

Proposal Cover Sheet

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services is seeking qualifications from qualified contractors to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services for MDRS clients.

Qualifications are to be submitted as listed below, on or before **10:30 AM CST, Friday, October 17, 2025**.

PLEASE MARK YOUR ENVELOPE:

**Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
Attention: Lee Shirley, Director of Contracts
1281 Highway 51 North
Madison, Mississippi 39110
Request for Qualifications for Pre-Employment Transition Services
No. 3120003211
Opening Date: 10:30 AM CST, Friday, October 17, 2025
SEALED PROPOSAL PACKAGE – DO NOT OPEN**

Company Name: The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies

Address: 118 College Drive #516

City/State/Zip: Hattiesburg, MS 39401

Telephone: 601.266.3123

Fax Number: 601.266.3123

E-Mail Address: lee.kennedy@usm.edu

Printed Name of Authorized Signer: Lee Shirley

Signature and Date: _____

Authorization and Acknowledgements

By signing below, the Company Representative certifies that he/she has authority to bind the company, and further acknowledges on behalf of the company:

1. That he/she has thoroughly read and understands this Request for Qualifications, RFQ 3120003211 and the attachments herein;
2. That the company meets all requirements and acknowledges all certifications contained in this Request for Qualifications, RFQ 3120003211, and the attachments herein;
3. That the company agrees to all provisions of this Request for Qualifications, RFQ 3120003211, and the attachments herein;
4. That the company can and will meet all required laws, regulations, and/or procedures related to confidentiality and represents that its workers are licensed, certified, and possess the requisite credentials to perform the transition services; and
5. That the company has, or will secure, at its own expense, applicable personnel who shall be qualified to perform the duties required to be performed under this Request for Qualifications.
6. That the company understands that should an amendment to this RFQ be issued, it will be posted on the MDRS website (www.mdrs.ms.gov) in a manner that all proposers will be able to view. Proposers shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the solicitation by signing and returning the amendment with the proposal, by identifying the amendment number and date in the space provided for this purpose on this form. The acknowledgment must be received by MDRS by the time and at the place specified for receipt of proposal. It is the company's sole responsibility to monitor the website for amendments to the RFQ.

Company Name: The University of Southern Mississippi/Institute for Disability Studies

Signature and Date: _____

Name and Title: Erica Kennedy, Associate Vice President for Research

Certifications and Assurances

I/We make the following certifications and assurances as a required element of the offer to which it is attached, of the understanding that the truthfulness of the facts affirmed here and the continued compliance with these requirements are conditions precedent to the award or continuation of the related contract(s) by circling the applicable word or words in each paragraph below:

1. Representation Regarding Contingent Fees.

Contractor represents that it [HAS or **HAS NOT**] retained a person to solicit or secure a state contract upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, except as disclosed in Contractor's proposal.

2. Representation Regarding Gratuities.

The Respondent or Contractor represents that it [HAS or **HAS NOT**] violated, is not violating, and promises that it will not violate the prohibition against gratuities set forth in Section 6-204 (Gratuities) of the Mississippi Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal service Contract Review Rules and Regulations.

3. Certification of Independent Price Determination.

The Respondent certifies that the prices submitted in response to the solicitation [**HAVE** or HAVE NOT] been arrived at independently and without, for the purpose of restricting competition, any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other respondent or competitor relating to those prices, the intention to submit a proposal, or the methods or factors used to calculate price.

4. Prospective Contractor's Representation Regarding Contingent Fees.

The Prospective Contractor represents as a part of such Contractor's proposal that such Contractor [HAS or **HAS NOT**] retained any person or agency on a percentage, commission, or other contingent arrangement to secure this contract.

Company Name: The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies

Signature and Date: _____

Name and Title: Vicki Kennedy, Associate Vice President for Research

Note: Please be sure to circle the applicable word or words provided above. Failure to circle the applicable word or words and/or to sign the proposal form may result in the proposal being rejected as nonresponsive. **Modifications or additions to any portion of this proposal document may be cause for rejection of the proposal.**

Company Questionnaire

If additional space is needed, please attach supplemental pages as necessary to completely answer all questions.

1. Corporate Experience and Capacity

Provide the age of your business. ☐ USM 113 years and IDS 49 years

Describe the experience of the firm in providing the service, give number of years that the service has been delivered, and provide a statement on the extent of any corporate expansion required to handle the service.

The University of Southern Mississippi was founded in 1848 as a military "cadet" college. Today, the University has grown into a comprehensive doctoral and research-driven institution with a proud history and an eye on the future. With a diverse student body of over 14,000 students annually representing 70 foreign countries, all corners of the United States and every corner of Mississippi, diversity is celebrated in every sense of the word. Not only is Southern Miss a haven for the arts, but the University maintains a tradition of success in both academics and athletics, offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in more than 130 programs. A dual-campus university, Southern Miss serves students on campuses in Hattiesburg and Long Beach in addition to five teaching and research sites in Mississippi and Online Southern Miss. As the premier research university of the Gulf South, Southern Miss takes pride in being classified as a Carnegie R1 research institution. As a comprehensive research university, Southern Miss (USM) houses Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, and Creative Development, Education and Human Sciences, Health and Nursing and Health Professions.

The Institute on Disability Studies (IDS) is Mississippi's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Research, Education, and Service and has been located at The University of Southern Mississippi for 49 years. IDS' mission is to positively affect the lives of Mississippians with developmental and other disabilities and their families across the life span by promoting increased independence, productivity and community integration. IDS provides an organizational structure which fully supports its mission across emphasis areas and core functions and is a unit under the Office of the Vice President for Research. Also located within the Office of the Vice President for Research is the Office of Research Administration, which ensures compliance with all grant restrictions and guidelines. The Chief Operating Officer supervises Financial Affairs, Procurement and Purchasing Services, and Contracts and Grants Accounting. Staff members of all these units assure that correct financial procedures and reporting are followed for all grant-funded projects.

IDS has a long-standing tradition of providing best practice training and technical assistance to Mississippians with disabilities, their families and those that serve them. The area of transition to adulthood has been a focus on IDS for over 20+ years and currently includes four programs that focus on employment. IDS has been part of Mississippi Pre-Employment Transition Services from the start, providing direct services since 2018. During this time, hundreds of high school and/or college students with disabilities received thousands of hours of employment-focused training and experiences.

Company Name: The University of Southern Mississippi/Institute for Disability Studies

Company Questionnaire (Page 2 of 3)

If additional space is needed, please attach supplemental pages as necessary to completely answer

2. Service Location

- ☐ If services are to be provided at a site other than firm's principal place of business (the address given in Attachment A), please specify the place of performance. ☐

Services are provided at training centers located at the USM campus in Lumbia Beach and the USM Campus in Hattiesburg. Training is also provided at middle schools, high schools, virtually through Zoom, community businesses and other community settings as needed.

3. Personnel

Attach resumes' of all those who will be involved in the delivery of service (from principals to field technicians) that include their experience in this area of service delivery as well as a list of all principals, parent organizations, and subsidiaries. Additionally, please provide copies of all applicable permits, professional certifications and/or licenses from the applicable certifying authority, and a list of all principals. A principal of an offeror is defined as a person or entity who has a 5% or greater ownership interest in the offeror and all individuals in senior-level management positions, regardless of whether those individuals have an ownership interest in the offeror ☐

Please see attached resumes/vitae and curriculum for the following TETAL team members: Dr. Jerry R. Alliston, Interim Executive Director; Rich Baker, MS, Technology Director; Vannell Coleman, Transition Specialist (includes ACRE National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services); Robert "Taylor" Carley, Self-Advocacy Coordinator; Joaquin S. Self-Advocacy Coordinator; Joseph K. King, LCSW, Executive Coordinator for Counselor (includes clinical social work licensure, ACRE National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services, and PEERs certification); Leah Kelly, Assistant Self-Advocacy Coordinator; Dr. John Phillip, Executive Coordinator for Transition (includes social work licensure, ACRE National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services, and peer mentoring certification); Scott Mullins, Coordinator social work licensure, and ACRE National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services; Michell Remms, ISW, Family Support Specialist; Asha Robertson, Transition Specialist (includes ACRE National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services); Beth Robertson, Executive Coordinator for Transition (includes ACRE National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services and PEERs certification); and Laura Thomas, Coordinator, (includes ACRE National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services).

Company Name: The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies

Company Questionnaire (Page 3 of 3)

If additional space is needed, please attach supplemental pages as necessary to completely answer

4. References

Give at least three (3) references for contracts of similar size and scope, including at least two (2) references for current contracts or those awarded during the past three (3) years. Include the name of the organization, the length of the contract, a brief summary of the work, and the name and telephone number of a responsible contact person.

