

2015  
two thousand fifteen



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF  
REHABILITATION SERVICES

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services  
**Annual Report**

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## MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) to provide appropriate and comprehensive services to Mississippians with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

## VISION STATEMENT

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services is committed to being recognized as the premier agency for Mississippians with disabilities by creating a culture of care with compassionate, valued, and knowledgeable staff. We will promote an environment where customers and staff work together to achieve our common goal of empowering and improving the lives of Mississippians with disabilities.



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

## **WELCOME** from the Executive Director

Dear friends,

On behalf of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS), I am pleased to present our FY2015 Annual Report. It is the first such report that I have been privileged to submit to you since being appointed MDRS Executive Director.

Our agency serves over 100,000 Mississippians with disabilities each year with our mission to provide quality services in a timely and effective manner. Some of our accomplishments, which you may not see within these pages but to which I would like to make you aware, are highlighted below.

### ***Disability Determination Services (DDS)***

- Reduced the total number of pending Disability Hearings by 12% and reduced by 75% the number of cases pending over 360 days
- Staff met and exceeded workload goals by 6%

### ***Office of Special Disability Programs (ODSP)***

- Reduced the waiting list for the Independent Living Waiver to less than four months
- Provided services to about 5,000 individuals across the state allowing these clients to remain in their home instead of a nursing home and providing cost savings to the state

### ***Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)***

- Mississippi, for the 21st consecutive year, exceeded all federal standards and indicators including successful rehabilitations
- Successfully restructured counselor caseloads in order to comply with federal mandates contained in the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

### ***Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (VRB)***

- Met employment goal of 575
- Completed 2nd annual Summer Internship Program (SIP) for nine interns, allowing students to get first-hand work experience in their chosen field

The information contained within this report will provide you with more in-depth information about MDRS. You are a key part of the successes we have, so thank you for your support. It is greatly appreciated and very necessary in making a difference in the lives of the people we serve. We look forward to working with in the upcoming year to assist Mississippians with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Chris M. Howard  
MDRS Executive Director

# ABILITYWORKS

AbilityWorks is a network of 16 community rehabilitation programs providing vocational assessment, job training, and actual work experience for individuals with disabilities. This is possible through a wide array of contract and subcontract services provided to local business and industry. Some of the services and products AbilityWorks offers include collating and sorting, packaging and handling, assembly work, product reworking, product reclamation, grounds maintenance, housekeeping and quality reviews. During FFY 2015, AbilityWorks served a total of 2,472 MDRS clients, resulting in 847 employments. An AbilityWorks' community-based program, Linking Innovative Networks of Community Services (LINCS), establishes cooperative agreements with local businesses to provide evaluation, job readiness or job training for our consumers.

**847 SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES**

## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive Technology (AT) is defined as the application of technology to alleviate barriers that interfere with the lives of individuals with disabilities and is intended to help the individual maintain or enhance his or her ability to function personally, socially, and/or vocationally. MDRS Rehabilitation Engineers and Rehabilitation Technologists provide consultation on all AT referrals as well as perform initial evaluations and assessments, and set up AT equipment, provide follow-up evaluations, design and fabricate original items, and provide specifications and final inspections for AT services. The Assistive Technology Division staff evaluates MDRS clients for the most appropriate assistive technology, thus enabling them to return to work and/or live independently.

## DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES

We operate in a partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to determine the medical eligibility of individuals to receive benefits from Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income as directed by federal guidelines from SSA. This office handles disability claims from all 23 SSA offices in Mississippi.

