Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

Annual Report
The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) is the state agency dedicated to helping Mississipians with disabilities to live and work independently. It is the mission of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) to provide appropriate and comprehensive services to Mississipians with disabilities in a timely and effective manner. Programs and services assist individuals with disabilities to gain employment, retain employment and to live more independently.

*All numbers are reported by state fiscal year (SFY) July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019 with the exception of those for Disability Determination Services, which is entirely federally funded. DDS numbers reflect the federal fiscal year (FFY) October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019*
On behalf of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS), I am pleased to present our state fiscal year (SFY) 2019 Annual Report. As this is my fourth year as Executive Director to provide to you this report, I am excited to state that MDRS is truly changing the lives of so many people across this great state. Through our four major programs, we have been able to touch approximately 100,000 lives. These programs provide such important services; as: to assist individuals with preparing for and obtaining meaningful employment, to assist individuals with significant disabilities the opportunity to live at home as opposed to a long-term care facility, to provide for a safe place for individuals to live through home modifications, and to make the Social Security determinations to determine eligibility to obtain disability income that will provide for individuals who are unable to work and their families. All of these great services and incredible outcomes would not be possible without your continued support.

As we reflect back on 2019, some of the highlights of our accomplishments include the launch of the Mississippi ABLE Program which our office administers along with the Mississippi ABLE Board, pursuant to state law. In addition, our office launched our first Project SEARCH site in August of 2018 and we continue to grow this program with the expansion of five locations in 2019 and a planned 12 in 2020. Also, we are partnering with beauty retail giant Sephora to assist this great company in training and hiring individuals with disabilities. We expect to hit a goal of 100 such hires in the fall of 2019 and expect 175 in the winter of 2020. Additionally, this partnership with Sephora is assisting us in meeting with other large employers across our state.

In addition to the accomplishments noted above, below are additional bullet points of other accomplishments we made over this past year.

**Disability Determination Services (DDS) Program**
- Processed 71,115 claims
- Exceeded Budgeted Workload by 1.7%
- Led the Region by being the first State in the Region to rollout our new case processing system (DCPS)
- Provided assistance to other States in the Region by providing over 1,000 medical ratings
- Production Per Worker Year (PPWY) of 302
- Lowest cumulative Cost per Case in the Region ($376)
- Continued to process hearings expeditiously. No Aged Hearings.

**Office of Special Disability Programs (OSDP)**
- Provided services to over 3,700 individuals across the State providing the opportunity for these individuals to live at home as opposed to a long term care facility
- Provided nearly a $60,000 cost savings per individual per year to the State of Mississippi through the administering of two Home and Community Based Programs
- Provided more than 200 home modifications to individuals across the State to ensure individuals with disabilities are safe and secure in their homes
- In partnership with the Mississippi Highway Patrol and Families First of Mississippi, provided outreach to nearly 10,000 high school students regarding the PROM (Please Return on Monday) initiative
- Provided nearly 10,000 bicycle helmets to elementary schools as a safety prevention activity through the TBI/SCI Trust Fund Program

**Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)**

**Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (VRB)**
- Assisted over 2500 individuals with disabilities to successfully obtain and retain employment
- Collaborated and partnered with local school agencies to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to over 4,200 students with disabilities while in high school
- Partnered with and developed over 20 new partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Partners to provide Pre-Employment Services – Transition camps to students with Disabilities
- The 4th Annual Pre-Employment Transition Camp for Student who are deaf was held at Eagle Ridge
- Completed the 6th VRB and VR Summer Internship Program (SIP) for students – the program allowed students to obtain first-hand work experience in their chosen field
- Conducted three job fairs with over 130 businesses in attendance were held in Southaven, Jackson, and Gulfport.

The information contained within this report will provide you with even more information about our service to the state this fiscal year.

You are a key part to our successes, and we thank you for your support and very much look forward to working with you in the upcoming year.