(1) Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) is in its fourth year of operation and is in the fourth year of a five-year grant cycle. IDS is funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) and is a member of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), a network of 68 intellectual disability centers in the United States and its territories working to advance policy and practice for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and communities. IDS has a variety of programs to assist individuals with disabilities and their families with the emphasis areas of community living, education and capacity building and family engagement.
Contact: Sandy Root-Elledge, Interim Executive, Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) 307-760-9111

(2) Family Advocacy Network (FAN) is in its fourth year of operation and is funded through a grant with the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities. Funding is provided on a year-to-year basis with the current and last year ending on 12/31. FAN is designed to increase availability and accessibility of community-based peer support to families of children and youth receiving special education services or are underserved through Local Education Agencies in the state.
Contact: Christy Ashley, Executive Director, Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities, 601-350-5535

(3) Job Exploration is in its third year of overall services and first year of a new contract through the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. Job Exploration provides dynamic, hands-on, job exploration events designed for students with disabilities, ages 14-21, enrolled in school. This high-energy, interactive event allows students to engage directly with local businesses through hands-on workstation activities, providing students the opportunity to experience sample job tasks, while gaining insight into different career fields.
Contact: Erica Brown, Transition and Youth Career Services Program Coordinator, 601-853-5390

Company Name: The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies

Required Clauses for Service Contracts Resulting from this Request for Qualifications

1. Applicable Law. The contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi, excluding its conflicts of laws, provisions, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of the State. Contractor shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
2. Availability of Funds. It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligation of MDRS to proceed under this agreement is conditioned upon the appropriation of funds by the Mississippi State Legislature and the receipt the appropriated funds. If the funds anticipated for the continuing time fulfillment of the agreement are, at any time, not forthcoming or insufficient, regardless of the source of funding, MDRS shall have the right upon 10 business days written notice to Contractor, to terminate this agreement without damage, penalty, cost or expense to MDRS of any kind whatsoever. The effective date of termination shall be as specified in the notice of termination.
3. Compliance with Equal Opportunity in Employment Policy. Contractor understands that the MDRS is an equal opportunity employer and therefore, maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, genetic information, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful, and Contractor agrees during the term of the agreement that Contractor will strictly adhere to this policy in employment practices and provision of services.
4. Compliance with Laws. Contractor shall comply with, and all activities under this agreement shall be subject to, all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, as now existing and as may be amended or modified.
5. Contract Rights. Contract rights do not vest in any party until a contract is legally executed. The MDRS is under no obligation to award a contract following issuance of this solicitation.
6. E-Payment. Contractor agrees to accept all payments in United States currency via the State of Mississippi's electronic payment and remittance vehicle. The Agency agrees to make payment in accordance with Mississippi "Timely Payments for Purchases by Public Bodies" laws, which generally provide for payment of undisputed amounts by the Agency within 45 calendar days of receipt of invoice. Mississippi Code Annotated § 31-7-301, et seq.
7. E-Verification. If applicable, Contractor represents and warrants that it will ensure its compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act and will register and participate in the status verification system for all newly hired employees. Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 71-11-1 and 71-11-3. Contractor agrees to provide a copy of each verification upon request of MDRS subject to

approval by any agencies of the United States Government. Contractor further represents and warrants that any person assigned to perform services hereafter meets the employment eligibility requirements of all immigration laws. The breach of this clause may subject Contractor to the following: (1) termination of this contract and exclusion pursuant to Chapter 15 of the Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations; (2) the loss of any license, permit, certification or other document granted to Contractor by an agency, department, or governmental entity for the right to do business in Mississippi; or (3) both. In the event of such termination, Contractor would also be liable for any additional costs incurred by the Agency due to Contract cancellation or loss of license or permit to do business in the state.

8. Expenses Incurred in the Procurement Process. All parties participating in the procurement process with regard to this solicitation shall bear their own costs of participation, pursuant to Section 1.4.4 of the Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations.
9. Minor Informalities and Irregularities. MDRS has the right to waive minor defects or variations of a qualification from the exact requirements of the specifications that do not affect the price, quality, quantity, delivery, or performance of the services being procured and if doing so does not create an unfair advantage for any offeror. If insufficient information is submitted by a offeror, for MDRS to properly evaluate the offer, MDRS has the right to require such additional information as it may deem necessary after the submission deadline, provided that the information requested does not change the price, quality, quantity, delivery, or performance time of the services being procured and such a request does not create an unfair advantage for any offeror. (Information requested may include, for example, a copy of business or professional licenses, or a work schedule.)
10. Paymode. Payments by MDRS using the state's accounting system shall be made and remittance information provided electronically as directed by the state and deposited into the bank account of Contractor's choice. MDRS may, at its sole discretion, require Contractor to electronically submit invoices and supporting documentation at any time during the term of this Agreement. Contractor understands and agrees that the Agency is exempt from the payment of Mississippi taxes. All payments shall be in United States currency.
11. Procurement Regulations. This solicitation shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations, a copy of which is available on the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration's website (www.dfa.ms.gov). Any offeror responding to a solicitation for personal and professional services and any contractor doing business with a state Agency is deemed to be on notice of all requirements therein.
12. Property Rights. Property rights do not inure to any Offeror until such time as services have been provided under a legally executed contract. No party responding to this RFQ has a legitimate claim of entitlement to be awarded a contract or to the provision of work thereunder. MDRS is under no obligation to award a contract and may terminate a legally executed contract at any time.

13. Representation Regarding Gratuities. Offeror represents that it has not, is not, and will not offer, give, or agree to give any employee or former employee of MDRS, a gratuity or offer of employment in connection with any approval, disapproval, recommendation, development, or any other action or decision related to the solicitation and resulting contract. Offeror further represents that no employee or former employee of MDRS has or is soliciting, demanding, accepting, or agreeing to accept a gratuity or offer of employment for the reasons previously stated; any such action by an employee or former employee in the future, if any, will be rejected by offeror. Offeror further represents that it is in compliance with the Mississippi Ethics in Government laws, codified at Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-4-101 through 25-4-121, and has not solicited any employee or former employee to act in violation of said law.
14. Required Public Records and Transparency. Upon execution of a contract, the provisions of the contract which contain the personal or professional services provided, the unit prices, the overall price to be paid, and the term of the contract shall not be deemed to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated § 25- 61-9(7). The contract shall be posted publicly on www.transparency.ms.gov and shall be available for at the Agency for examination, inspection, or reproduction by the public. The offeror acknowledges and agrees that MDRS and this contract are subject to the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983 codified at Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-1, et seq. and its exceptions, Mississippi Code Annotated § 79-23-1, and the Mississippi Accountability and Transparency Act of 2008, codified at Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 27-104-151, et seq.
15. Stop Work Order. MDRS may, by written order to Contractor at any time, require Contractor to stop all or any part of the work called for by this contract. This order shall be for a period of time specified by MDRS. Upon receipt of such an order, Contractor shall forthwith comply with its terms and take all reasonable steps to minimize any further cost to MDRS. Upon expiration of the stop work order, Contractor shall resume providing the services which were subject to the stop work order, unless MDRS has terminated that part of the agreement or terminated the agreement in its entirety. MDRS is not liable for payment for services which were not rendered due to the stop work order.
16. Termination.

Termination for Convenience. MDRS may, when the interests of the Agency so require, terminate this contract in whole or in part, for the convenience of the Agency. MDRS shall give written notice of the termination to Contractor specifying the part of the contract terminated and when termination becomes effective. Contractor shall incur no further obligations in connection with the terminated work and on the date set in the notice of termination Contractor will stop work to the extent specified. Contractor shall complete the work not terminated by the notice of termination and may incur obligations as are necessary to do so.

Termination for Default. If MDRS gives the Contractor a notice that the personal or professional services are being provided in a manner that is deficient, the Contractor shall have 30 days to cure the

deficiency. If the Contractor fails to cure the deficiency, MDRS may terminate the contract for default and the Contractor will be liable for the additional cost to MDRS to procure the personal and professional services from another source. Termination under this paragraph could result in Contractor being excluded from future contract awards pursuant to Chapter 15 of the Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations. Any termination wrongly labelled termination for default shall be deemed a termination for convenience.

17. Trade Secrets, Commercial and Financial Information. It is expressly understood that Mississippi law requires that the provisions of this contract which contain the commodities purchased or the personal or professional services provided, the price to be paid, and the term of the contract shall not be deemed to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information and shall be available for examination, copying, or reproduction.
18. Approval Clause. It is understood that if this contract requires approval by the Public Procurement Review Board ("PPRB") and/or the Department of Finance and Administration Office of Personal Service Contract Review ("OPSCR"), and this contract is not approved by PPRB and/or OPSCR, it is void and no payment shall be made hereunder
19. Acknowledgment of Amendments. Offerors shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the RFQ in writing. The acknowledgement shall be submitted by signing and returning the amendment with the bid, by identifying the amendment number and date in the space provided for this purpose on the bid form, or by letter. Each offeror shall submit a written acknowledgement of every amendment to the Agency on or before the submission deadline.
20. Certification of Independent Price Determination. By submitting a qualification, the offeror certifies that the prices submitted in response to the solicitation have been arrived at independently and without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other offeror or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition.
21. Offeror's Representation Regarding Contingent Fees. By [responding to the solicitation, the offeror represents that it has not retained any person or agency on a percentage, commission, or other contingent arrangement to secure this contract. If the offeror cannot make such a representation, a full and complete explanation shall be submitted in writing [with the offeror's response, to the Agency prior to contract execution].

Areas of Coverage

List of Counties where Pre-ETS can be performed:

AS IDP is able to provide virtual services and staff are agreeable to short-term, one-day training event, the ToLAP program can provide Pre-ETS throughout the state in any county. For on-going, frequent, in-person Pre-ETS, IDP staff can provide training in the following south central and south Mississippi counties: Covington, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson Jefferson Davis, Jones, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Stone and Wayne.

Company Name: The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies

Signature and Date: _____

Name and Title: Frieda Kennedy, Associate Vice President for Research

Additional Data

As noted previously in this proposal, [REDACTED] program has been providing Pre-ETS since 2018. In addition to the quality, curriculum-based, and best practice-based training, ToTAL staff have presented in state, regional, national and one international (Spain) conferences.

Additional activities that [REDACTED] staff provide include:

- ✓ monthly Pre-ETS Update email on successes and areas of improvement,
- ✓ parent presentations through Mississippi Parent Training and Information Centers as well as at various school events,
- ✓ awareness training at various state conferences and school transition events,
- ✓ Mississippi version of the National Disability Employment Awareness Month poster which is disseminated statewide,
- ✓ series of celebratory activities for National Disability Employment Awareness Month such as the annual Together Employing All Mississippi Students (TEAMS) Awards in which Mississippi Special Education Teachers/Staff and two Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services Counselors/Staff are recognized for their contributions,
- ✓ use of actual work/community-based activities to give real-world experiences such as community garden, makerspace and coffee roastery,
- ✓ internship opportunities for social work students at the undergraduate and graduate level to promote future professionals to work in employment-related positions,
- ✓ [REDACTED] staff participation on the MDRS
- ✓ annual meetings with MDRS staff and school transition staff each year to discuss student needs for next academic year, and
- ✓ specific staff designations in employment, PEERs socialization training, peer mentoring, and neurodiverse training including a focus on executive functioning skill development.

