State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report 2009









Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

Providing the freedom to live



WELCOME	2
Consumer Satisfaction Survey	4
SRC Recommendations	5
Guide to the System	5
Vocational Rehabilitation	6
Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind	6
Business Enterprise Program	7
ABILITYWORKS	8
TRANSITION	9
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT	9
CLIENTS SERVED PER COUNTY	10
Facts at a Glance/ Spotlight on Success	11
PROGRAM FUNDING	13
FIELD OFFICE LOCATIONS	14

Mission Statement

It is the express mission of the State of Mississippi Rehabilitation Council to ensure that Mississippians with disabilities have a strong role in shaping the vocational rehabilitation programs of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services.



Vision Statement

The vision of the State of Mississippi Rehabilitation Council is to ensure that the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services provides Mississippians with disabilities empowerment through informed choice, inclusion through equal access and full participation, independence through employment opportunities, and integration through advocacy.

Dear Governor Barbour and Members of the Mississippi Legislature:

On behalf of the members of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), I am pleased to present you with our 2009 Annual Report. This report is designed to inform you all of the status of vocational rehabilitation programs in Mississippi. Our Council has met regularly to produce this report for you and could not have accomplished our work without the capable support staff at MDRS.

The SRC was created in 1992 by the United States Congress as part of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. The Council is to review and advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation of the supports and services and programs affecting persons with disabilities in our state. The majority of the members of our Council are individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. We know how important these services are to us all and take our voluntary service quite seriously. This year we have also had the opportunity to enhance the reporting document and change the format in which you view this document. We hope you like the changes.

Working together with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, we have continued to enhance the vision of empowerment through informed choice and inclusion. We have also experienced some success this year by "just doing the right thing" helping folks find jobs and a place to belong. I am proud to serve as your chairperson and look forward to another successful year ahead. I do hope you find this report helpful and enlightening.



Dear Governor Barbour and Members of the Mississippi Legislature:

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you a few of the many accomplishments of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services and the State Rehabilitation Council in 2009. Our partnership lends to carrying out our mission of providing services to individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

Throughout this report, you will meet the members of this important council and read of their recommendations and accomplishments. I would like to thank the members for their service, guidance, and valuable input in the agency's work to provide quality services to Mississippians with disabilities.

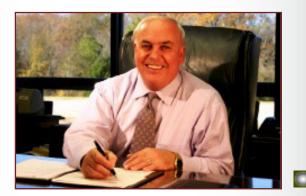
This year our agency has achieved many successes for which we are very proud. The Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind have served almost 21,000 people and achieved outstanding ratings in client satisfaction surveys. We continue to develop new relationships within our federal partner agency, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and we look forward to working with them in the next year.

In our report, we have included success stories of our consumers. These successes, along with our others, could not be achieved without the dedication and hard work by the staff of the MDRS in consultation with the members of the State Rehabilitation Council. We look forward to this continued partnership and another year of successful outcomes.



H.S. McMillan, Executive Director MS Department of Rehabilitation Services

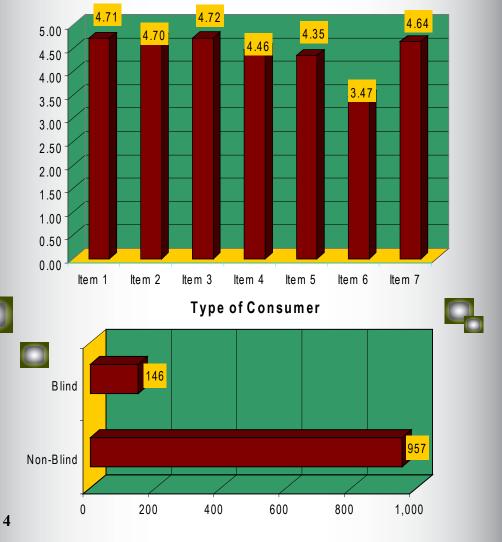




Consumer Satisfaction Survey

The ratings for the various services consumers received are presented below using the average (mean) score given to each item by all respondents interviewed. The respondents were asked to rate the following items on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very bad and 5 being very good. Thus, a high score indicates that the service was good and a low score that it was bad.

- *ITEM 1:* The help the VR staff provided at the time you applied for VR services.
- **ITEM 2:** The help from the VR staff during the planning of your services.
- *ITEM 3:* The help from the VR staff when you were receiving your VR services.
- ITEM 4: The help you received from other agencies or service providers.
- **ITEM 5:** Your employment outcome.
- **ITEM 6:** Employment benefits provided by your new employer.
- ITEM 7: Overall, how do you rate the services you received?



