

# **State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report 2012**



**Mississippi Department of  
Rehabilitation Services**

*Providing the freedom to live*



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## **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 2012 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 extremely capable support staff at MDRS.

The SRC was created in 1992 by the United States Congress as part of the Rehabilitation Act. The council's charge is to review and advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation of the supports and services and programs impacting 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.

Although 2012 was a successful year in spite of some economic downturn, we will continue to face tough economic challenges in 2013. It is imperative that we continue to receive the support you have given us in the past so that we may successfully assist an increasing number of Mississippians with disabilities find employment and achieve economic independence.

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, and helping employers realize how beneficial it can be to hire a person with a disability. 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.

Here to Help,  
Matt Nalker, SRC Chairperson



***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 2012. Our partnership is vital to carrying out our mission of providing quality services to individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner. 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.

Although the citizens of Mississippi have faced some tough economic times this year, at MDRS we continue to strive to meet the needs of Mississippians with disabilities who rely on our services to become successfully employed. In 2012, the Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind have served 21,546 job seekers with significant disabilities and achieved outstanding ratings in client satisfaction surveys. This year, we have achieved our goal of assisting over 4,500 people enter into the workforce and become successfully employed leading to economic independence.

In our report, we have included success stories of our consumers. These successes 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 and the consumers we serve. We look forward to this continued partnership and another year of successful outcomes.

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

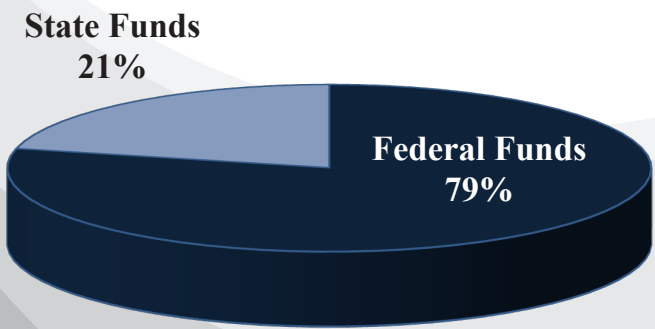


# Guide Through The System

- STEP ONE:**     **Referral** — I provide contact information to VR to arrange a meeting.
- STEP TWO:**     **Orientation** — I learn what VR is about and if it is right for me.
- STEP THREE:**   **Application** — I declare that I intend to work and need assistance in getting or keeping a job.
- STEP FOUR:**    **Assessment and Evaluation** — My counselor collects information about how my disability affects work, including medical information from my doctors, to determine my strengths and limitations.
- STEP FIVE:**     **Determine Eligibility** — The counselor reviews all the information to decide if I am eligible for VR services.
- STEP SIX:**       **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.
- STEP SEVEN:**   **Action** — Along with my counselor and other VR staff, I work my plan to reach my job goal.
- STEP EIGHT:**    **Employment** — I’ve reached my job goal!
- STEP NINE:**     **Case Closure** — I am employed for at least 90 days.
- STEP TEN:**      **Post Employment Services** — If I have problems at my job, I can contact my VR counselor to help me stay employed.