Company Name: [REDACTED]

Signature and Date: _____

Name and Title: [REDACTED]

Redaction Notice

Offerors shall acknowledge which of the following statements is applicable regarding release of its qualification as a public record. An offeror may be deemed non-responsive if the offeror does not acknowledge either statement, acknowledges both statements, or fails to comply with the requirements of the statement acknowledged. Choose one:

☒ Along with a complete copy of its qualification, offeror has submitted a second copy of the qualification in which all information offeror deems to be confidential commercial and financial information and/or trade secrets is redacted in black. Offeror acknowledges that it may be subject to exclusion pursuant to Chapter 15 of the PPRB OPSCR Rules and Regulations if the MDRS or the Public Procurement Review Board determine redactions were made in bad faith in order to prohibit public access to portions of the qualification which are not subject to Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-9, 75-26-1 through 75-26-19, and/or 79-23-1. Offeror acknowledges and agrees that MDRS may release the redacted copy of the qualification at any time as a public record without further notice to offeror. An offeror who selects this option but fails to submit a redacted copy of its qualification may be deemed non-responsive.

☐ Offeror hereby certifies that the complete unredacted copy of its qualification may be released as a public record by MDRS at any time without notice to offeror. The qualification contains no information offeror deems to be confidential commercial and financial information and/or trade secrets in accordance with Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-9, 75-26-1 through 75-26-19, and/or 79-23-1. Bidder explicitly waives any right to receive notice of a request to inspect, examine, copy, or reproduce its bid as provided in Mississippi Code Annotated § 25-61-9(1)(a). An offeror who selects this option but submits a redacted copy of its qualification may be deemed non-responsive.

Company Name: The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies

Signature and Date: _____

Name and Title: Eric Kennedy, Associate Vice President for Research

**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES
CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

1. Parties. The parties to this contract are the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (hereinafter "MDRS") and [REDACTED] (hereinafter "Contractor").
 2. Purpose. The purpose of this contract is for MDRS to engage Contractor to provide certain professional services as set forth in RFQ 3120003211, issued by MDRS and incorporated herein by reference. Contractor is one of the vendors selected through the above referenced RFQ.
 3. General Terms and Conditions. This contract is hereby made subject to the terms and conditions included in Exhibit "A", attached hereto and incorporated herein, captioned "General Terms and Conditions."
 4. Scope of Services. Contractor will perform and complete in a timely and satisfactory manner the services described in Exhibit "B", attached hereto and incorporated herein, captioned "Scope of Services."
 5. Consideration. As consideration for the performance of the services referenced in Exhibit "B", MDRS agrees to compensate Contractor as provided in Exhibit "B", attached hereto and incorporated herein, captioned "Compensation."
 6. Period of Performance. This contract will become effective for the period beginning September 12, 2025 and ending on September 11, 2026, upon the approval and signature of the parties hereto. MDRS has the option to renew the contract for four (4) successive one-year period(s).
 7. Notices. All notices required or permitted to be given under this agreement must be in writing and personally delivered or sent by certified United States mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, to the party to whom the notice should be given at the address set forth Exhibit "C", attached hereto and incorporated herein, captioned "Notifications."
- In witness whereof, the parties hereto have affixed, on duplicate originals, their signatures on the date indicated below, after first being authorized so to do.

DATE

By: _____

Samandra Murphy, Chief of Staff
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

DATE

By: _____

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Contract #26-331-6000-XXX

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Anti-assignment/subcontracting. Contractor acknowledges that it was selected by the State to perform the services required hereunder based, in part, upon Contractor's special skills and expertise. Contractor shall not assign, subcontract, or otherwise transfer this agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the State, which the State may, in its sole discretion, approve or deny without reason. Any attempted assignment or transfer of its obligations without such consent shall be null and void. No such approval by the State of any subcontract shall be deemed in any way to provide for the incurrence of any obligation of the State in addition to the total fixed price agreed upon in this agreement. Subcontracts shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement and to any conditions of approval that the State may deem necessary. Subject to the foregoing, this agreement shall be binding upon the respective successors and assigns of the parties.
2. Applicable Law. The contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi, excluding its conflicts of laws, provisions, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of Mississippi.
3. Attorneys' Fees and Expenses. Subject to other terms and conditions of this agreement, in the event Contractor defaults in any obligations under this agreement, Contractor shall pay to the State all costs and expenses (including, without limitation, investigative fees, court costs, and attorney's fees) incurred by the State in enforcing this agreement or otherwise reasonably related thereto. Contractor agrees that under no circumstances shall the customer be obligated to pay any attorney's fees or costs of legal action to Contractor.
4. Availability of Funds. It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligation of MDRS to proceed under this agreement is conditioned upon the appropriation of funds by the Mississippi State Legislature and the receipt of the appropriated funds. If the funds anticipated for the continuing time fulfillment of the agreement are, at any time, not forthcoming or insufficient, regardless of the source of funding, MDRS shall have the right upon 10 business days written notice to Contractor, to terminate this agreement without damage, penalty, cost or expense to the MDRS of any kind whatsoever. The effective date of termination shall be specified in the notice of termination.
5. Compliance with Equal Opportunity in Employment Policy. Contractor understands that the MDRS is an equal opportunity employer and therefore, maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, genetic information, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful, and Contractor agrees during the term of the agreement that Contractor will strictly adhere to this policy in its employment practices and provision of services.
6. Compliance with Laws. Contractor shall comply with, and all activities under this agreement shall be subject to, all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, as now existing and as may be amended or modified.
7. Conflict of Interest. Contractor represents, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that this contract does not present the Contractor with a conflict of interest with respect to any past, current, or potential contract or employment such that the Contractor would be unable to perform impartially and without bias. Contractor must also refrain from using confidential or protected personally identifiable information for any other purpose other than to perform the duties required by this contract.

8. Disputes. Any dispute concerning a question of fact arising under this Contract shall be disposed of by good faith negotiation between duly authorized representative of MDRS and the Contractor. Disputes that cannot be resolved in this manner shall be determined by a court of competent jurisdiction in Hinds County, Mississippi. Pending final decision of a dispute, the Contractor shall proceed diligently with the performance of its obligation in this agreement.
9. E-Payment. Contractor agrees to accept all payments in United States currency via the State of Mississippi's electronic payment and remittance vehicle. The Agency agrees to make payment in accordance with Mississippi "Timely Payments for Purchases by Public Bodies" laws, which generally provide for payment of undisputed amounts by the Agency within 45 calendar days of receipt of invoice. Mississippi Code Annotated § 31-7-301, et seq
10. E-Verification. If applicable, Contractor represents and warrants that it will ensure its compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act and will register and participate in the status verification system for all newly hired employees. Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 71-11-1 and 71-11-3. Contractor agrees to provide a copy of each verification upon request of the MDRS subject to approval by any agencies of the United States Government. Contractor further represents and warrants that any person assigned to perform services hereafter meets the employment eligibility requirements of all immigration laws.

The breach of this clause may subject Contractor to the following: (1) termination of this contract and exclusion pursuant to Chapter 15 of the Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations; (2) the loss of any license, permit, certification or other document granted to Contractor by an agency, department, or governmental entity for the right to do business in Mississippi; or (3) both. In the event of such termination, Contractor would also be liable for any additional costs incurred by the Agency due to Contract cancellation or loss of license or permit to do business in the state.

11. Entire Agreement. This Contract, RFQ 3120003211, it's amendments, and the Contractor's submitted Statement of Qualifications constitute the entire agreement of the parties with respect to the subject matter contained herein and supersedes and replaces any and all prior negotiations, understandings and agreements, written or oral, between the parties relating thereto.
12. Failure to Deliver. In the event of failure of Contractor to deliver services in accordance with the contract terms and conditions, MDRS, after due oral or written notice, may procure the services from other sources and hold Contractor responsible for any resulting additional purchase and administrative costs. This remedy shall be in addition to any other remedies that MDRS may have.
13. Failure to Enforce. Failure by MDRS at any time to enforce the provisions of the contract shall not be construed as a waiver of any such provisions. Such failure to enforce shall not affect the validity of the contract or any part thereof or the right of MDRS to enforce any provision at any time in accordance with its terms.
14. Force Majeure. Each party shall be excused from performance for any period and to the extent that it is prevented from performing any obligation or service, in whole or in part, as a result of causes beyond the reasonable control and without the fault or negligence of such party and/or its subcontractors. Such acts shall include without limitation acts of God, strikes, lockouts, riots, acts of war, epidemics, governmental regulations superimposed after the fact, fire, earthquakes, floods, or other natural disasters ("force majeure events"). When such a cause arises, Contractor shall notify the State immediately in writing of the cause of its inability to perform, how it affects its performance, and the anticipated duration of the inability to perform. Delays in delivery or in meeting completion dates due to force majeure events shall automatically extend such dates for a period equal to the

duration of the delay caused by such events, unless the State determines it to be in its best interest to terminate the agreement.

15. HIPAA Compliance. Contractor agrees to comply with the “Administrative Simplification” provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, including electronic data interchange, code sets, identifiers, security, and privacy provisions, as may be applicable to the services under this contract.
16. Indemnification. To the fullest extent allowed by law, Contractor shall indemnify, defend, save and hold harmless, protect, and exonerate the agency, its commissioners, board members, officers, employees, agents, and representatives, and the State of Mississippi from and against all claims, demands, liabilities, suits, actions, damages, losses, and costs of every kind and nature whatsoever including, without limitation, court costs, investigative fees and expenses, and attorney’s fees, arising out of or caused by Contractor and/or its partners, principals, agents, employees and/or subcontractors in the performance of or failure to perform this agreement. In the State’s sole discretion upon approval of the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General, Contractor may be allowed to control the defense of any such claim, suit, etc. In the event Contractor defends said claim, suit, etc., Contractor shall use legal counsel acceptable to the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General. Contractor shall be solely responsible for all costs and/or expenses associated with such defense, and the State shall be entitled to participate in said defense. Contractor shall not settle any claim, suit, etc. without the concurrence of the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General, which shall not be unreasonably withheld.
17. Independent Contractor Status. Contractor shall, at all times, be regarded as and shall be legally considered an independent contractor and shall at no time act as an agent for the State. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed or construed by the State, Contractor, or any third party as creating the relationship of principal and agent, master and servant, partners, joint ventures, employer and employee, or any similar such relationship between the State and Contractor. Neither the method of computation of fees or other charges, nor any other provision contained herein, nor any acts of the State or Contractor hereunder creates, or shall be deemed to create a relationship other than the independent relationship of the State and Contractor. Contractor’s personnel shall not be deemed in any way, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, to be employees of the State. Neither Contractor nor its employees shall, under any circumstances, be considered servants, agents, or employees of MDRS, and MDRS shall be at no time legally responsible for any negligence or other wrongdoing by Contractor, its servants, agents, or employees. MDRS shall not withhold from the contract payments to Contractor any federal or state unemployment taxes, federal or state income taxes, Social Security tax, or any other amounts for benefits to Contractor. Further, MDRS shall not provide to Contractor any insurance coverage or other benefits, including Worker’s Compensation, normally provided by the State for its employees.
18. Insurance. The Contractor represents that it will maintain workers’ compensation insurance as required by the State of Mississippi which shall inure to the benefit of all the Contractor’s personnel provided hereunder. The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services reserves the right to request from carriers, certificates of insurance regarding the required coverage. Insurance carriers must be licensed or hold a Certificate of Authority from the Mississippi Department of Insurance.
19. Modification or Renegotiation. This agreement may be modified only by written agreement signed by the parties hereto. The parties agree to renegotiate the agreement if federal and/or state revisions of any applicable laws or regulations make changes in this agreement necessary.
20. No Limitation of Liability. Nothing in this agreement shall be interpreted as excluding or limiting any liability of the Contractor for harm arising out of the Contractor’s or its subcontractors’ performance under this

agreement.