Average Consumer Ratings

SRC Recommendations

For State Fiscal Year 2010, the State Rehabilitation Council proposes that the MDRS write into the State Plan, contingency plans if the Choctaw Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program does not, at some time, receive continuation of funding through the competitive grant process.







<u>Step One</u> :	Referral —I provide contact information to VR to arrange a meeting.
<u>Step Two</u> :	Orientation — I learn what VR is about and if it is right for me.
<u>Step Three</u> :	Application — I declare that I intend to work and need assistance in getting or keeping a job.
<u>Step Four</u> :	Assessment and Evaluation — VR collects information about how my disability affects work, including medical information from my doctors, to determine my strengths and limitations.
<u>Step Five</u> :	Determine Eligibility — The counselor reviews all the information to decide if I am eligible for VR services.
<u>Step Six</u> :	Individualized Plan for Employment (IEP) — Together, my counselor and I design the roadmap to help me go to work - a plan to reach a job goal that is right for me.
<u>Step Seven</u> :	Action — Along with my counselor and other VR staff, I work my plan to reach my job goal.
<u>Step Eight</u> :	Employment — I've reached my job goal!
<u>Step Nine</u> :	Case Closure — I am employed for at least 90 days.
<u>Step Ten</u> :	Post Employment Services — If I have problems at my job, I can contact my VR counselor to help me stay employed.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The total number of individuals served in 2009 was 19,762, and the total number of successful employment outcomes was 4,555. After receiving services through MDRS, the average client income increased by \$11,344.32. The total increase in income for all VR clients was \$51,529,840.44.



Shirley Sanders, a Hurricane Katrina survivor, came to live with her son in DeSoto County after the tragic loss of her husband and other members of her family in the disaster. Shortly after her move, she discovered she had a malignant lung cancer, which required the removal of a lung. With only one lung, she developed COPD, plus she had arthritis and rheumatism, causing pain and problems in standing or walking.

At MDRS, she was given an evaluation, revealing to her VR Counselor that Shirley would be an ideal candidate for the Experience Works program at the DeSoto County WIN Job Center. The program requires participants to continue to look for employment while performing jobs referred by the Center. Shirley was allowed to work as front desk receptionist for the Job Center, where she performed her job in a dedicated and caring manner. As a result, she was able to locate a lucrative position with the Internal Revenue Service.



Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

Of the 4,555 successful employment outcomes by VR, 591 were achieved through Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (VRB).



Lehne Brasseal, past resident of Jackson and later Madison, attended the Mississippi School for the Blind and participated in the summer work experience programs at the Addie McBryde Center and Mississippi Industries for the Blind. Lehne was born with congenital optic nerve hypoplasia and has been with no light perception in both eyes since birth. He graduated from the Mississippi School for the Blind and attended his

first two years of college at Meridian Community College.

After graduating from the University of Southern Mississippi with a BS degree in speech communication, he returned to Madison. Then, after assessing his options, Lehne sought further training at the REACH Center in Tupelo. Afterwards, he was accepted for IRS Tax Representative training at Lion's World Services for the Blind in Little Rock, AR. Lehne was subsequently placed as an IRS Tax Representative in Jacksonville, Florida.

Business Enterprise Program

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides full-time self employment opportunities for 35 legally blind Mississippians. The BEP entrepreneurs operate a variety of businesses including vending machine routes, snack bars and even cafeterias on military bases.



Francis Lee, VRB Counselor, relates that, from the first day she talked to Ray Renderman, she knew she was dealing with a charismatic and self-sufficient individual. Ray and his new bride moved to Mississippi from Florida to be closer to his in-laws. Ray had left a successful business for the sake of love and contacted the Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind at MDRS to discuss job opportunities in the Hattiesburg area.

When Francis met with Ray on January 19, 2007, she learned of his articulate speech and friendly, laid-back nature, which made it easy to forget the fact that Ray was legally blind as a result of Retinitis Pigmentosa. Ray's goal was to participate in the Business Enterprise Program; however, since there were no vacancies, he had to consider other types of employment that would allow him to use his skills to support his family. Along with most of us during these tough economic times, Ray was under financial pressure and found it necessary to postpone his dream of being an entrepreneur.