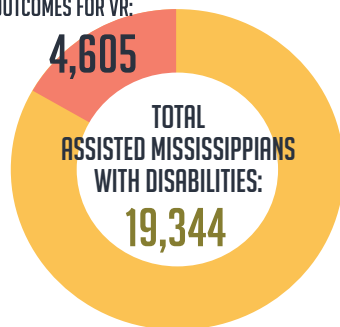
## SPECIAL DISABILITY PROGRAMS

We specialize in assisting individuals with the most severe physical disabilities to remain active in their homes and communities. Services are provided based on need as determined by functional assessment and are provided through an individualized plan of care. The Office of Special Disability Programs (OSDP) offers services that include, but are not limited to: case management, attendant care, durable medical equipment and specialized medical supplies, home and vehicle modifications, respite care, and transition services. During the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2015, the Office of Special Disability Programs (OSDP) provided independent living services for 4,996 individuals with significant (severe) disabilities.

**4,996 INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES PROVIDED**

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT  
OUTCOMES FOR VR:



We help over 19,000 Mississippians a year overcome limitations imposed by physical or mental disabilities in order for that person to secure or maintain employment. In the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) assisted 19,344 Mississippians with disabilities in receiving services including, but not limited to: counseling and guidance in adjustment to disability, vocational exploration, physical and mental restoration, job training, assistive technology, and job placement. Individuals served by VR have a wide array of disabilities including, but not limited to: hearing loss or deafness, amputations, mental and emotional disorders, epilepsy, developmental disease and disorders, traumatic brain injuries, orthopedic impairments, residuals from cancer, and speech impairments. The total number of VR consumers employed during FFY 2015 was 4,605.

**4,605 SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES**

## DEAF SERVICES

We help people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or late deafened find employment, attend education and training programs, and learn more about their community resources. The MDRS Deaf Services Program continues to promote excellence by striving to assist new RCD's (Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf) to reach the required communications skills level on the Signed Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI), an American Sign Language assessment developed by the Rochester Institute of Technology. Adequate communication skills are a pre-requisite to meaningful counseling and guidance with people who are Deaf and use manual communication.

This skill, along with other specialized training, has been a vital factor in the successful rehabilitation of individuals with deafness or significant hearing loss. In FFY 2015, Deaf Services were provided to 3,219 Mississippians, resulting in 1,247 successful rehabilitations.

**1,247 SUCCESSFUL REHABILITATIONS**

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

We assist individuals with the most significant disabilities who require intensive support services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment. Each MDRS district has a Supported Employment Team consisting of a specialized VR/SE counselor, and a Vocational Training Instructor who oversees the work of Job Trainers working on site with our consumers. During FFY 2015, 803 individuals received Supported Employment services, 57 resulting in successful employment.

**57 SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENTS**

## TRANSITION SERVICES

We work with eligible secondary school students with disabilities, their families, and school personnel to assure there is an integrated program of education and vocational training available to provide a seamless transition from school to work. In FFY 2015, the number of students receiving transition services was 3,072 and 408 students found employment. Examples of transition services are vocational-technical training, vocational evaluation, work adjustment training, on the job training, job search skills, and work experience programs. These services may be available to students both on and off campus or at one of the 16 AbilityWorks as a part of their school day.

**408 SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES**

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR THE BLIND



We specialize in working with individuals who are blind or visually impaired to ensure opportunities for inclusion into the workforce, community, and home. Of the 4,605 successful employment outcomes by VR in FFY 2015, 575 were achieved through Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (VRB). VRB provided consumers services such as counseling and guidance in adjustment to disability, vocational exploration, orientation and mobility training, job training, and assistive technology.

## ADDIE MCBRYDE REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE BLIND

The Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center for the Blind provides traditional intensive evaluation, training, and adjustment services on the campus of the University of Mississippi Medical Center. In FFY 2015, the Addie McBryde Center provided training to 167 consumers.

**PROVIDED TRAINING TO 167 CONSUMERS**

## BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides support for self-employment opportunities in the food service industry for Mississippians who are legally blind. These BEP entrepreneurs operate a variety of businesses including vending machine routes, snack bars and cafeterias on military bases. In FFY 2015, 37 individuals operated successful businesses as BEP vendors.