21. Non-solicitation of Employees. Each party to this agreement agrees not to employ or to solicit for employment, directly or indirectly, any persons in the full-time or part-time employment of the other party until at least six (6) months after this agreement terminates unless mutually agreed to in writing by the State and Contractor.
22. Ownership of Documents and Work Papers. MDRS shall own all documents, files, reports, work papers and working documentation, electronic or otherwise, created in connection with the project which is the subject of this agreement, except for Contractor's internal administrative and quality assurance files and internal project correspondence. Contractor shall deliver such documents and work papers to MDRS upon termination or completion of the agreement. The foregoing notwithstanding, Contractor shall be entitled to retain a set of such work papers for its files. Contractor shall be entitled to use such work papers only after receiving written permission from MDRS and subject to any copyright protections. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, the above information and/or materials do not include any Contractor Pre-existing Material, including but not limited to material that was developed prior to the Effective Date that is used, without modification, in the performance of the Agreement. "Contractor Pre-existing Material" means curriculum (including but not limited to the Next Up curriculum, its videos, and lesson plans), materials, code, methodology, concepts, process, systems, technique, trade or service marks, copyrights, or other intellectual property right developed, licensed or otherwise acquired by Contractor, independent of the services to be rendered under this agreement. To the extent the above described information and/or materials contain Contractor Pre-existing Material, Contractor hereby grants to MDRS an irrevocable, perpetual, nonexclusive, royalty-free, world-wide license to use, execute, reproduce, display, perform, and distribute copies of Contractor Pre-existing Material, but only as they are incorporated into and form a part of the works developed for MDRS pursuant to this agreement.

Additionally, Contractor assures that any and all information regarding clients of MDRS will be kept strictly confidential pursuant to 34 CFR 361.38 and will become the property of MDRS. Contractor assures that MDRS shall have full access to all information collected. The Contractor is prohibited from use of the above described information and/or materials without the express written approval of MDRS.

Paper documents containing Personally Identifiable Information must be destroyed by burning, pulping, shredding, macerating, or other similar means that ensures the information cannot be recovered. If there are electronic devices and media (for example, computers, disk drives, CD's, Jump/Flash drives, magnetic tape, etc.) that need to be disposed of, please contact MDRS for further guidance on approved methods on destroying electronic devices and related media.

23. Paymode. Payments by MDRS using the state's accounting system shall be made and remittance information provided electronically as directed by the state and deposited into the bank account of Contractor's choice. The MDRS may, at its sole discretion, require Contractor to electronically submit invoices and supporting documentation at any time during the term of this Agreement. Contractor understands and agrees that the Agency is exempt from the payment of Mississippi taxes. All payments shall be in United States currency.
24. Personally Identifiable Information. Contractor will not disclose or release any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) to which the Contractor has access except as required to do so to authorized employees and officials within the scope of the Contractor's duties under this contract. Furthermore, Contractor acknowledges that any unauthorized disclosure of the information provided under this contract may violate the terms of Section 1106 of the Social Security Act and the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a and subject the Contractor to penalties.
25. Procurement Regulations. This contract shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the Public

Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations, a copy of which is available on the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration's website (www.dfa.ms.gov). Any offeror responding to a solicitation for personal and professional services and any contractor doing business with a state Agency is deemed to be on notice of all requirements therein.

26. Property Rights. Property rights do not inure to Contractor until such time as services have been provided under a legally executed contract. Contractor has no legitimate claim of entitlement to the provision of work hereunder and acknowledges that the MDRS may terminate this contract at any time for its own convenience.
27. Record Retention and Access to Records. Provided Contractor is given reasonable advance written notice and such inspection is made during normal business hours of Contractor, the State or any duly authorized representatives shall have unimpeded, prompt access to any of Contractor's books, documents, papers, and/or records which are maintained or produced as a result of the project for the purpose of making audits, examinations, excerpts, and transcriptions. All records related to this agreement shall be retained by Contractor for three (3) years after final payment is made under this agreement and all pending matters are closed; however, if any audit, litigation or other action arising out of or related in any way to this project is commenced before the end of the three (3) year period, the records shall be retained for one (1) year after all issues arising out of the action are finally resolved or until the end of the three (3) year period, whichever is later.
28. Recovery of Money. Whenever, under the contract, any sum of money shall be recoverable from or payable by Contractor to MDRS, the same amount may be deducted from any sum due to Contractor under the contract or under any other contract between Contractor and MDRS. The rights of MDRS are in addition and without prejudice to any other right MDRS may have to claim the amount of any loss or damage suffered by MDRS on account of the acts or omissions of Contractor.
29. Representation Regarding Contingent Fees. Contractor represents that it has not retained a person to solicit or secure a state contract upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, except as disclosed in Contractor's bid or proposal.
30. Representation Regarding Gratuities. Contractor represents that it has not, is not, and will not offer, give, or agree to give any employee or former employee of MDRS a gratuity or offer of employment in connection with any approval, disapproval, recommendation, development, or any other action or decision related to the solicitation and resulting contract. Contractor further represents that no employee or former employee of MDRS has or is soliciting, demanding, accepting, or agreeing to accept a gratuity or offer of employment for the reasons previously stated; any such action by an employee or former employee in the future, if any, will be rejected by contractor. Contractor further represents that it is in compliance with the Mississippi Ethics in Government laws, codified at Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-4-101 through 25-4-121, and has not solicited any employee or former employee to act in violation of said law.
31. Requirements Contract. During the period of the contract, Contractor shall provide all the service described in the contract. Contractor understands and agrees that this is a requirements contract and that the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services shall have no obligation to Contractor if no services are required. Any quantities that are included in the scope of work reflect the current expectations of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services for the period of the contract. The amount is only an estimate and Contractor understands and agrees that MDRS is under no obligation to Contractor to buy any amount of the services as a result of having provide d this estimate or of having any typical or measurable requirement in the past. Contractor further understands and agrees that MDRS may require services in an amount less than or in excess of the

estimated annual contract amount and that the quantity actually used, whether in excess of the estimate or less than the estimate, shall not give rise to any claim for compensation other than the total of the unit prices in the contract for the quantity actually used.

32. Right to Audit. Contractor shall maintain such financial records and other records as may be prescribed by MDRS or by applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. Contractor shall retain these records for a period of three years after final payment, or until they are audited by MDRS, whichever event occurs first. These records shall be made available during the term of the contract and the subsequent three-year period for examination, transcription, and audit by the Mississippi State Auditor's Office, its designees, or other authorized bodies.
33. Severability. If any part of this agreement is declared to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity or unenforceability shall not affect any other provision of the agreement that can be given effect without the invalid or unenforceable provision, and to this end the provisions hereof are severable. In such event, the parties shall amend the agreement as necessary to reflect the original intent of the parties and to bring any invalid or unenforceable provisions in compliance with applicable law.
34. Stop Work Order. The MDRS may, by written order to Contractor at any time, require Contractor to stop all or any part of the work called for by this contract. This order shall be for a period of time specified by the MDRS. Upon receipt of such an order, Contractor shall forthwith comply with its terms and take all reasonable steps to minimize any further cost to the MDRS. Upon expiration of the stop work order, Contractor shall resume providing the services which were subject to the stop work order, unless the MDRS has terminated that part of the agreement or terminated the agreement in its entirety. The MDRS is not liable for payment for services which were not rendered due to the stop work order.

35. Termination.

Termination for Convenience. The MDRS may, when the interests of the Agency so require, terminate this contract in whole or in part, for the convenience of the Agency. The MDRS shall give written notice of the termination to Contractor specifying the part of the contract terminated and when termination becomes effective. Contractor shall incur no further obligations in connection with the terminated work and on the date set in the notice of termination Contractor will stop work to the extent specified. Contractor shall complete the work not terminated by the notice of termination and may incur obligations as are necessary to do so.

Termination for Default. If the MDRS gives the Contractor a notice that the personal or professional services are being provided in a manner that is deficient, the Contractor shall have 30 days to cure the deficiency. If the Contractor fails to cure the deficiency, the MDRS may terminate the contract for default and the Contractor will be liable for the additional cost to the MDRS to procure the personal and professional services from another source. Termination under this paragraph could result in Contractor being excluded from future contract awards pursuant to Chapter 15 of the Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations. Any termination wrongly labelled termination for default shall be deemed a termination for convenience.

36. Trade Secrets, Commercial and Financial Information. It is expressly understood that Mississippi law requires that the provisions of this contract which contain the commodities purchased or the personal or professional services provided, the price to be paid, and the term of the contract shall not be deemed to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information and shall be available for examination, copying, or

reproduction.