## Program Funding

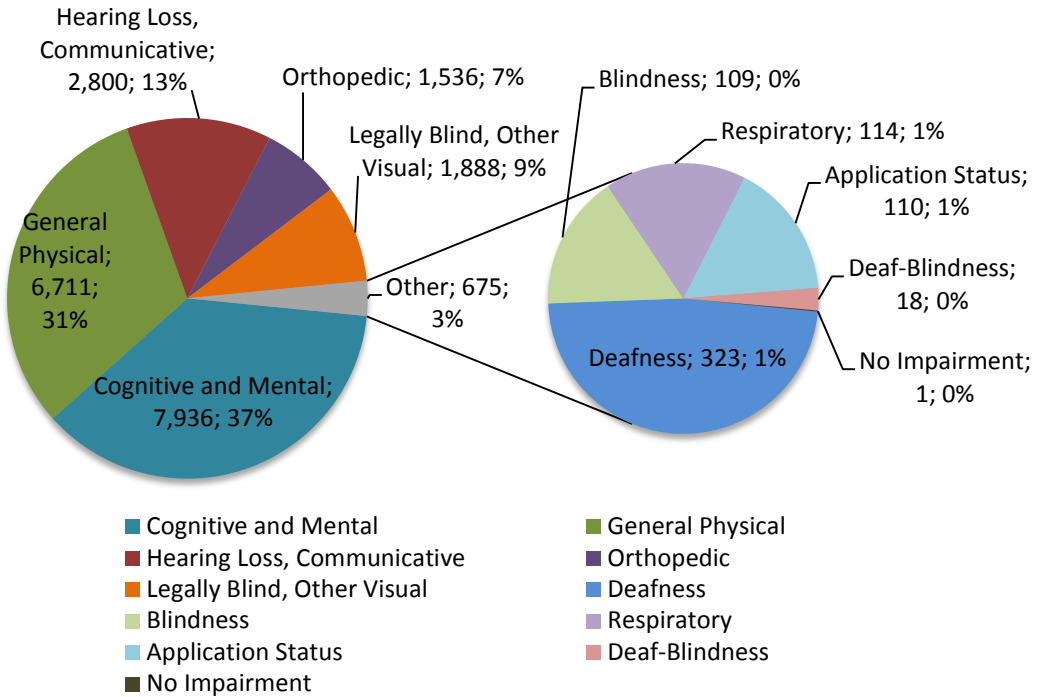
### Title One Section 110 Match Funding



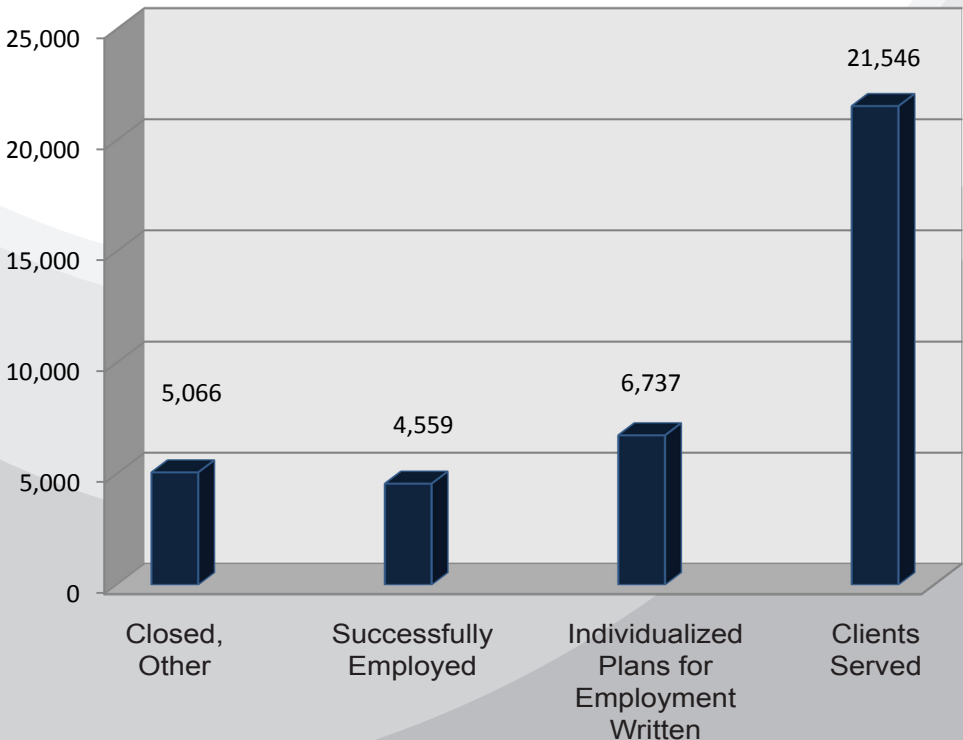
2012 SECTION 110 GRANT	\$ 44,516,178
STATE MATCH	<u>\$ 12,048,216</u>
TOTAL 2012 FUNDING	\$ 56,564,394