**37 SUCCESSFUL BEP VENDORS**

## INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

We serve individuals who are legally blind and either over the age of 55 or have a significant secondary disability by providing a variety of independent living services. In FFY 2015, ILB served over 2,000 consumers through indirect services such as health fairs, vision screening, peer groups, and outreach. ILB provided direct services to 616 consumers.

**PROVIDED SERVICES TO 616 CONSUMERS**

## ITINERANT TEACHER PROGRAM

Itinerant teachers work closely with VRB counselors to coordinate services, evaluate client needs, develop living-needs plans and instructional materials, and provide onsite training for consumers who are blind or visually impaired. In 2015, the Itinerant Teacher Program provided 68 services for VRB consumers.

**PROVIDED SERVICES TO 68 CONSUMERS**

# PROGRAM FUNDING

## Title One Section 110 Match Funding

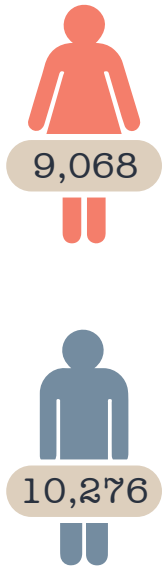
### 2015

Section 110 Grant	\$44,536,766 (78.7%)
State Match	\$12,053,788 (21.3%)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$56,590,554 (100.0%)</b>