37. Required Public Records and Transparency. Upon execution of a contract, the provisions of the contract which contain the personal or professional services provided, the unit prices, the overall price to be paid, and the term of the contract shall not be deemed to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated § 25- 61-9(7). The contract shall be posted publicly on www.transparency.ms.gov and shall be available for at the Agency for examination, inspection, or reproduction by the public. The contractor acknowledges and agrees that the MDRS and this contract are subject to the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983 codified at Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-1, et seq. and its exceptions, Mississippi Code Annotated § 79-23-1, and the Mississippi Accountability and Transparency Act of 2008, codified at Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 27-104-151, et seq.
38. Waiver. No delay or omission by either party to this agreement in exercising any right, power, or remedy hereunder or otherwise afforded by contract, at law, or in equity shall constitute an acquiescence therein, impair any other right, power or remedy hereunder or otherwise afforded by any means, or operate as a waiver of such right, power, or remedy. No waiver by either party to this agreement shall be valid unless set forth in writing by the party making said waiver. No waiver of or modification to any term or condition of this agreement will void, waive, or change any other term or condition. No waiver by one party to this agreement of a default by the other party will imply, be construed as or require waiver of future or other defaults.
39. Approval Clause. It is understood that if this contract requires approval by the Public Procurement Review Board ("PPRB") and/or the Department of Finance and Administration Office of Personal Service Contract Review ("OPSCR"), and this contract is not approved by PPRB and/or OPSCR, it is void and no payment shall be made hereunder.

SERVICES AND COMPENSATION

SCOPE OF SERVICES

In fulfillment of the purposes of this Agreement, the Contractor shall provide MDRS with the professional services needed to create and host comprehensive training events for MDRS clients. Services shall be provided in accordance with the terms set forth in the Request for Qualifications RFQ 3120003211 issued by MDRS, and are further described in Exhibit "D", captioned "Statement of Qualifications", attached hereto and made a part hereof by reference.

COMPENSATION

In furtherance of the performance of the services referenced above, MDRS agrees to compensate the Contractor at the rates listed below. Purchases under this Agreement shall be subject to any limitations contained in Exhibit D. Contractor agrees to ensure the funds subject to this Agreement are used in accordance with conditions, requirements and restrictions of federal, state and local laws, as well as any terms and conditions set forth in the Request for Qualifications.

Pre-Employment Transition Services	Group Rate	Individual Rate
Workplace Readiness Training	\$75.00 per unit/per student	\$85.00 per unit/per student
Work Based Learning Experience	\$100.00 per unit/per student	\$110.00 per unit/per student
Job Exploration Counseling	\$75.00 per unit/per student	\$85.00 per unit/per student
Counseling on Post Secondary Education and Training Opportunities	\$75.00 per unit/per student	\$85.00 per unit/per student
Instruction in Self-Advocacy Training	\$75.00 per unit/per student	\$85.00 per unit/per student

The Contractor shall invoice MDRS monthly as needed. The final invoice to MDRS shall be sent within thirty (30) days after the Agreement ending date. The invoice should have appropriate documentation substantiating actual expenses.

It is expressly understood and agreed that in no event will the total compensation to be paid hereunder exceed the specified amount of Seven-Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$700,000).

NOTIFICATIONS

Notices. All notices required or permitted to be given under this agreement must be in writing and personally delivered or sent by certified United States mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, to the party to whom the notice should be given at the address set forth below. Notice shall be deemed given when actually received or when refused. The parties agree to promptly notify each other in writing of any change of address.

For MDRS: Billy Taylor, Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
Post Office Box 1698
Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1698

[with Copy to Contract Coordinator]

For the Contractor: Brian Kennedy, Associate Vice-President of Research
The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies
118 College Drive #516
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39406

Statement of Qualifications

[Contractor's proposal shall be detailed within this Exhibit.]

The MDRS Pre-ETS program will provide Pre-Employment Transition Services as outlined in the OVR/OVRB Business Practices. These Pre-ETS will be provided to students with disabilities as defined by MDRS and on behalf of MDRS. The Pre-ETS have been designed to assist students explore career interests as well as develop skills necessary for future employment and/or post-secondary education or training. The program affirms MDRS' statement that Pre-ETS serve as the foundation for a successful transition to competitive integrated employment. In addition, the program affirms MDRS' statement that Pre-ETS support the development of self-awareness, self-esteem, self-advocacy, and self-empowerment skills while promoting exploration of individual career pathways.

The Pre-ETS will be provided in integrated settings to students with disabilities who have met eligibility requirements for services. The program will collaborate with both MDRS VR/VRB Counselors and local school districts to promote program awareness and overall service options. The program will review the MDRS-VR-100 Referral for Contracted Pre-ETS Services Form and consult with OVR/OVRB Counselors on individualized student's Pre-ETS needs, goals, and the purpose of participation. The program will submit monthly participant Pre-ETS Provision Form (MDRS-VR-61) to the assigned OVR/OVRB Counselor who must authorize services prior to the start date per the established MDRS Fee Schedule.

The Pre-ETS program will continue to operate training centers at the Mississippi and Long Beach Campuses of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. In addition, the program will provide Pre-ETS in school systems, community locations and virtually as appropriate and requested. Through collaboration with the MDRS Office of Communications, all publicity efforts including promotional materials will include co-branding and any publications will receive prior approval from the Director of the Office of Communications and the Director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation before distribution.

All Pre-ETS will be provided to meet the unique needs of Mississippi students with disabilities as they navigate the transition to adulthood. The services will be provided to complement the current transition services provided by school system special education staff as well as vocational counselors with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS). In fact, the Pre-ETS will be provided to assist MDRS with its mission to provide appropriate and comprehensive services to Mississippians with disabilities in a timely and effective manner, gain competitive integrated employment, and to live more independently. All Pre-ETS will be provided through the use of the following foundational transition to adulthood principles:

- Person-Centered Planning/Thinking,
- Strengths-Based Approach,
- Effective and Best Practices, and
- Research-Based Curriculum.

A total of 19 curricula have been developed to administer Pre-ETS. Each curriculum was developed based on current research, best practices and lessons learned/past experiences in providing employment training to youth and young adults with disabilities. Each curriculum was developed to be individualized to the unique needs, available training opportunities and specific tasks/sub-tasks – please contact the Program Director for Transition Services for additional information about the curriculum or to obtain a copy.

Contact: Ms. Robinson at [redacted]

All of the Pre-ETS have been provided through various specific programming, cover all five major training areas and can be provided in-person or virtually as appropriate. The programming will include the following:

- ✓ **Adulting 101/102 Training** - Weekly training on advocacy, independent and real-world living skills including driver's education that focuses on the written test only,
- ✓ **Bridge Training Series** - Weekly pre-employment training series for classrooms,
- ✓ **Career Informational Interview** - Monthly training on local businesses including virtual tours and Q & A sessions,

- ✓ [REDACTED] – Weekly advanced entrepreneurship training focusing on several self-employment opportunities such as 3-D printing, laser printing, coffee roasting and more,
- ✓ [REDACTED] – Weekly practical office skills training through hands-on projects and team work to promote workplace success,
- ✓ [REDACTED] – weekly training on 3-D design, laser printing and digital teamwork,
- ✓ [REDACTED] - Multi-week training on career preparation including career assessments,
- ✓ [REDACTED] - Multi-week training focused on creating e-portfolios to prepare for college,
- ✓ [REDACTED] - Weekly hands-on training with community garden and other entrepreneurship opportunities,
- ✓ [REDACTED] – Multi-week training on regional postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities and a summer inclusive postsecondary education training event,
- ✓ [REDACTED] - Individualized in-person and/or virtual internship experiences,
- ✓ Job Club - Monthly job-focused learning opportunities in the community,
- ✓ [REDACTED] - Multi-week training to strengthen skills in executive functioning, time management, and task completion,
- ✓ [REDACTED] Multi-week training on advocacy, leadership and how to share one's story including a leader internship experience for selected students,
- ✓ [REDACTED] (Ambassador Leadership) - Multi-week training on advocacy, social-emotional and self-expression skills,
- ✓ [REDACTED] - Weekly social skills training,
- ✓ [REDACTED] - Weekly social skills training for students with a neurodiverse diagnosis such as Autism, and
- ✓ [REDACTED] - Two-month training experience combined with paid internship experiences.

TERRY RENE ALLISTON

118 College Drive, 5163, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001 |

901.266.5979 | usm.edu/ids

EDUCATION

2010 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Higher Education Administration, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
Dissertation: Postsecondary education of students with disabilities
Review of faculty and of students with disabilities perceptions for training

1999 Master of Social Work, The University of Southern Mississippi, Long Beach, MS

1993 Bachelor of Science, Psychology, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

1991 Associate of Arts, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Parkinston, MS

WORK HISTORY

2018-present Associate Director, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

2017-2018 Interim Associate Director, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

2015-2018 Community Education Director, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

2005-2015 Project Coordinator, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

2001-2004 Social Worker/Case Manager, Humana Military Healthcare Services, Biloxi, MS

2000-2001 Medical Social Worker, Hancock Medical Center, Bay St. Louis, MS

1995-2000 Early Intervention Service Coordinator, MS State Department of Health, Gulfport

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2023-present RISE to the Top Leadership Team, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

2022-present Luckyday Service Site Leader, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

2022-present Honors Thesis Advisor, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

2022-present Application Reviewer, Honors and Luckyday Student Applicants, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

2020-2024 Chair, Doctoral Dissertation Committee, Educational Leadership Student, Belhaven University, Jackson, MS

2006-present Adjunct Instructor, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS (SELECTED)

2024-present Chair, Mississippi Association of People Supporting Employment First

2023-present Mississippi Alliance for Inclusive Postsecondary Education Programs

2021-present The Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)

2019-present Association for Higher Education and Disability

2018-present Department of Mental Health Bureau of Intelligence and Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council

2018-present Employment Special Interest Group, Association of University Centers on Disabilities

2017-present Southeastern Postsecondary Education Alliance (2018-2022 Awareness Day Chair; 2017-2022 MS Representative, Board of Directors; 2017-2019 Annual Conference Planning Committee)

2017-present Communications Special Interest Group, Association of University Centers on Disabilities

2017-present Disability Studies Special Interest Group, Association of University Centers on Disabilities

