ms.gov](mailto:jtucker@mdrs.ms.gov).

Jamie Tucker, Director  
Project START



**Jamie Tucker**  
*Director*

# DEVICE REUTILIZATION

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The Device Reutilization program focuses on the under-served populations in Mississippi with the mission to provide education, awareness and access of assistive technology to individuals with limited resources in their community. The program redistributes used equipment that has been sanitized, checked for safety and repaired for appropriate use.

## DEVICE REASSIGNMENT/ REFURBISHMENT

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■ Mobility, Seating, and Positioning	6
■ Daily Living	3
■ Computer and Related	74
■ Vision	1

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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Highly Satisfied .....	61
Satisfied .....	7
Somewhat Satisfied .....	16
<b>Total Surveyed .....</b>	<b><u>84</u></b>

## TESTIMONIAL

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*Through our computer refurbishment program we are able to serve disabled individuals in all areas of education, employment and community living. In this reporting period we refurbished 72 laptop computers that were dispersed across the state. This program has become increasingly popular so we've decided to increase the amount of individuals we can serve for FY19-20 to 96.*

# DEVICE LOAN PROGRAM

Project START provides a short term equipment loan program allowing an individual to try a device before they purchase it. This program also allows an individual to borrow a device to use while theirs is being repaired or while funding is being secured for the purchase of their device.

## DEVICE LOANS BY TYPE OR BORROWER

Individual with Disabilities .....	87
Family members, Guardians & Authorized Representatives .....	11
Representatives of Education .....	13
Representatives of Employment .....	1
Representative of Health, Allied Health & Rehabilitation .....	2
Representative of Community Living .....	1
Representative of Technology .....	0

### PURPOSE OF DEVICES LOANED

Assist in Decision Making (device trial or evaluation) .....	38
Serve as Loaner During Device Repair or While Waiting for Funding .....	33
Provide an Accommodation on a Short-Term Basis .....	37

## TYPES OF DEVICES LOANED

Vision .....	27
Hearing .....	0
Speech Communication .....	32
Learning, Cognition, & Positioning .....	13
Mobility, Seating, & Positioning .....	29
Daily Living .....	17
Environmental Adaptations .....	0
Vehicle Modification & Transportation .....	0
Computers & Related .....	13
Recreation Sports & Leisure .....	0
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>115</b>

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Highly Satisfied .....	83
Satisfied .....	2
Satisfied Somewhat .....	0
Not at all satisfied .....	0
Non respondent .....	30
<b>Total Surveyed .....</b>	<b>115</b>

## TESTIMONIAL

We had a client in her 50s who was working with our Assistive Technology department as well as our Business Development program at MS Department of Rehabilitation Services- the agency we are housed under in the state. She was joining our intern program where she would be working as a bank teller at a local credit union. She was in need of a power wheelchair with lift in order to reach the counter for transactions, and there was absolutely no way she would receive funding in time to start her internship. We were able to provide her a loaner power chair that fit her needs exactly so that she could begin work the very next day. Otherwise, she would've had to postpone her internship thus creating a longer wait for her independence.

# DEVICE DEMONSTRATION

In addition to our offices at the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services in Madison, our partnerships provide Demonstration Centers throughout the state to educate individuals and their families or caregivers on assistive technology to aid in hearing, mobility, communication, vision and performing activities of daily living.

## DEMONSTRATIONS BY DEVICE TYPE

Vision .....	0
Hearing .....	0
Speech Communication .....	35
Learning, Cognition, & Developmental .....	0
Mobility, Seating, & Positioning .....	0
Daily Living .....	0
Environmental Adaptations .....	0
Vehicle Modification & Transportation .....	0
Computers & Related .....	0
Recreation Sports & Leisure .....	0
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>36</b>

## TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS

Individuals with Disabilities .....	36
Family Members, Guardians, & Authorized Representatives .....	46
Representative of Education .....	7
Representatives of Employment .....	1
Representative of Health, Allied Health & Rehabilitation .....	3
Representatives of Community Living .....	1
Representatives of Technology .....	0

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Highly Satisfied .....	32
Satisfied .....	62
Satisfied Somewhat .....	0
Not at all satisfied .....	0
Non respondent .....	0
<b>Total Surveyed .....</b>	<b>94</b>

## TESTIMONIAL

*A local school district administrator reached out to us to assist with a student who is visually impaired and has a dyslexia. He was struggling in his classes, and she wanted us to help find the best fit for him. She along with the student and his mother visited our loan library for a demonstration of a few portable devices and of the C Pen Reader as they didn't have any experience with it. After the demonstration the student decided to try it out at school, and a loan was made to him. The school district administrator called to inform us that the C Pen Reader has made such a difference in his confidence and school work. The child is doing 100% better in his studies.*

# TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

Project START provides training, technical assistance and public awareness activities, providing information on availability, benefits and cost of AT devices and services.

## TOTAL TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

■ Individual with Disabilities .....	0
■ Family members, Guardians & Authorized Representatives .....	0
■ Representatives of Education .....	15
■ Representatives of Employment .....	0
■ Representative of Health, Allied Health & Rehabilitation .....	0
■ Representative of Community Living .....	0
■ Representative of Technology .....	0
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>15</b>

*Project START sponsored a training in conjunction with a representative from PRC on augmentative alternative communication devices to educators, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, parents and assistive technology professionals. The Accent communication devices are one of the most popular items in our loan library so our staff wanted to familiarize ourselves with a better understanding of its functions as well. We learned about LAMP Words for Life and programming, customizing and basic implementation of vocabulary. We learned basic strategies to get a non-verbal individual communicating with the device.*



Your perspective is extremely valuable,  
and we greatly appreciate any and all feedback!

*Please send any comments or questions to:*

Jamie Tucker

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*Mississippi Project START is funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998,  
as amended by the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services  
Administration.*

*MDRS Project START, the statewide assistive technology program for Mississippians,  
is coordinated by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services agency.*