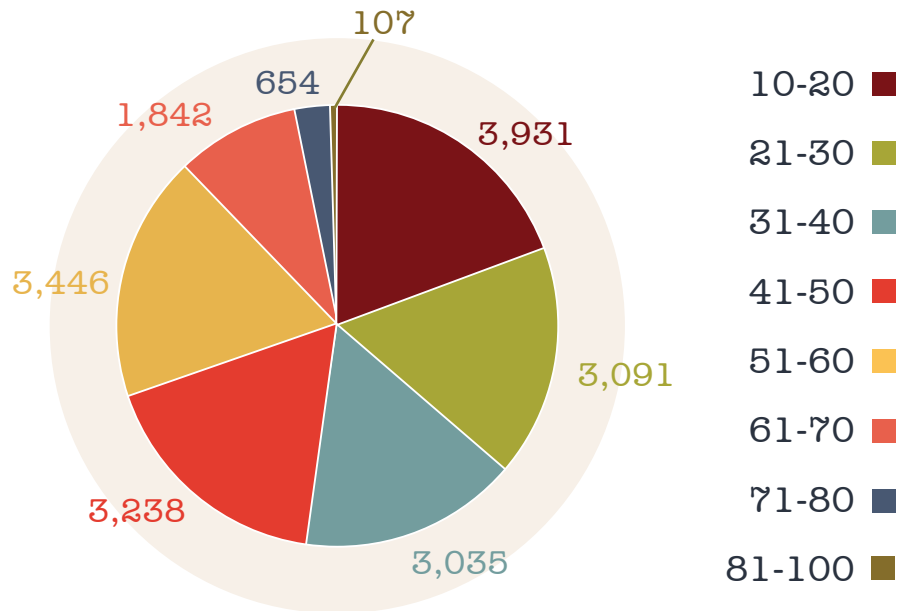
# IN DEPTH LOOK AT VR & VRB

## Demographics of Persons Served

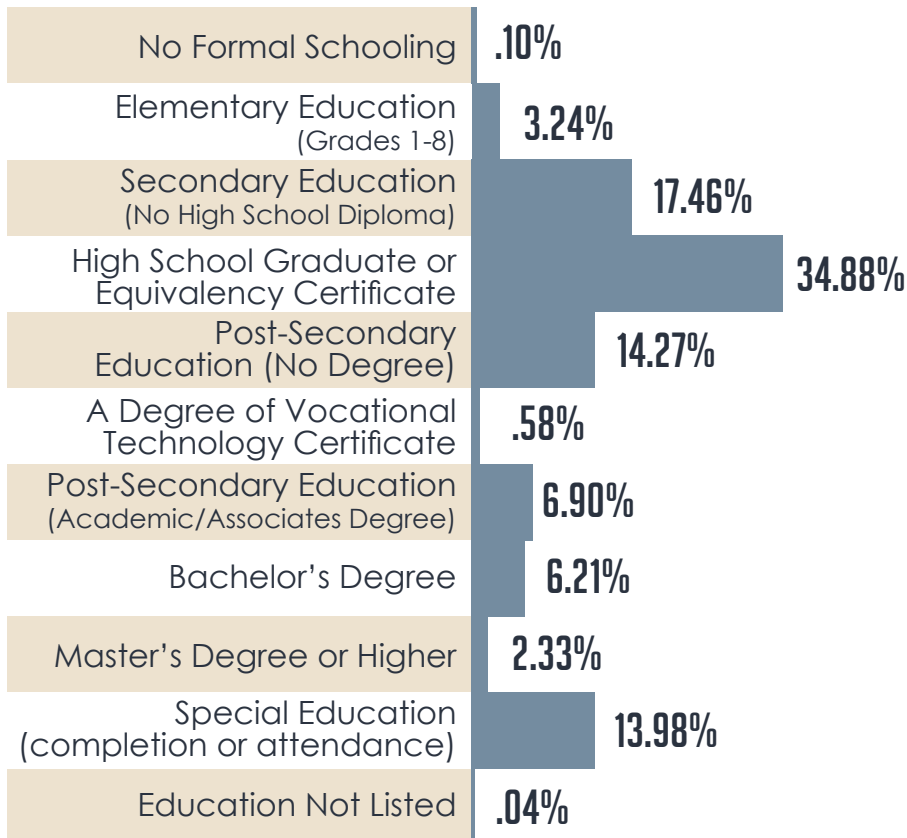
### Gender



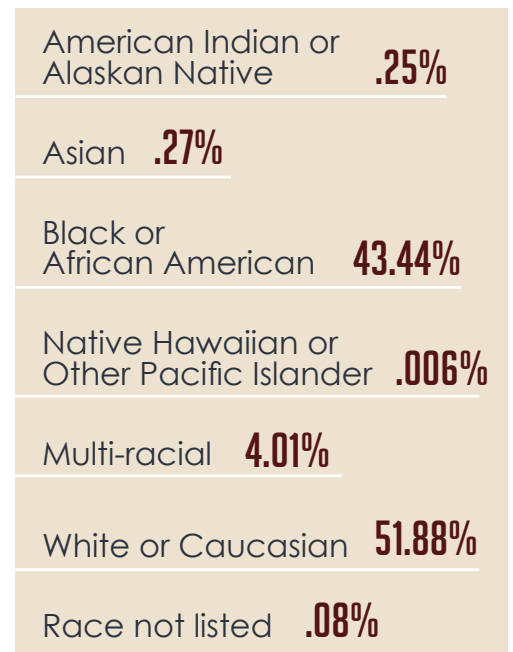
### Age at Application



### Education Level at Application



### Race

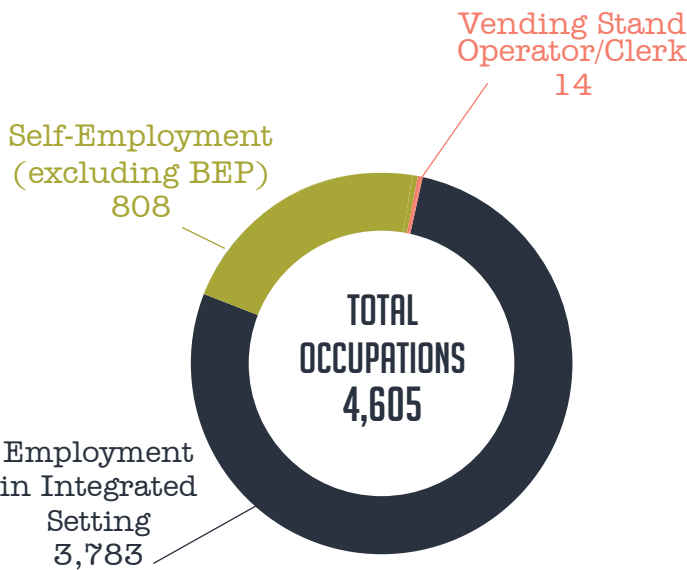




# IN DEPTH LOOK AT VR & VRB

## Status of Persons Rehabilitated

### Employment Status of Persons Rehabilitated



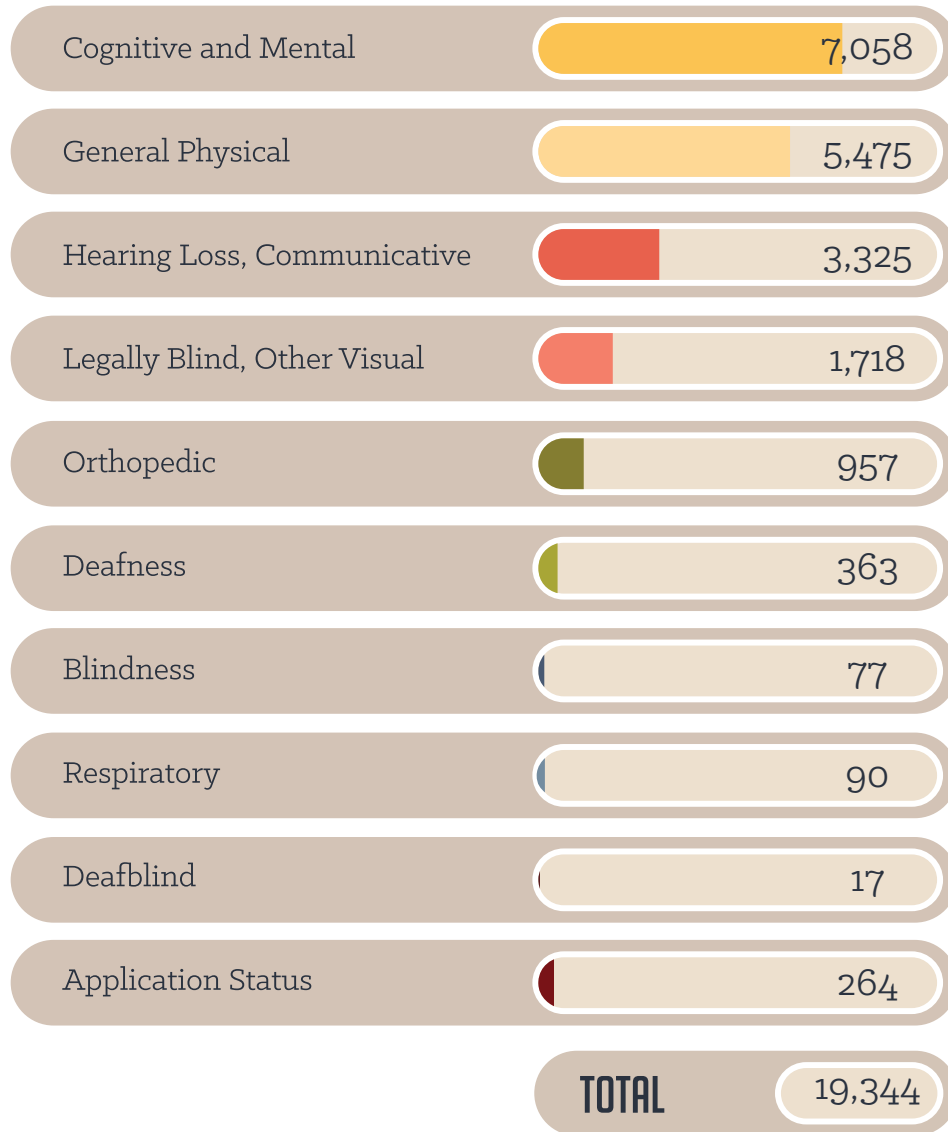
### Employment in Integrated Settings

Service Worker .....	1,021
Sales .....	500
Skilled Craft .....	571
Secretarial/Office/Clerical .....	467
Laborer .....	360
Professional .....	378
Operative .....	227
Executive/Managerial .....	134
Technical/Paraprofessional .....	78
Production Occupations .....	5
Community & Social Service .....	4
Clerical & Administrative Support .....	8
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical ...	7