RICH BAKER

136 College Drive, S103, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
601.266.6248 | usm.edu/idsr

EDUCATION

2014 Master of Science, Assistive Technology, California State University,
Northridge, CA
1989 Bachelor of Science, Management/Computer Information Systems, Park
College, Parkville, MO

WORK HISTORY

2002-present Technology Coordinator, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of
Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
1999-2002 Assistant Professor, Aerospace Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi,
Hattiesburg, MS
1996-1999 Air Force Communications Squadron Branch Chief, Scott Air Force Base, IL
1992-1996 Chief, Database Implementation Team, United States Strategic Command,
Offutt Air Force Base, NE
1982-1992 Team Supervisor, Computer Maintenance Office,
Shift Supervisor, Telecommunications Maintenance

CERTIFICATIONS/TRAININGS

Advanced Communications Officers Training (184 hours)
Air University Academic Instructor School
Software Project Management
SYBASE Relational Database Design, Physical Database Design, System and DB Administration
Data Modeling
Software Engineering (32 hours)
C Programming (120 hours)
CA-IDMS Defining a Database, Integrated DB Implementation and Control
Introduction to Unix (40 hours)
Communications-Computer Systems Programming and Analysis Officer Course (742 hours)
Assembler Language (160 hours)

VANTRELL COLEMAN

730 East Beach Boulevard #5125, Long Beach, MS 39060
228.214.3281 | usm.edu/ids

EDUCATION

12/2015 Bachelor of Science, Psychology, The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf
Park Campus, Long Beach, MS
01/2012 Associate of Arts, Criminal Investigations, Everest College, Mesa Online,
Phoenix, AZ

WORK HISTORY

2024-present Transition Specialist, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of
Southern Mississippi Gulf Park Campus, Long Beach, MS
2021-2024 Employment Specialist, Mississippi Department of Employment Securities,
Gulfport, MS
2019-2021 Licensure Specialist I, Mississippi Child Protective Services, Gulfport, MS
2016-2019 Counselor, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Gulfport, MS
2006-2016 Deputy Court Clerk, Harrison County Youth Court, Gulfport, MS
2004-2006 Correctional Officer, Harrison County Sheriff's Department, Gulfport, MS

CERTIFICATIONS

2023 Association of Community Rehabilitation Education (ACRE) Certification in
Employment Services
12/2001 Office Systems Technology Certification, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community
College, Long Beach, MS

ROBERT "TAYLOR" CARLEY

100 College Drive, #163, Hattiesburg, MS 39401-0001
601.266.4763 | tuscmedu@ms.edu

EDUCATION

- 2022-present RISE To The Top! Southern Miss Inclusive Postsecondary Education Program
- Eagle Connections 2024- present
 - SO College Southern Miss 2022-present
- 2011 Occupational Diploma, Sumrall High School, Sumrall, MS

WORK HISTORY

- 2015-present Self Advocacy Coordinator, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
- Hosts YouTube series titled Chat Thursday with Taylor that focused on disability happenings in Mississippi
 - Shares person story through various advocacy activities
 - Provides informal peer mentoring to other self-advocates
 - Develops, schedules and creates various videos of self-advocates, business sites and more
- 2013-2014 Gas Station Attendant, Sam's Club, Hattiesburg, MS
- 2011-present Contract Laborer, Rental and Leasing, Hattiesburg, MS

FEATURED PRESENTATIONS

- Carley, R. (2024). Hosted Job Extravaganza Events, Long Beach and Hattiesburg, MS.
- Carley, R. (2024). Panelist on Transition for Persons with Autism Discussion Panel, Featured Session, 10th Annual Creating Your Own Path Conference.
- Carley, R. (2024). Advocacy and Employment Guest on All Wales People First Self Advocacy TV, a Wales Self-Advocacy YouTube series.
- Carley, R. (2023). Employment and Advocacy, Virtual Self-Advocacy Summit.
- Carley, R. (2023). Hosted Job Extravaganza Events, Long Beach, MS.
- Carley, R. (2023). My Personal Story, Honor's 303 Seminar Class, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.
- Carley, R. (2023). Panelist on Transition for Persons with Autism Discussion Panel, Featured Session, 10th Annual Creating Your Own Path Conference.
- Carley, R. (2023). Employment and Advocacy, Virtual Self-Advocacy Summit.
- Carley, R. (2022). Featured Host at Mississippi disAbility MegaConference, Jackson, MS.
- Carley, R. (2022). My Personal Story, Honor's 303 Seminar Class, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.
- Carley, R. (2022). Self-Advocacy Story, My Personal Story, Honor's 303 Seminar Class, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.
- Carley, R. (2021). My Personal Story, Honor's 303 Seminar Class, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.
- Carley, R. (2020). My Personal Story, Honor's 303 Seminar Class, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.
- Edwards, T., Carley, R., and Johnson, T. (2019). Join the Chat! Pressing the Start Button on Live-Streaming, Concurrent Session. Mississippi disAbility MegaConference, Jackson, MS.
- Carley, R. (2017) My Personal Story, Panelist. Mississippi disAbility MegaConference, Jackson, MS
- Carley, R. (2016). My Personal Story, Concurrent Session. Association of University Centers on Disabilities National Conference, Washington, DC.

VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE

2014-2015	Member, TRIAD AmeriCorps, [REDACTED]
2011-2013	[REDACTED] <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed three years of national service• Shared personal story on transition• Performed in various disability transition and financial skills skits
2012-present	[REDACTED] <ul style="list-style-type: none">• President and Co-Treasurer, [REDACTED]• Office Volunteer

AWARDS

2025	Featured Writer for Cow Tipping Press edition of <i>The Best of Cow Tipping Press</i> , a collection of short stories from self-advocates
2024	RISE To the Top! Southern Miss Service Awards, The University of Southern Mississippi Center for Civic Engagement
2015	TRIAD AmeriCorps Service Recognition Award, [REDACTED]
2014	Breaking Barriers Award, Recognition of Leadership and Advocacy
2014	Recognizing Advocacy, <i>Hattiesburg American</i> (newspaper article)
2013	Student Group Award, [REDACTED]

JOANIE F. INNES

730 East Beach Drive, Apt 45-128, Long Beach, MS 39061
228.214.3412 | usm.edu/ids

EDUCATION

05/2023 Long Beach High School, Long Beach, MS

WORK HISTORY

08/2024-present Self-Advocacy Coordinator, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Park Campus, Long Beach, MS

- Develops virtual training sessions and workshops for enhancing self-advocacy skills
- Produces educational videos and PowerPoint presentations to improve student engagement
- Coordinates inclusive programs with community leaders, integrating students with disabilities into mainstream settings

HONORS AND AWARDS

08/2024 Heart of Service Award, AmeriCorps
Recognized for exceptional dedication to community service and advocacy programs

VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE

09/2023-08/2024 Service AmeriCorps Member, Training, Resources, and Information for the Advancement of Disability (TRIAD) AmeriCorps, The University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Park Campus, Long Beach, MS

- Provided more than 1,700 hours of community service, focusing on health-related education
- Designed and instructed self-advocacy and health education lessons across multiple schools

SKILLS

- Advanced proficiency in Canva and Microsoft Office
- Works effectively in independent and team-based projects
- Quickly adapts to new technologies and software platforms
- Competent in multitasking and meeting deadlines

JOSEPH KING

118 Oaklawn Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39408-0001 |

601.266-4021 | usm.edu/jk

EDUCATION

2020 Master of Social Work, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL
2013 Bachelor of Science, Social Work, Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS

WORK HISTORY

2024-present Executive Coordinator for Transition to Adulthood Services, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2022-2023 Transition Specialist, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2021-2022 Licensed Clinical Therapist, Pine Grove Behavioral Health, Hattiesburg, MS
2021 Qualified Mental Health Professional, Wexford Health, Springville, AL
2017-2021 Senior Social Worker, Alabama Department of Human Resources, Oneonta, AL
2014-2016 Practice Model Coach, Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services, Jackson, MS
2014 Firehouse Subs, Hattiesburg, MS
2013-2014 Intern, Christian Encounter Ministries, Grass Valley, CA
2012-2013 Student Intern, Wesley Foundation, Starkville, MS
2010-2013 Summer Camp Counselor, Camp Wesley Pines, Gallman, MS
2005-2009 Server, Porches Restaurant, Wesson, MS

VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE

2020 Children's Aid Society of Alabama, Birmingham, AL
2013 Grace Community Homes, Henderson, NE
2010-2012 Wesley Foundation, Starkville, MS
2010 Emerson Family Center, Starkville, MS
2001-2008 Wesson Public Library, Wesson, MS

CERTIFICATIONS AND LICENSURES

2025 Licensed Certified Social Worker, #11499
2025 Excellence in Action, Mississippi Alliance of Nonprofits and Philanthropy
2023 Association of Community Rehabilitation Education (ACRE) Certification in Employment Services
2022 Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS)
2021 Licensed Master of Social Work, Mississippi #M6883
2020 Licensed Master of Social Work, Alabama #5348G
2020 Trauma Informed Care (TIC) Training

MEMBERSHIPS

2024-present National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
2009-2013 National Honor Society

AWARDS

2020 Master Scholar Award, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL

NOAH KELLY

730 East Beach Boulevard #5125 Long Beach, MS 39601

228-244-3412 | noah@noahkelly.com

EDUCATION

2020 AAS, 3D Modeling and Technology, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College,
Gautier, MS

2019 Diploma, Ocean Springs High School, Ocean Springs, MS

WORK HISTORY

2025-present Assistant Self-Advocacy Coordinator, Institute for Disability Studies, The
University of Southern Mississippi, Long Beach, MS

2024 Shift Lead, Salad Station, D'Iberville, MS

2021-2022 Salad Station, D'Iberville, MS

SKILLS

Computer-Aided Design (CAD)

Autodesk AutoCAD

Autodesk Inventor

Tinkercad

Microsoft Office Suite

Bilingual: Fluent in English and Japanese

ALYSSA DANIELLE MUIR LINS

118 College Drive, Suite 210, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-4401
601-556-6921 | amui@edc-tn.org

EDUCATION

2018 Master of Social Work, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2015 Bachelor of Social Work, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

