Project START  
*(Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology)*

2016

Annual Report

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

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

**Letter from our Executive Director**

Dear friends,

I am pleased to present the 2016 Annual Report for the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services’ (MDRS) Project START, also known as the Mississippi Technology Act Program. START stands for Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology.

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Chris M. Howard, Executive Director

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

**Letter from Director**

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

Last year our program assisted 1,122 individuals under our State Level Activities at cost savings of $419,145 to the state of Mississippi. Those services included 744 evaluations and demonstration of assistive technology equipment, the repair and refurbishment of equipment for 116 clients and 262 short term loans of assistive technology devices from our loaner library.

Our State Leadership Activities program provided training to 1,008 participants and reached 86,381 people through public awareness campaigns. We also provided assistance and information to 777 individuals.

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

We are excited about some additions to our program for the coming year and invite you to visit our website at msprojectstart.org for more information about our services and upcoming events. You can contact us anytime, through our website or by calling our office at 601-853-5249 or 1-800-852-8328 or emailing me directly at pgaltelli@mdrs.ms.gov.

Patsy Galtelli, Director

Project START

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

**Device Reassignment/Refurbishment**

Mobility, Seating & Positioning 87

Daily Living 25

Computer & Related 3

116

**Customer Satisfaction**

Highly Satisfied 105

Satisfied 6

Satisfied somewhat 5

Total Surveyed 116

**Testimonial**

*We had a 66 year old male with Multiple Sclerosis who was unable to safely ambulate within his home and community. The client had a work history as an independent dump truck driver and wanted to return to self-employment. Project START was able to accommodate his needs by providing him with a refurbished power wheelchair. The client was able to return to a better quality of life and hopes to soon return to work to assist in supporting his family as well as being able to enjoy a better quality of life.*

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

**Device Loans by Type or Borrower**

Individual with disabilities 211

Family members, guardians & authorized representatives 2

Representatives of Education 43

Representatives of Employment 0

Representative of Health, Allied Health & rehabilitation 5

Representative of Community Living 1

Representative of technology 0

Assist in decision making (device trail or evaluation) 129

Serve as loaner during device repair or while waiting for funding 74

Provide an accommodation on a short-term basis 59

**Types of Devices Loaned**

Vision 37

Hearing 15

Speech Communication 86

Learning, cognition & developmental 16

Mobility, Seating & positioning 31

Daily Living 58

Environmental adaptations 0

Vehicle modification & transportation 0

Computers & related 19

Recreation, sports & leisure 0

Total 262

**Customer Satisfaction**

Highly satisfied 217

Satisfied 13

Satisfied Somewhat 0

Not at all Satisfied 0

Nonrespondent 32

262

**Testimonial**

*One young man who as apraxia had been in speech therapy for 9 months and could not say any words. We evaluated and loaned a device with Words for Life on it. Within a week he was approximating a few words. His parents were so excited they purchased a device for him. A year later he is using 2-3 word phrases with his natural speech and uses the device for words he cannot say. His parents are beyond thrilled, he is making great progress in school and it is expected he will be in general education.*

**Device Demonstrations by Device Type**

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

Vision 76

Hearing 43

Speech Communication 172

Learning, cognition & develo0pmental 77

Mobility, seating & positioning 64

Daily Living 0

Environmental adaptations 55

Vehicle modification & transportation 184

Computers & related 57

Recreation, sports & leisure 16

Total 744

**Types of Participants**

Individuals with Disabilities 456

Family Members, guardians & authorized representatives 44

Representative of Education 269

Representatives of Employment 0

Representative of Health, Allied Health & rehabilitation 7

Representatives of Community Living 0

Representatives of Technology 0

**Customer Satisfaction**

Highly Satisfied 742

Satisfied 29

Satisfied somewhat 5

Not at all satisfied 0

Non respondent 0

Total 776

**Testimonial**

*A parent was searching for options for her 12 year old nonverbal son. We demonstrated several augmentative communication devices but he was unable to comprehend and was totally uninterested. We then demonstrated an iPad with several communication apps installed. His mother was overjoyed as he quickly became engaged and was soon navigating through the various apps.*

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

Individuals with disabilities 28

Family members, guardians & authorized representatives 52

Representatives of Education 533

Representatives of Employment 41

Representatives of Health, allied health & rehabilitation 342

Representatives of Community Living 12

Representatives of Technology 0

Total 1,008

Metro 438

Non-Metro 570

Total 1,008

**Public Awareness Activities**

Newsletter 756

Other printed materials 0

Internet Information 3,531

PSA/radio/TV/other media 81,000

Other Electronic Media 489

Presentations/expos/conferences 605

86,381

**Information & Assistance**

AT Device Service AT Funding Total

Individuals with disabilities 167 41 208

Family members, guardians & authorized repress 95 58 153

Representative of Education 334 18 352

Representative of Employment 3 0 3

Representative of Health, Allied Health & Rehab 56 0 56

Representative of Community Living 5 0 5

660 117 777

Your perspective is extremely valuable,

and we greatly appreciate any and all feedback!

*Please send any comments or questions to:*

Patsy Galtelli  
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1.800.852.8328 (in MS only) | [www.msprojectstart.org](http://www.msprojectstart.org)

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

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