Sincerely,

Chris M. Howard
Executive Director
We specialize in assisting individuals with the most severe physical disabilities to remain active in their homes and communities. Services are provided based on need as determined by functional assessment and are provided through an individualized plan of services and supports. The Office of Special Disability Programs offers services that include, but are not limited to: case management, attendant care, durable medical equipment and specialized medical supplies, home and vehicle modifications, respite care, and transition services. During the State Fiscal Year 2019, the Office of Special Disability Programs provided independent living services for 3,737 individuals with significant (severe) disabilities. OSDP administers the Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund. A full copy of that report can be found at www.mdrs.ms.gov.
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

We help over 10,000 Mississippians a year overcome limitations imposed by physical or mental disabilities in order for that person to secure or maintain employment. In the State Fiscal Year 2019, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services assisted 12,543 Mississippians with disabilities in receiving services including, but not limited to: counseling and guidance in adjustment to disability, vocational exploration, physical and mental restoration, job training, assistive technology, and job placement. VR also assisted 1,925 potentially eligible clients that are under the Transition Program. Individuals served by VR have a wide array of disabilities including, but not limited to: hearing loss or deafness, amputations, mental and emotional disorders, epilepsy, developmental disease and disorders, traumatic brain injuries, orthopedic impairments, residuals from cancer, and speech impairments. The total number of VR consumers employed during SFY 2019 was 2,379.

DEAF SERVICES

We help people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or late deafened find employment, attend education and training programs, and learn more about their community resources. 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, 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, has been a vital factor in the successful rehabilitation of individuals with deafness or significant hearing loss. In SFY 2019, Deaf Services were provided to 2,764 Mississippians resulting in 1,050 successful rehabilitations.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

We assist individuals with the most significant disabilities who require intensive support services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment. 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 our consumers. During SFY 2019, 487 individuals received Supported Employment services, 37 resulting in successful employment.

TRANSITION & YOUTH CAREER SERVICES

We work with potentially eligible students with disabilities between the ages of 14 through 21 to provide pre-employment transition services, as well as our eligible secondary school students with disabilities, their families, and school personnel, to assure there is an integrated program of education and vocational training available to begin to build a foundation for a career pathway, and then to help provide a seamless transition from school to work. In SFY 2019, the number of students receiving transition services was 4,285 and 347 students found employment. Services may be provided to students both on and off campus or at one of the 15 AbilityWorks as a part of their school day.
We specialize in working with individuals who are blind or visually impaired to ensure opportunities for inclusion into the workforce, community, and home. Of the 2,729 successful employment outcomes by MDRS, 350 were achieved through Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind. VRB provided consumers services such as counseling and guidance in adjustment to disability, vocational exploration, orientation and mobility training, job training, and assistive technology. The total number of Mississippians with disabilities served by VRB during SFY 2019 was 1,609.

### ADDIE MCBRYDE REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE BLIND

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. In SFY 2019, the Addie McBryde Center provided training to 112 consumers.

### BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

The Business Enterprise Program provides support for self-employment opportunities in the food service industry for Mississippians who are legally blind. These BEP entrepreneurs operate a variety of businesses including vending machine routes, snack bars and cafeterias on military bases. In SFY 2019, 38 individuals operated successful businesses as BEP vendors.

### INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

We serve individuals who are legally blind and either over the age of 55 or have a significant secondary disability by providing a variety of independent living services. In SFY 2019, ILB served over 5,004 consumers through indirect services such as health fairs, vision screening, peer groups, and outreach. ILB provided direct services to 847 consumers.

### ITINERANT TEACHER PROGRAM

Itinerant teachers work closely with VRB counselors to coordinate services, evaluate client needs, develop living-needs plans and instructional materials, and provide on-site training for consumers who are blind or visually impaired. In 2019, the Itinerant Teacher Program provided 59 services for VRB consumers.
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The MDRS Office of Business Development (OBD) is committed to being a valuable resource for any business. During FY 2019, MDRS Business Development Representatives (BDR) helped support hundreds of employers across the state in sourcing, hiring and retaining qualified candidates with disabilities. Visit mdrs.ms.gov to find a MDRS Business Development Representative in your area.