Healthcare Support .....	3
Computer & Mathematical .....	3
Education, Training, & Library .....	6
Protective Service .....	2
Personal Care .....	2
Construction/Extraction Operations .....	1
Business and Financial Operations .....	1

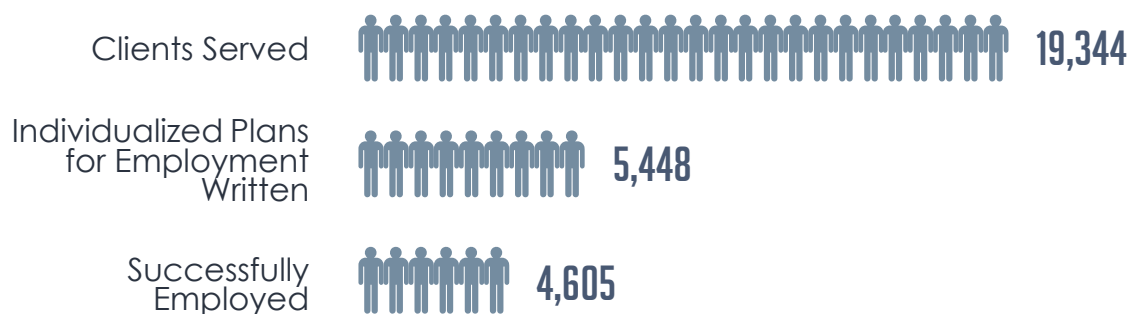
3,773

# IN DEPTH LOOK AT VR & VRB

## Persons served by Primary Disability



## Clients Served and Closed for 2015



# IN DEPTH LOOK AT DDS & OSDP

## Office of Disability Determination Services

Claims Processed	93,344
Average Processing Time	89 days
Average Cost per Case	\$316.00
Accuracy Rate	98.6%

## Office of Special Disability Programs

	Number Served
Independent Living Waiver	2,922
TBI/SCI Trust Fund	332
TBI/SCI Waiver	952

## PROOF OF PERFORMANCE

### Office of Disability Determination Services

#### Processing time

Year	National Average	Mississippi Average
2011	110 Days	97 Days
2012	102 Days	93 Days
2013	107 Days	91 Days
2014	104 Days	89 Days
2015	110 Days	89 Days

#### Cost per case

Year	National Average	Mississippi Average
2011	\$488	\$299
2012	\$435	\$279
2013	\$455	\$311
2014	\$462	\$316
2015	\$462	\$316

#### Production per Work Year

Year	National Average	Mississippi Average
2011	290	340
2012	324	370
2013	322	368
2014	310	357
2015	310	357

*\*The Mississippi DDS has maintained a net accuracy rate of 97% or higher for each of the 5 years above.*

## Office of Special Disability Programs

Year	Number of Clients Served	Annual Cost Savings to the Division of Medicaid
2011	3,346	\$168,355,878
2012	3,378	\$176,145,487
2013	3,487	\$206,635,981
2014	3,739	\$220,322,128
2015	3,874	\$216,208,403

*\*Figures shown above are based on the Division of Medicaid cost reports for the Independent Living Waiver and the Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver. \*OSDP numbers are reported from the State Fiscal Year.*