WORK HISTORY

2024-present Executive Coordinator for Transition (RISE To The Top), Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2022-2024 Transition Coordinator, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2018-2022 Transition Specialist, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2018 Job Corps Employment Specialist, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2017-2018 Intern, Southern Care Hospice, Hattiesburg, MS
2016-2018 Graduate Assistant, END Trainee and Intern, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2015 Intern, Mississippi Children's Home Services, Jackson, MS

RESEARCH

2017-2018 END Trainee, Proposal for Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities at USM, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2017 Research Graduate Assistant, Gaining Opportunities in Leadership Development (GOLD) Program, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

CERTIFICATIONS AND LICENSURES

2025-present Excellence in Action
2023-present Disability Mentoring Certification
2023 Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Certification in Employment Services
2020-present CPR/AED for Professional Rescuers with First Aid
2018-present Licensed Master's Social Worker (License #M9382)
2014-present Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

MEMBERSHIPS

2025-present Advisory Board Member, Center for Women & Leadership
2023-present Member, Mississippi Inclusive Postsecondary Education Alliance
2022-present Board Member, Southeastern Postsecondary Education Alliance
2015-present Member, Luckyday Citizenship Scholarship Committee, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2011-2015 Member, Luckyday Leadership Team and Mentor, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2015-2018 Phi Alpha Social Work Society, The University of Southern Mississippi

VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE

2012-2015 The Arc, Hattiesburg, MS
2012 Hope House (grant proposal development)
2008-2011 Make a Wish Foundation, Hattiesburg, MS

SCOTT N. MULLINS

116 College Drive, 5183, Hattiesburg, MS 39402-0001
801 295-1291 | m.ed@usm.edu

EDUCATION

2018 Master of Social Work, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2013 Bachelor of Science, Social Work, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

WORK HISTORY

2022-present Transition Coordinator, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2018-2022 Transition Specialist, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2018 Employment Skills Trainer, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2013-2016 Family Protection Specialist, Mississippi Department of Human Services, Department of Child Protection Services, Pearl River County, MS

INTERNSHIPS

2016-2018 Project SEARCH and FORward and TRIAD AmeriCorps, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2013 Lamar County Health and Human Services (DHS): Division of Family and Children's Services, Lamar County, MS
2010 Family Network Partnership Agency, Hattiesburg, MS

CERTIFICATIONS, LICENSURES, AND TRAININGS

2025 Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Certification in Employment Services
2020-present CPR/First Aid Certification, American Red Cross
2019 Developmental Disabilities and Sexuality Educator and Trainer Course
2018 Master of Social Work Licensure (License Number M9506), Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)
2018 Person-Centered Planning Training
2015 Family-Centered Focus Training

MEMBERSHIPS

2020-present Advisor/Staff Liaison, Step Up to Leadership Advisory Council, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2018-2020 Assistant Advisor, Step Up to Leadership Advisory Council, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2018-present Lead Advisor/Coordinator, Special Olympics College, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE

2001-2009 Volunteer, Mission trips to assist needy populations in various areas throughout Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee
2013 Volunteer, Worked with the School of Social Work at The University of Southern Mississippi to assess need for services of clients/victims after the tornado
2003 BSA Eagle Scout

AWARDS

2009-2013 Leadership Scholarship, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2003 BSA Eagle Scout Award

MICHAEL RAMOS

730 E. 1st St., Long Beach, MS 39060 |

228.214.5404 | usm.edu/ids

EDUCATION

2025 Master of Social Work, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2024 Bachelor of Social Work, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

WORK HISTORY

2024-2025 Social Work Internship, PEERS Skills Coaching Program, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Gulfport, MS
2020-present Wellness Family Support Specialist, Family to Family Program, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Gulfport, MS
2018-2020 Bus Driver, First Student, Inc., Gulfport, MS
2015-2017 Case Aid and Safety Officer, Volunteers of America Service Center, San Diego, CA

COMMUNITY SERVICE/VOLUNTEER WORK

2022-present The Arc of Mississippi, Gulfport, MS
2019-present Northwood Church, Long Beach, MS
2015-2017 Volunteers of America

MEMBERSHIPS

2022-present Vice President, Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Club
Chairperson, STRIDE
2022-present Alumni Association

AWARDS AND HONORS

2022-present Phi Alpha Honor Society
2022-present Staff Council Scholar
2022-present President's List
2022-present Katharine L. Guice Scholar
2022-present Supp Education Opportunity Grant

CERTIFICATIONS, LICENSURES, AND TRAININGS

2020-present Procurement Card and CAREN Training, The University of Southern Mississippi
2020-present Psychological First Aid (PFA)
2020-present Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR)
2020-present Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
2020-present Seizure Recognition and First Aid Certification
2020-present Medical Assistance, HIPAA, Transition Assessment: Putting It Into Action
2010-2011 Medical Assistant, Home Health, Office Unit Clerk, Physical Therapy Aid, Occupational Therapy Aid, Phlebotomy Lab, CAN, HIPAA, EKG, CPR, Kaplan College, San Diego, CA

AYSHA ROBERTSON

18 College Drive, 2012, Hattiesburg, MS 39407-0001

601 266 4612 | usm.edu/ids

EDUCATION

2024 Master of Social Work, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2022 Bachelor of Social Work, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2020 Associate of Arts, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Perkinston, MS

WORK HISTORY

2024-present Transition Specialist, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2023-2024 Social Work Intern, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2021-2022 Customer Service Representative and Sales Agent, Smarter Call Center (Remote)
2018-present Personal Care Assistant, Ability Works, Hattiesburg, MS

MEMBERSHIPS

2022 Member, Bachelor of Social Work Club, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE

2023-2024 LEND Trainee, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2022-2023 Member/Volunteer, TRIAD AmeriCorps, Special Olympics College, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2022-2023 Volunteer, Eagles Nest Party, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

AWARDS AND HONORS

2024 Youth Commissioner, Volunteer Mississippi
2022 Scholastic Excellence Award, Afro-American Student Organization, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2022 Nominee, Who's Who, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
2022 Cum Laude, Bachelor of Social Work, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

CERTIFICATIONS AND LICENSURES

2025 Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Certification in Employment Services

BETH ROBERTSON

211 East Beach Boulevard, Apt. 20, Long Beach, MS 39060

228-314-3422 | beth@edulife.com

EDUCATION

2010 Master of Arts, Biblical Counseling, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
1993 Interpreter Training Program, American Sign Language Studies, Bishop State Community College, Mobile, AL
1992 Bachelor of Science, Education for the Hearing Impaired, University of Montevallo, Montevallo, AL

WORK HISTORY

2023-present Executive Coordinator for Transition to Adulthood Services, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Long Beach, MS
2019-2023 Transition Coordinator, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern Mississippi, Long Beach, MS
2017-2019 Program Manager/Evaluator II, Ability Works, Inc. Job Readiness Program, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Gulfport, MS
2016-2017 Women's Counselor, Home of Grace, Women's Campus, Gautier, MS
2010-2015 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Gulfport, MS
2009-2010 Bookkeeper, Mission Landscapes, Wake Forest, NC
2008-2010 Coordinator and Interpreter for the Deaf, North Wake Church, Wake Forest, NC
2008 Bookkeeper/Financial Secretary, Open Door Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC
2003-2007 Medical Billing Clerk, Golden Triangle Radiology, Columbus, MS
2001-2002 Administrative Support, Columbus Personnel Inc., Columbus, MS
1998-2000 Interpreter for the Deaf, Occupational Safety Associates, Mobile, AL
1997-1998 Teacher for the Sensory Impaired, Baldwin County Schools, AL
1997 Tutor for the Deaf, Mobile County, AL
1994-1997 Interpreter, Volunteers of America, Inc., Mobile, AL
1993-1994 Teacher for the Deaf, Regional School for the Deaf and Blind, Mobile County, AL

VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE

2007-2010 Volunteer Counselor, Hope Counseling Center, Wake Forest, NC
2015-2021 Volunteer Counselor, First Baptist Church Gulfport, Gulfport, MS

Awards

2022 Gulf Coast Staff Excellence Award, The University of Southern Mississippi, Long Beach, MS

CERTIFICATIONS AND LICENSURES

2024 The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS)
PEERS Certified Trainer, UCLA Semel Institute
PEERS Adolescents Certified, UCLA Semel Institute
PEERS Telehealth Certified, UCLA Semel Institute
2020 Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Certification in Employment Services
2015 Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI)

LAURA CLEMENTS THOMAS

730 East Beach Boulevard, 1st Floor, Long Beach, MS

228.214.3241 | laura@lauraclthomas.com

EDUCATION

2013 Master of Science, Psychology, Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ
2001 Bachelor of Science, Psychology, The University of Southern Mississippi,
Hattiesburg, MS
1997 Associate of Applied Sciences in Marketing Management Technology, Jones
College, Ellisville, MS

WORK HISTORY

2023-present Transition Coordinator, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern
Mississippi, Long Beach, MS
2020-2023 Transition Specialist, Institute for Disability Studies, The University of Southern
Mississippi, Long Beach, MS
2015-2020 Counselor III, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Gulfport, MS

VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE

2020-2024 TRIAD AmeriCorps
1997, 2003-2004, 2014 Special Olympics

MEMBERSHIPS

2000-2001 Psi Chi Honor Society, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
1995-1997 DECA Secretary/Treasurer, Jones College, Ellisville, MS
1995-1997 Letter J Awards, Jones College, Ellisville, MS
1993 Choir, Jones College, Ellisville, MS
1993 Maroon Typhoon Percussion, Jones College, Ellisville, MS

CERTIFICATIONS AND LICENSURES

2025 Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Certification in
Employment Services

**AMENDMENT #1
TO THE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES
RFQ #3120003211**

Q1: Do I put the counties I was approved for when I first applied, or the counties I'll be working this school year? Also, with the increased school, will my budget change?

A1: In your proposal, you must complete Attachment F – Areas of Coverage, which specifically requires you to list the counties where you can perform Pre-ETS services. The RFQ also states that providers must "specify the geographic area(s) in which services can be provided, as well as how the services will be delivered." This means you should report the counties you will actually cover during the upcoming school year—not just those from your original approval. The coverage section is about current capacity and service delivery, not historical approval. Budgets will be based on coverages areas and the staff's review of the proposals.