**Total Calls:** 11,053.0

**Average Calls Per Rep:** 789.50
**Average Days to Employment:** 78.80
**Total Number of People Employed:** 253
**Total Number Job Searching:** 416
**Total Number Searching for Training / Internship:** 306
**Placements per Call Percentage (Team):** 3.82%

**Referral Source:**
- VR – 73%
- VRB – 5.6%
- SE – 21.3%

**Type of Contact by BDR:**
- In Person Cold Call: 27%
- Phone: 24%
- Email: 16%

**Employed Sector Breakdown Highlights:**
- Manufacturing: 14%
- Food Service: 11%
- Retail: 16%
- Transportation and Warehousing: 8%
- Medical Facilities: 86.4%

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**VR/VRB PROGRAM FUNDING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title One Section 110 Match Funding</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 110 Grant</td>
<td>$44,680,926 (78.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Match</td>
<td>$12,092,805 (21.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Funding</strong></td>
<td>$56,773,731 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# IN-DEPTH LOOK AT VR & VRB

## Demographics of Persons Served

### Gender

- Female: 45.33%, 7,287
- Male: 54.64%, 8,735
- Doesn’t wish to self identify: 0.03%

### Age at Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 &lt;</td>
<td>4,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>2,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>2,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>2,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>1,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Education Level of Persons Served

- Bachelor’s degree/Masters Degree; Degree above Masters: 7.15%
- Elementary Education (grade 1-8): 0.98%
- High School graduate or GED: 27.76%
- No Formal Schooling: 0.25%
- Post- secondary education, academic/Associates deg.: 9.65%
- Secondary Education, no HS diploma; Occup: 15.18%
- Special Education (completion or in attendance): 3.61%
- Technical or Occupation Skills Program (not provided by employer): 0.20%
- Adult Secondary Education Program (Non-State): 0.25%
- Adult Secondary Education Program (State): 1.33%
- Career/ Tech Training Program:
  - Leading to a Recognized Post Secondary credential: 1.78%
  - Not Leading to a Recognized Post Secondary Credential: 0.64%
- Employer Training Program: 0.01%
- Education not listed: 22.44%
- IPE has not been developed as of 6/30/19: 2.83%
- No Plan Date: 6.01%

### Race

- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 0.16%
- Asian: 0.32%
- Black or African American: 44.42%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0.06%
- Multi-racial: 2.42%
- White or Caucasian: 52.17%
- Does not wish to self identify: 0.09%
- Hispanic/Latino: 0.35%
Employment Status of Persons Rehabilitated

Employment in Integrated Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office/Administrative Support</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; Material Moving</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Preparation &amp; Food</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Occupations</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Craft</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building/Grounds Cleaning &amp; Maint.</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Worker</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Practitioners &amp; Technical Education</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Training &amp; Library</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction &amp; Extraction</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation, Maintenance &amp; Repair</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Social Service</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Support</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Service</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Financial Operation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operative</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, Fishing &amp; Forestry</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectures &amp; Engineering</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports &amp; Media</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Paraprofessional</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Physical &amp; Social Science</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer &amp; Mathematical</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Specific Occupations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Occupations: 2,729

Self-Employment (excluding BEP): 299

Employment in Integrated Setting: 2,425
## In-Depth Look at VR & VRB

### Persons served by Primary Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive and Mental</td>
<td>6,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Physical</td>
<td>3,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic</td>
<td>668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Loss, Communicative</td>
<td>2,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deafness</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deafblind</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blindness</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legally Blind, Other Visual</td>
<td>1,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Status</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>16,077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Clients Served and Closed for 2018

- **Clients Served**: 16,077
- **Clients potentially eligible**: 1,925
- **Individualized Plans for Employment Written**: 5,182
- **Successfully Employed**: 2,729
Office of Disability Determination Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mississipi Average</th>
<th>Mississippi Average</th>
<th>Claims Processed</th>
<th>Average Processing Time</th>
<th>Average Cost per Case</th>
<th>Accuracy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T2-81 days/T16-74 days</td>
<td>93 Days</td>
<td>91 Days</td>
<td>78,580</td>
<td>T2-81 days/T16-74 days</td>
<td>$313.00</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Office of Special Disability Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Served</th>
<th>TBI/SCI Trust Fund</th>
<th>TBI/SCI Waiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T2 benefits are based on the amount of years a person has worked.