# DISTRICTS & OFFICE LOCATIONS

## District I

51 County Road 166  
Oxford, MS 38655  
OVR: (662) 234-3171  
OVRB: (662) 234-6092  
OSDP: (662) 234-5744

## District II

2620 Traceland Drive  
Tupelo, MS 38801  
OVR: (662) 842-1010  
OSDP: (662) 840-9946  
615-A Pegram Drive  
Tupelo, MS 38801  
OVRB: (662) 844-5830

## District III

201 Highway 7 South  
Greenwood, MS 38930  
OVR: (662) 453-6172  
OVRB: (662) 455-1432  
OSDP: (662) 453-2253

## District IV

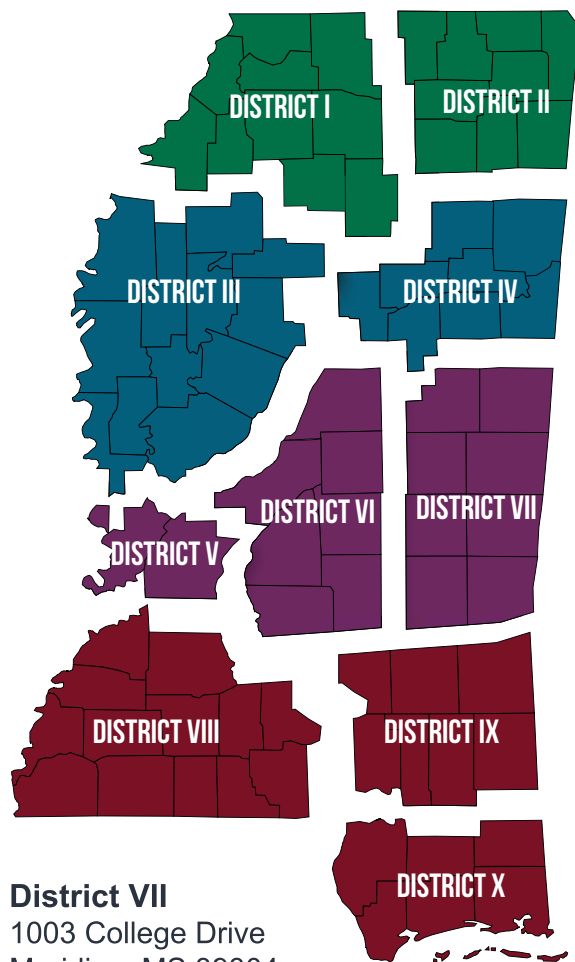
207 Industrial Park Road  
Starkville, MS 39760  
OVR: (662) 323-9594  
OSDP: (662) 324-1881  
48 Datco Industrial Drive  
Columbus, MS 39704  
OVRB: (662) 328-8807