The first step for Ray was to determine his strengths, identify alternative vocations, and decide what would be required to reach his goal. A vocational evaluation was conducted at the Addie McBryde Center for the Blind to make that determination, resulting in a decision to focus on bookkeeping and small business management as secondary goals. Ray then went to the Center to participate in personal adjustment training, with a strong emphasis on learning computer skills.

Francis worked with Beth Frantz, Employment Coordinator, on a job opportunity with a local manufacturing company in Ellisville. An on-the-job-training (OJT) was set up, and Ray began working there in June 2007 on challenges such as negotiating salary, getting loaner AT equipment, and learning a new job. Ray was always on time and a model of efficiency; however, due to budget cuts, he was laid off right before Thanksgiving. Although very disappointed, Ray was tenacious in starting the job search again.

This time, a vacancy was available within the Business Enterprise Program. Ray applied, and, with the help of a very supportive recommendation from Francis, was selected. With the use of a CCTV and several other low vision devices, Ray now lives on the Coast and runs one of the most successful vending routes within the BEP.

Although Ray had to overcome a lifetime of hardships, his determination and hard work, along with assistance from the MDRS Vocational Rehabilitation of the Blind, have enabled him to once again live his dream of being a self-employed businessman.



AbilityWorks

During FFY 2009, AbilityWorks served a total of 3,004 MDRS clients, placing 744 in employment opportunities, which resulted in 786 successful employment outcomes.

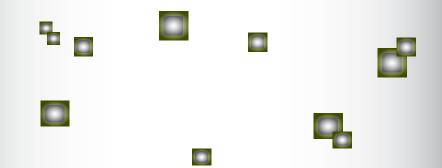


Brandon Streetman received a Certificate of Life Skills from high school and was referred to MDRS for vocational rehabilitation. It was very evident that Brandon was highly motivated to work, but he wasn't clear on what type of job he should pursue. Brandon, his parents, and VR counselor determined he should have a Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation (CVE) to help him have a better understanding of employment opportunities.

Following exploration of different CRPs, Brandon chose AbilityWorks of Tupelo for his CVE, which resulted in a recommendation that he participate in a period of Job Readiness Training designed to develop his work skills and allow for job exploration. Brandon progressed handily through a variety of work assignments, always treating each assignment as an opportunity to demonstrate his enthusiasm and positive attitude, as well as his willingness and ability to learn new tasks and accept responsibilities. He also attended GED preparation classes to improve his reading and math skills.

Brandon eventually progressed in his CRP training to the point of being assigned to an on-the-job evaluation/training experience with a premier company specializing in the proper disposal and management of hazardous medical waste. Because of her belief in Brandon's competency to perform well within this company's work environment, Employment Coordinator LaWanda Rausch approached the company's General Manager on his behalf and recommended Brandon for employment.

At the completion of Brandon's training, he was hired on a full-time basis as a cleaning technician by Cardinal Health, performing an important multi-step job. He now earns \$9.50/hour, with full company benefits, including accrued vacation time and health insurance. When asked how life is treating him, Brandon enthusiastically responds, "I love my job!"



Transition

In FFY 2009, the Transition Program served approximately 2,627 students and placed 385 in successful employment outcomes.



In 2008, 17-year old Kyle Bullock entered AbilityWorks of Hattiesburg as a transition student. Kyle underwent an evaluation process via the McCarron-Dial Work Evaluation System and performed simulated work in the AW workshop as a result of his diagnosis as Specific Learning Disability (SLD). He also participated in a Community Based Job Readiness program at Purvis High School as a custodial worker with no significant

work-related problems.

In 2009, he was assisted by the AW evaluator in completing an application for Walmart as either a custodian or cart pusher. When contacted for an interview, Kyle was aided by his evaluator in a 3-panel interview for the cart pusher position and was offered the job. In his first week, Kyle was assisted by a job trainer to help him learn the new tasks. As a result, the Walmart Manager reports that Kyle is one of Walmart's best employees; dependable with a strong work ethic.



Supported Employment

During FFY 2009, 778 individuals received Supported Employment services, and 121 resulted in successful employment outcomes.