Q2: Page 13, Section 4.3 discusses Marked and Unmarked documents. Page 15, Section 5.1 in bold states Unmarked documents are no longer required. Could you please clarify this information on what is needed for submittal?

A2: Please disregard Section 4.3. Proposals are no longer required to be submitted as "unmarked". You are only required to submit a REDACTED version if you include proprietary information in your proposal that you do not wish to be posted to the public. Further details on redactions can be found in Attachment H "Redaction Notice", on page 31 of the RFQ.

Q3: I am a Louisiana-based sole proprietor. The RFQ notes that "sole proprietors are not required to register with the Mississippi Secretary of State." Can you confirm if any additional steps (e.g., business license or local registration) are required for a Louisiana sole proprietor to qualify prior to contract award?

A3: MDRS only requires that the business be registered with the Mississippi Secretary of State if necessary, and have any license or certification required to do business in the State. For more information on what is required for your specific business to operate in the state, you may contact the Business Services & Regulation department of the Mississippi Secretary of State's office at 601-359-1633.

Q4: Since the rate sheet is provided in the RFQ, should I simply confirm acceptance of the published group/individual rates, or do I need to calculate an estimated number of students and present a total cost based on that estimate?

A4: MDRS will set the totals for these contracts. You are not required to submit a total cost estimate.

Q5: The RFQ requests an insurance certificate. Should proof of insurance be submitted with the proposal or only upon award? As a sole proprietor, is there a waiver process or flexibility until staff or subcontractors are added?

A5: If available, you should submit the insurance certificate with your proposal. DFA may withhold the final approval of your contract if it's not submitted.

Please note that businesses that have less than 5 full-time employees are not required to carry workers compensation insurance per Mississippi law. If you are not required to have workers compensation insurance, please make a note of this in Attachment G "Additional Data" of your proposal.

Q6: Section 5.2 states:
"The original and 1 copy of the proposal, 2 copies total with an electronic version, shall be signed, placed in a sealed envelope or package, and submitted..."
Could you confirm if this means:

- I should submit one signed paper original, one signed paper copy, **and** a USB flash drive with the electronic version (PDF)?
- Or is a single printed version plus the electronic copy sufficient?

A6: You may submit a single printed version plus the electronic copy.

Q7: Is there a specific type or size of envelope/package required for submission (e.g., manila envelope, sealed box), or simply any sealed envelope clearly labeled with the RFQ number and opening date?

A7: There is no specific type of box or envelope that is required.

Q8: Are payments issued on net 45 terms from receipt of invoice, or is there a different payment schedule that MDRS follows for Pre-ETS providers?

A8: All MDRS invoices use the net 45 payment terms per state law.

Q9: Section 1.11 references an “Unmarked Proposal” with no self-identifying information, while Section 5.1 notes that unmarked proposals are no longer required and instead all sections should be marked. Could you clarify what is currently required:

Do I need to prepare a separate “unmarked” version of my proposal with no logos or identifiers?

Should I simply submit one version with all sections “marked” as indicated (Attachments A–H and proposal narrative), plus a redacted copy if I have trade secrets?

A9: Section 5.1 is correct. You are no longer required to submit an “unmarked” proposal. Your proposal may have identifying information (logos, staff names, etc..). However, you do have the option of submitting a “Redacted” version if there is proprietary information in your submission that you do not wish to be made public knowledge. (see attachment H of the RFQ for more information).

Q10: Does this RFQ include post secondary institutions?

A10: Pre-Employment Transition Services can be provided to students enrolled in post-secondary institutions. Also, if a Post-Secondary Institution provides Pre-Employment Transition Services, they can submit a RFQ.

Q11: Will Entrepreneurship classes be considered a Pre Employment Transition service?

A11: Self-employment/entrepreneurship would fall under Job Exploration Counseling.

Q12: The RFQ states that services must be delivered in an integrated setting? What is the definition of an integrated setting? Can Pre Employment Transition services be delivered in a virtual setting?

A12: The RFQ specifies that “all pre-employment services under this procurement must be provided in an integrated setting” In this context, an integrated setting means students with disabilities participate in services alongside peers without disabilities to the maximum extent possible, consistent with WIOA’s definition of integrated employment and training environments. It emphasizes inclusion in typical school, workplace, or community environments—not segregated or disability-only settings.

The RFQ also requires providers to specify both the geographic area(s) in which services will be provided and how services will be delivered. This language allows for flexibility in delivery methods, including virtual instruction, as long as:

- The service is pre-approved by MDRS,

- It aligns with one of the five required Pre-ETS categories, and
- It is designed to maintain the integrated setting requirement.

Therefore, Pre-ETS may be delivered virtually if MDRS authorizes (it and if the virtual format still supports interaction consistent with an integrated learning environment.

An integrated setting means providing Pre-ETS in environments where students with disabilities are included alongside peers without disabilities, not in segregated programs. Virtual services are permissible under the RFQ, provided they are authorized by MDRS and delivered in a way that supports inclusion and meets the five Pre-ETS service categories.

Q13: This RFQ states that providers must have a bachelor's degree and one year of relevant program experience. In the Job Extravaganza RFQ, providers were allowed to have an associates degree or a high school diploma with Work Keys which basically meet the Mississippi Department of Education requirements for an assistant teacher. Does this still apply for this RFQ

A13: Yes. While this RFQ outlines the standard minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree with one year of relevant program experience, the same flexibility that was applied in the Job Extravaganza RFQ continues here. That means providers may also qualify with an associate's degree or a high school diploma with WorkKeys, which aligns with the Mississippi Department of Education's requirements for an assistant teacher.

In short, both the bachelor's degree track and the alternative associate's degree/high school diploma with WorkKeys track are acceptable for this RFQ.

Q14: On page 11, the RFQ states: "the pre-service survey must accompany the initial monthly report and invoice while the post-service survey must be submitted with the final monthly report and invoice."

Could you clarify whether this requirement refers to the pre- and post-tests administered by instructors for each individual class, or whether it is intended as a program-wide pre-survey at the beginning of services and a program-wide post-survey at the conclusion of services?

Currently, we have been submitting pre- and post-tests each month with our billing paperwork. We want to confirm whether this is the correct process, or if MDRS expects a single pre-survey submitted with the first month's report/invoice and a single post-survey submitted with the final report/invoice for the year.

A14: The language on page 11 of the RFQ refers to the program-wide requirement rather than to every individual class. Specifically, the pre-service survey must be administered

to participants at the start of services and submitted with the initial monthly report and invoice, and the post-service survey must be administered at the end of services and submitted with the final monthly report and invoice

This means MDRS does not expect providers to submit pre- and post-tests for each class every month with billing paperwork. Instead, it is intended as a beginning-of-services pre-survey and an end-of-services post-survey tied to the overall service period for each student.

Q15: Page 32 says the period of performance dates are Sept 12, 2025, ending Sept 11, 2026. Page 6 says the dates are Dec 10, 2025, ending Dec 9, 2026.

A15: The correct period of performance dates are December 10, 2025 to December 9, 2026.

Respondents shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the solicitation by signing and returning the amendment with the response. The acknowledgment must be received by MDRS by the submission deadline.

Company Name: The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Diversity Studies

Signature and Date: [Redacted Signature] 10/13/25

Name and Title: Jerry R. Alston, Interim Executive Director

MISSISSIPPI



INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

August 13, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

As the Director of Risk Management for the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), I administer the insurance plans for the Board Office as well as the IHL System. The following information is provided to address some of our coverage details, and please consider this to meet the requirement of a commitment letter. It is my intent to maintain the same coverages below, although approval of some future policies will require the approval of the Board of Trustees.

1. Liability Coverage. IHL and the public four-year universities are insured for general liability and professional liability through the IHL Self-Insured Tort Plan. This Tort Plan provides coverage to the maximum amount permitted by the Mississippi Tort Claims Act (MTCA) for claims falling under that Act. The statutory per occurrence limit is currently \$500,000. For claims falling outside of the MTCA, the Tort Plan has expanded its coverage up to \$4,000,000 per occurrence.

2. Auto Liability. The Tort Plan purchases auto liability insurance with \$500,000 of coverage per occurrence when the MTCA applies. For other claims, the coverage limit is increased through an excess policy up to \$5,000,000.

3. Workers' Compensation. IHL and the universities in its system maintain statutory workers' compensation coverage through the IHL Self-Insured Workers' Compensation Plan. This plan also purchases excess insurance.

4. Public Official Bond and Crime/Dishonesty Coverage. IHL maintains a public official bond as required by state statute in the amount of \$100,000. IHL also maintains a crime policy with limits of \$100,000.

As you can appreciate as an agency of the State of Mississippi, IHL is also unable to add third parties as additional insureds to its insurance policies or self-insured coverages.

If additional information is needed, please feel free to ask through the appropriate contacts, and I will be glad to provide further assistance or clarity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. S. Buford", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David S. Buford
Director of Risk Management, IHL

CERTIFICATE OF COVERAGE

Issued to:



The State Institutions of Higher Learning, as a participant of the Mississippi Tort Claims Fund as set forth in Chapter 46, Title 11, Mississippi Code 1972, as amended, certifies coverage of the above-named institution under its self-insured IHL Tort Claims Plan. The IHL Tort Claims Plan provides protection for tort claims against the named institution as well as its employees subject to terms and limitations established by law. This Certificate shall continue in full force and effect until such time as it may be canceled or rescinded.

Issued this the 1st day of January, 2025.

State Institutions of Higher Learning
IHL Tort Claims Plan

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Buford', written over a horizontal blue line.

David S. Buford, Administrator

CERTIFICATE OF COVERAGE

Issued to:



The Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning is a certified self-insurer of workers' compensation benefits pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated § 71-3-75 of the Mississippi Workers Compensation Act. This certificate memorializes that the above-named institution is insured under the *IHL Self-Insured Workers' Compensation Plan*. The Plan provides payment of medical and indemnity benefits to a worker who suffers a work-related injury or occupational disease which arises out of and in the course of his employment with the above-named employer. This Certificate shall continue in full force and effect until such time as it may be canceled or rescinded.

Issued this the 1st day of January, 2025.

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Self-Insured Workers' Compensation Plan

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Buford", written over a horizontal line.

David S. Buford, Administrator