T16 benefits are based on a person’s income and assets.

PROOF OF PERFORMANCE

Office of Disability Determination Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processing time</th>
<th>Cost per case</th>
<th>Production per Work Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>Mississippi Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 102 Days</td>
<td>$435</td>
<td>$279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 107 Days</td>
<td>$455</td>
<td>$311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 104 Days</td>
<td>$462</td>
<td>$316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 110 Days</td>
<td>$462</td>
<td>$316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 83/86 Days</td>
<td>$491</td>
<td>$310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 83/85 Days</td>
<td>$498</td>
<td>$313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 86/90 Days</td>
<td>$542</td>
<td>$378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Prior years reporting is based on Overall Processing time. The reporting for FFY2016 forward is based on claim type (T2 vs T16).

Office of Special Disability Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Clients Served</th>
<th>Annual Cost Savings to the Division of Medicaid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3,487</td>
<td>$206,635,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3,739</td>
<td>$220,322,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3,874</td>
<td>$216,208,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4,043</td>
<td>$222,365,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>3,636</td>
<td>$207,231,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>3,270</td>
<td>$156,960,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>3,717</td>
<td>$140,175,338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As of 6/30/19

*Figures shown above are based on the Division of Medicaid cost reports for the Independent Living Waiver and the Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver. *OSDP numbers are reported from the State Fiscal Year.
The Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) of 2014 allows individuals with disabilities to save money in a tax-advantaged account that may be used for qualified disability related expenses while keeping eligibility for federal public benefits.

The Mississippi ABLE Act is codified in Miss. Code Ann. 43-28-1 et. seq. The legislation established an ABLE Board which works with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services to administer the program. The program launched in Mississippi in June of 2019.

To learn more about able or sign up visit www.MississippiAble.com.

To order brochures or schedule a presentation email MSABLEINFO@mdrs.ms.gov.

To contact customer service call 888-609-3469.
DISTRICTS & OFFICE LOCATIONS

District I
51 County Road 166
Oxford, MS 38655
VR: (662) 234-3171
VRB: (662) 234-6092
OSDP: (662) 234-5744

District II
2620 Traceland Drive
Tupelo, MS 38801
VR: (662) 842-1010
OSDP: (662) 840-9946
615-A Pegram Drive
Tupelo, MS 38801
VRB: (662) 844-5830

District III
104 Professional Plaza
Greenwood, MS 38930
VR: (662) 453-6172
VRB: (662) 455-1432
OSDP: (662) 453-2253

District IV
207 Industrial Park Road
Starkville, MS 39760
VR: (662) 323-9594
OSDP: (662) 324-1881
48 Datco Industrial Drive
Columbus, MS 39704
VR: (662) 328-8807

District V
3895 Beasley Road
Jackson, MS 39213
VR: (601) 898-7004
OSDP: (601) 898-7034
2550 Peachtree Street
Jackson, MS 39296
VR: (601) 987-7403

District VI
1032 Center Pointe Blvd., Suite A
Pearl, MS 39208
VR: (601) 709-5601
VRB: (601) 709-5625
OSDP: (601) 709-5657

District VII
1003 College Drive
Meridian, MS 39304
VR: (601) 483-3881
VRB: (601) 483-5391
OSDP: (601) 482-1594

District VIII
1221 Parklane Road
McComb, MS 39649
VR: (601) 249-2498
VRB: (601) 684-3392
OSDP: (601) 249-4646

District IX
17 J M Tatum Industrial Drive
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
VR: (601) 545-5619
VRB: (601) 545-5613
18 J M Tatum Industrial Drive
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
OSDP: (601) 545-5644

District X
13486 Fastway Lane
Gulfport, MS 39503
VR: (228) 575-3789
VRB: (228) 575-3788
OSDP: (228) 575-3785

Additional locations can be found at www.mdrs.ms.gov using the location finder.
Your perspective is extremely valuable, and we greatly appreciate any and all feedback! (A digital copy of this report can be found at www.mdrs.ms.gov)

Please send direct comments or questions to:
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
Attn: Office of Communications
Post Office Box 1698
Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1698
1.800.443.1000
www.mdrs.ms.gov