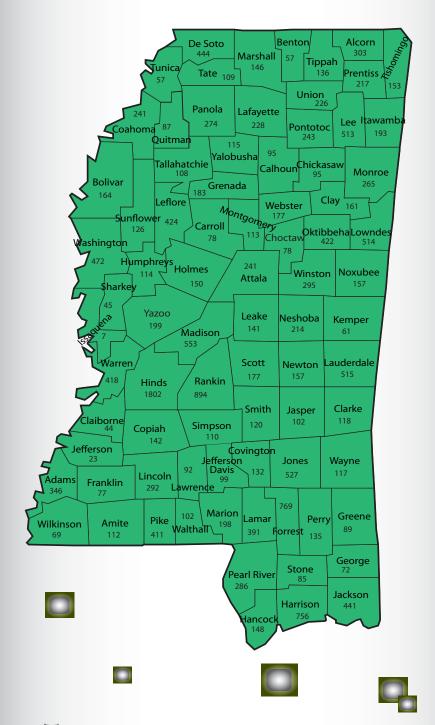


In 2007, Supported Employment Counselor Leslie Shake met with Ricky Williams to discuss his employment needs and the services available. With a Cognitive Disability and Hearing Impairment, Ricky was seeking help at a workshop for people with severe disabilities.

After providing Ricky with hearing aids, his counselor assisted him with interview skills and job applications, and then approached the Manager of a local grocery store about hiring Ricky. Noting that he was eager to work, she stressed that Ricky would make an ideal cook for the deli.

He was hired a couple of weeks later, working 20 hours/week. Although he had a speech impediment, he overcame that adversity with a beautiful smile and attitude. After two months, his hours were increased to 35. Because he mastered his duties, proved he could work independently, and did not miss work, Ricky is now successfully employed.





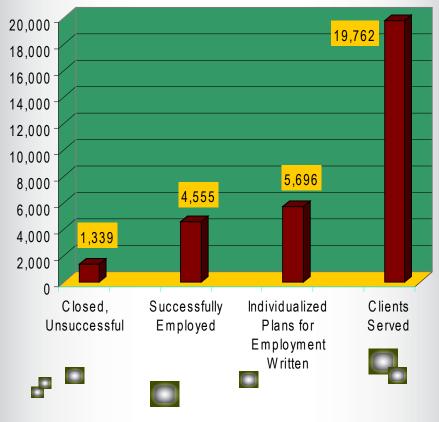
The average expenditure per rehabilitant for 2009 was \$4,218.54.





Facts at a Glance

Clients Served and Closed for 2009



Spotlight on Success



Amy Shirley, a 30-year old Courtland resident, came to the Batesville Vocational Rehabilitation Office seeking assistance for Arachnoiditis. This debilitating neurological condition is caused by inflammation in an arachnoid lining surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Preservatives in epidural steroid injections can cause arachnoiditis, especially if the medication enters the cerebral spinal fluid, which occurred in Amy's

case, resulting in chronic, persistent pain and an absence of spinal fluid in her lower lumbar. Whereas most people with arachnoiditis are unable to work due to the pain and lack of mobility, Amy continues to work. She is aware, however, that she will eventually be confined to a wheelchair, because there is no cure for arachnoiditis. Amy is excited about the services MDRS provides her through Assistive Technology. She celebrated the completion of her vehicle modification, including hand controls, on December 17, 2009. She is employed with the State as the supervisor for Family and Children Services in Hernando. Amy is an inspiration to her counselor, Lula Merrell, because, despite her condition, she chooses to be happy and live life to the fullest.

