

Notice of Intent to Redesignate the Client Assistance Program

April 15, 2024

Notice of Hearing to receive public comment on the proposal by Governor Tate Reeves to redesignate the agency responsible for the administration of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) from the current agency, the Mississippi Society for Disabilities (MSD), to the Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities (MSCCD).

CAP is a federally mandated program (34 CFR Section 370), which advises and informs clients and client-applicants of all services and benefits available to them as authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended 29 U. S. C. Section 732. In Mississippi, these programs are provided through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services.

As established by Section 112 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“the Act”), the purpose of CAP is as follows:

To provide assistance in informing and advising all clients and client applicants of all available benefits under this Act, and, upon request of such clients or client applicants, to assist and advocate for such clients or applicants in their relationships with projects, programs, and services provided under this Act, including assistance and advocacy in pursuing legal, administrative, or other appropriate remedies to ensure the protection of the rights of such individuals under this Act and to facilitate access to the services funded under this Act through individual and systemic advocacy.

The Client Assistance Program shall provide information on the available services and benefits under this Act and Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (42 U. S. C. 12111 et seq.) to individuals with disabilities in the State, especially with regard to individuals with disabilities who have traditionally been unserved or underserved by vocational rehabilitation programs. In providing assistance and advocacy under this subsection with respect to services under this title, a client assistance program may provide the assistance and advocacy with respect to services that are directly related to facilitating the employment of the individual.

CAP is one hundred percent federally funded by the U. S. Department of Education’s Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) through an annual formula grant to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services.

The Governor holds the authority for the designation of the agency responsible for operating CAP in accordance with Section 112 of the Act, as amended. Pursuant to federal regulations, 34 CFR Section 370.2(c), this designation should be to an agency independent of any agency that provides treatment, services, or rehabilitation to individuals with disabilities.

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MSCCD is a private not-for-profit state-wide cross-disability organization formed in Mississippi in 1989, composed of Mississippians with disabilities and their families regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, economic status, or religion, organizations that represent or advocate for people with disabilities, professionals who work in disability-related fields, and other interested citizens. It is the mission of MSCCD to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life for children, adolescents, and adults with disabilities and their families and empower these individuals to reach their full potential in every aspect of life and to be a voice for families, advocates, consumers, and professionals representing the interests and needs of people with disabilities.

The Office of the Governor, through the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, will hold two (2) public hearings on Tuesday, April 30, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. and Thursday, May 9, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. at the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, located at 1281 Highway 51, in Madison, Mississippi, and via TEAMS video conference in the main conference rooms at the following additional locations:

1. AbilityWorks, Inc.
3895 Beasley Road
Jackson, MS 39213
Telephone: (601) 898-7076
Seating Occupancy: 10
2. AbilityWorks, Inc.
613 Pegram Drive
Tupelo, MS 38802
Telephone: (662) 842-2144
Seating Occupancy: 10
3. AbilityWorks, Inc.
2503 Browning Road
Greenwood, MS 38930
Telephone: (662) 453-7500
Seating Occupancy: 10
4. AbilityWorks, Inc.
1003 College Drive
Meridian, MS 39034
Telephone: (601) 649-8094
Seating Occupancy: 10

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5. AbilityWorks, Inc.
934 Industrial Park Road, N.E.
Brookhaven, MS 39601
Telephone: (601) 833-3201
Seating Occupancy: 10
6. AbilityWorks, Inc.
10280 Larkin-Smith Drive
Gulfport, MS 39503
Telephone: (228) 897-7616
Seating Occupancy: 10
7. Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center
2550 Peachtree Street
Jackson, MS 39296
Telephone: (601) 364-2700
Seating Occupancy: 10

The purpose of these hearings is to receive comments from all interested persons regarding the redesignation of the CAP from MSD to MSCCD.

Persons wishing to comment upon the proposed action of the Governor's Office may appear at the scheduled public hearings. Persons wishing to address their comments, data, views, or arguments, in written or oral form, may do so via phone, email, or direct mail to:

Kevin Bishop, Deputy Administrator
Workforce Development
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

Physical Address:
1281 Highway 51, Madison, MS 39110

Mailing Address:
P. O. Box 1698, Jackson, MS 39215

Telephone: 800.443.1000
E-Mail: kbishop@mhrs.ms.gov

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Written or oral submissions must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 9, 2024. The Governor will fully consider all public comments before issuing a written decision regarding redesignation. If there is no opposition to the redesignation, or such opposition is insufficient to outweigh the Governor's good cause and necessity to redesignate the administration of the CAP from MSD to MSCCD, the Governor will issue a written decision redesignating CAP to MSCCD on or after June 1, 2024.

Copies of this Notice have been provided to MSD, the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, the State Rehabilitation Council, the State Independent Living Council, and MSCCD. Copies of this Notice also will be posted at all locations provided above at which the hearings will be held, both in-person and via video conference, and available on-line at <https://www.mdrs.ms.gov/>. Copies of this Notice may be provided to members of the public upon request.

Reasonable Accommodation: People requiring reasonable accommodation or assistance at the hearing must submit a request at least two (2) weeks prior to the respective hearing date to Denee Smith, State Coordinator of Interpreting Services, by email to desmith@mdrs.ms.gov, or Barbara Hadnott, Accessibility Lead for the Blind, by email to bhadnott@mdrs.ms.gov or telephone at 601-364-2676. By your request, please specify if American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and/or Communication Access Real Time Transcription (CART) services are necessary.

Reasonable efforts to make accommodations for requests received less than two (2) weeks before the respective hearing date will be made but are not guaranteed.