## District V

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

## District VI

1032 Center Pointe Blvd., Suite A  
Pearl, MS 39208  
OVR: (601) 709-5601  
OVRB: (601) 709-5625  
OSDP: (601) 709-5657



## District VII

1003 College Drive  
Meridian, MS 39304  
OVR: (601) 483-3881  
OVRB: (601) 483-5391  
OSDP: (601) 482-1594

## District VIII

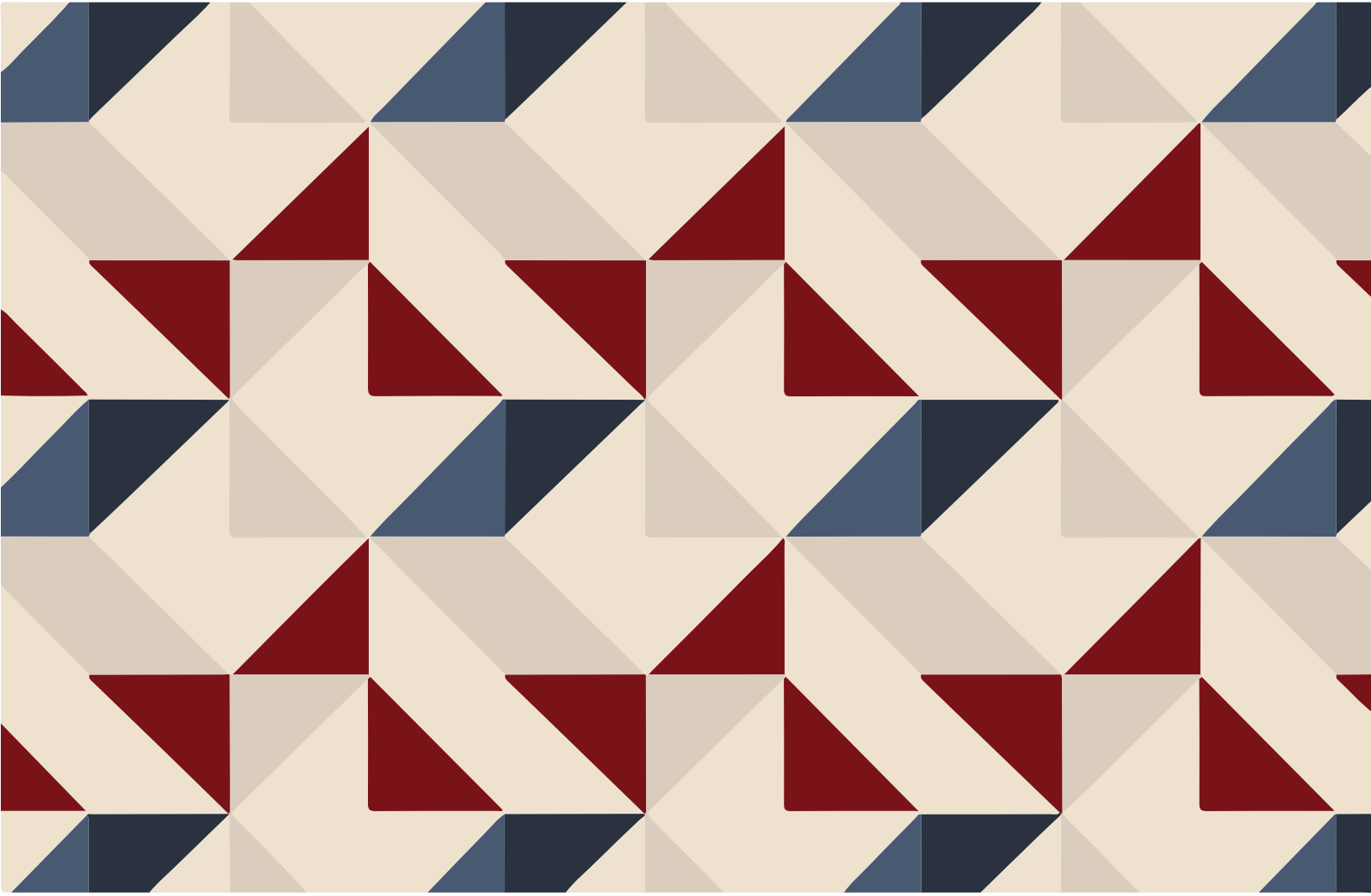
1400-A Harrison Drive  
McComb, MS 39649  
OVR: (601) 249-2498  
OVRB: (601) 684-3392  
OSDP: (601) 249-4646

## District IX

17 J M Tatum Industrial Drive  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
OVR: (601) 545-5619  
OVRB: (601) 545-5613  
18 J M Tatum Industrial Drive  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
OSDP: (601) 545-5644

## District X

13486 Fastway Lane  
Gulfport, MS 39503  
OVR: (228) 575-3789  
OVRB: (228) 575-3788  
OSDP: (228) 575-3785



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

*Please send any comments or questions to:*

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