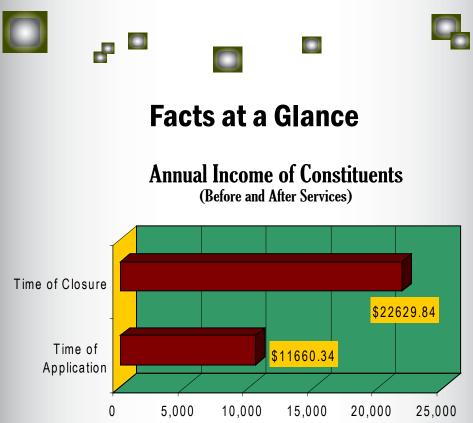
Spotlight on Success

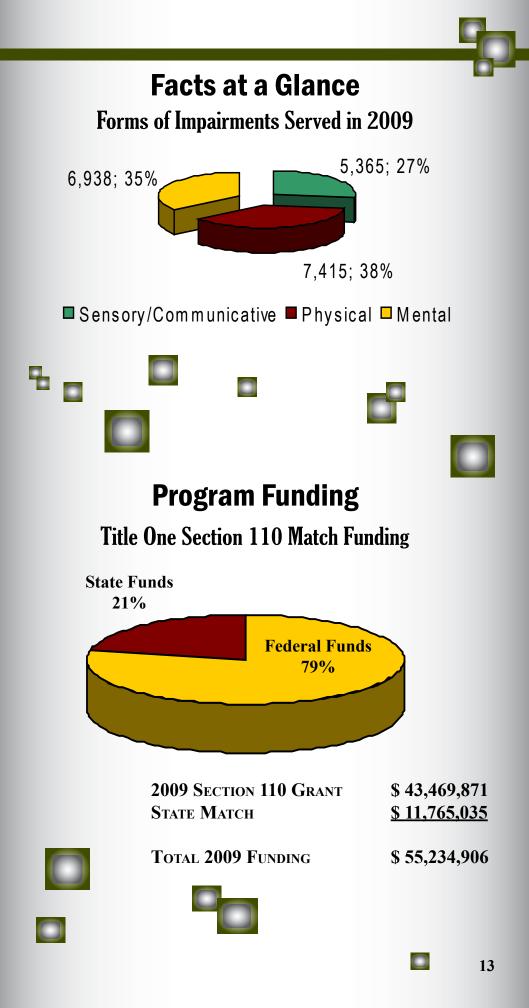


Mary was first introduced to MDRS staff while living in a nursing facility. With a dual sensory impairment, she communicated through tactual sign language. Born deaf, Mary lost her sight later in life, leaving her with light perception only. Although she had many service providers caring for her, it was clear that Mary did not trust the world around her. She was reluctant to open up to others

and allow new people into her life. In the nursing facility, Mary had become withdrawn from the world around her. Luckily, she had two guardians and a team of service providers searching for funding to get her into the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC).

After a four year struggle, they were finally able to obtain the funds and Mary, her brother, and the MDRS Deaf Blind Coordinator flew to HKNC, where Mary found the help she desperately needed. The first six months were a daily struggle for Mary, but then she began to open up. The staff members who were born deaf were able to win Mary's confidence, and the bond they formed led to various jobs on campus. Off campus, she worked in food services for a local bowling alley and at Applebee's. Now, after 2 1/2 years of intense training, Mary is back home living in her own apartment, working at a local Chili's and living an active life in her community.







Field Office Locations

District I

1111 West Jackson Avenue Oxford, MS 38655 OVR: (662) 234-3171 OVRB: (662) 234-6092

706 Highway 6 East Batesville, MS OSDP: (662) 563-8244

District II

2620 Traceland Drive Tupelo, MS 38803 OVR: (662) 842-1010

615-A Pegram Drive Tupelo, MS 38801 OVRB: (662) 844-5830

2701 CR 402 South Fulton Drive Corinth, MS 38835 OSDP: (662) 287-6964

District III

201 Highway 7 South Greenwood, MS 38930 OVR: (662) 453-6172 OVRB: (662) 455-1432 OSDP: (662) 455-2706

District IV

207 Industrial Park Road Starkville, MS 39760 OVR: (662) 323-9594 OVRB: (662) 328-8807

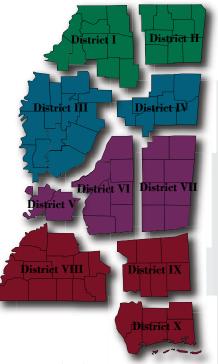
48 Datco Industrial Drive Columbus, MS 39704 OSDP: (662) 241-7673

District V

3895 Beasley Road Jackson, MS 39213 OVR: (601) 898-7004 OVRB: (601) 898-7042 OSDP: (601) 898-7026

District VI

1032 Center Pointe Blvd., Suite A Pearl, MS 39208 OVR: (601) 709-5601 OVRB: (601) 709-5625 OSDP: (601) 709-5651



District VII

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

600 North Court Ave., Suite A Louisville, MS 39339 OSDP: (601) 773-5458

District VIII

1400-A Harrison Drive McComb, MS 39649 OVR: (601) 684-1265 OVRB: (601) 442-7322 OSDP: (601) 249-4646

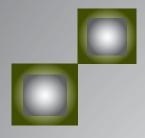
District IX

#17 John Merle Tatum Industrial Dr. Hattiesburg, MS 39401 OVR: (601) 545-5619 OVRB: (601) 545-5613 OSDP: (601) 545-6905

District X

13486 Fastway Lane, Suite D 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:

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services Attn: Michael Gandy Post Office Box 1698 Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1698

> 1.800.443.1000 www.mdrs.state.ms.us





Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

Providing the freedom to live