# Facts at a Glance

## Forms of Impairments Served in 2012



## Clients Served and Closed for 2012

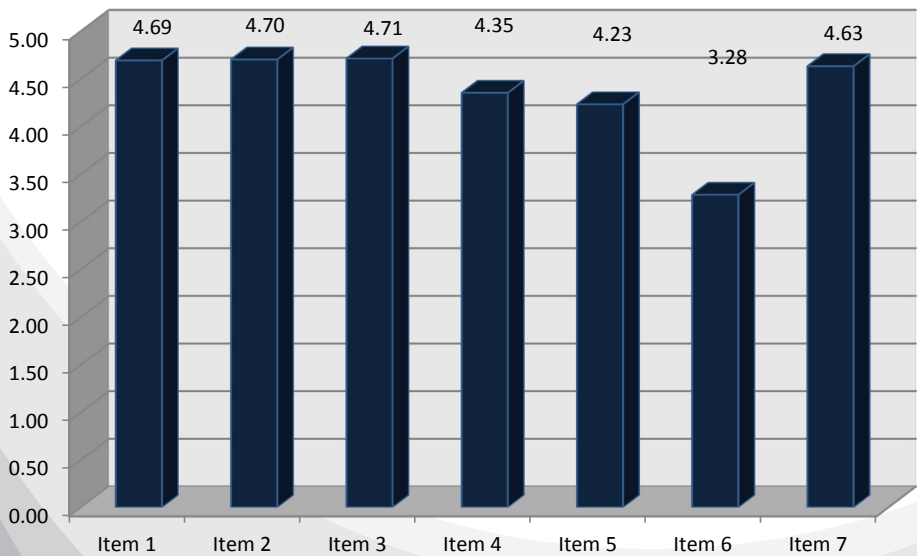


# Consumer Satisfaction Survey

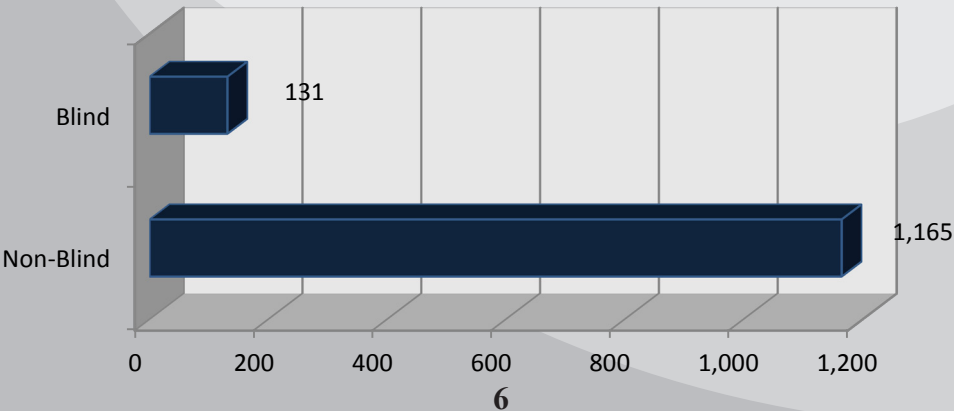
The ratings for the various services consumers received are presented below using the average (mean) score given to each item by all respondents interviewed. The respondents were asked by an independent third party to rate the following items on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very bad and 5 being very 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 Rating



Type of Consumer



# SRC Comments & Recommendations

## **SRC comments and/or recommendations for input into the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services' Office of Vocational Rehabilitation or Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVR/OVRB) service delivery system:**

- Low staff turnover seems to be a strength in the service delivery system. Try to educate policy makers to adequately fund VR to pay competitive wages to keep good staff member even if economy picks up.
- Compliments to all for efficiency and success.
- I am impressed with the case services success report. The goals seem to be on track for meeting.
- I would like to find out more information dealing with transportation in Mississippi rural areas.
- Need to talk/ask about clients not getting calls back as soon as they think.

**Agency Response:** *MDRS appreciates the compliments. Information was given to the SRC member regarding transportation resources. Customer service, including retuning phone calls, was addressed in the Statewide regional staff development trainings.*

## **SRC comments and/or recommendations concerning the results of consumer satisfaction surveys:**

- Consumer satisfaction is high, indicating that service delivery is meeting the consumers perceived needs.
- Great results.
- It would be interesting to see the AbilityWorks' consumer satisfaction surveys.
- Good job!
- What about doing two surveys--one midway through and the second after closure of the client's case?

**Agency Response:** *In next contract for the survey, we will investigate how to conduct a mid-point survey in addition to current survey conducted at closure.*

## **SRC comments and/or recommendations for input in terms of potential service providers or discussions on the performance of service providers currently being used by OVR/OVRB:**

- Outcomes indicate the current service providers must be adequate.
- J's Mobility is doing a great job in trying to help in different ways.

**Agency Response:** *MDRS appreciates your comments.*

## **SRC comments and/or recommendations concerning VR Policy, State Plan Development, and SRC business:**

- I would be interested in seeing the curriculum topics and calendar for staff training in print, during any available agenda time for a future SRC meeting.
- I think the idea of moving the SRC meeting around the state is a great job.
- Holding SRC meetings at different places throughout the state.
- Appreciation for job well done.
- I appreciated all of the parts being shared with me ahead of time on email. I had several weeks to review the documents, ask any questions and provide input.

**Agency Response:** *MDRS will schedule a discussion of the training plan in upcoming meetings.*

# Vocational Rehabilitation

In 2012, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) assisted 21,546 eligible Mississippians with disabilities to receive 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: hearing loss or deafness, amputations, mental and emotional disorders, epilepsy, developmental disease and disorders, traumatic brain injuries, orthopedic impairments, residuals from cancer, speech impairments, and the like.

The total number of successful employment outcomes for our VR consumers in 2012 was 4,559.

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## AbilityWorks

AbilityWorks is a network of 16 community rehabilitation programs that provides 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. AbilityWork's mission to clients is "to improve the quality of life, employment opportunities, and integration of people with disabilities into the community."

Its mission to business and industry through its subcontracting program is to provide fast turnaround times, high-quality workmanship, competitive rates, credit rates, credit terms and speedy delivery. 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 2012, AbilityWorks served a total of 2,952 MDRS clients, resulting in 874 successful employment outcomes.

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## Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

Of the 4,559 successful employment outcomes by VR, 554 were achieved through Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (VRB). VRB consumers received services such as counseling and guidance in adjustment to disability, vocational exploration, orientation and mobility training, job training, and assistive technology.

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 2012, thirty eight (38) individuals operated successful businesses as BEP vendors.

## **Deaf Services**

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 2012, Deaf Services were provided to 2,761 Mississippians, resulting in 885 successful rehabilitations.

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## **Transition**

Through the Transition Services Program, the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services assists eligible secondary school students with disabilities to enable them to make the difficult transition from school to subsequent work environments. Working cooperatively with the Mississippi Department of Education and local school districts, MDRS counselors plan and implement programs designed to provide this training and assistance.

Examples of transition services are vocational-technical training, vocational evaluation, work adjustment training, on the job training, job search skills, and work experience programs. In FFY 2012, the Transition Program served approximately 3,162 students and placed 447 in successful employment outcomes.

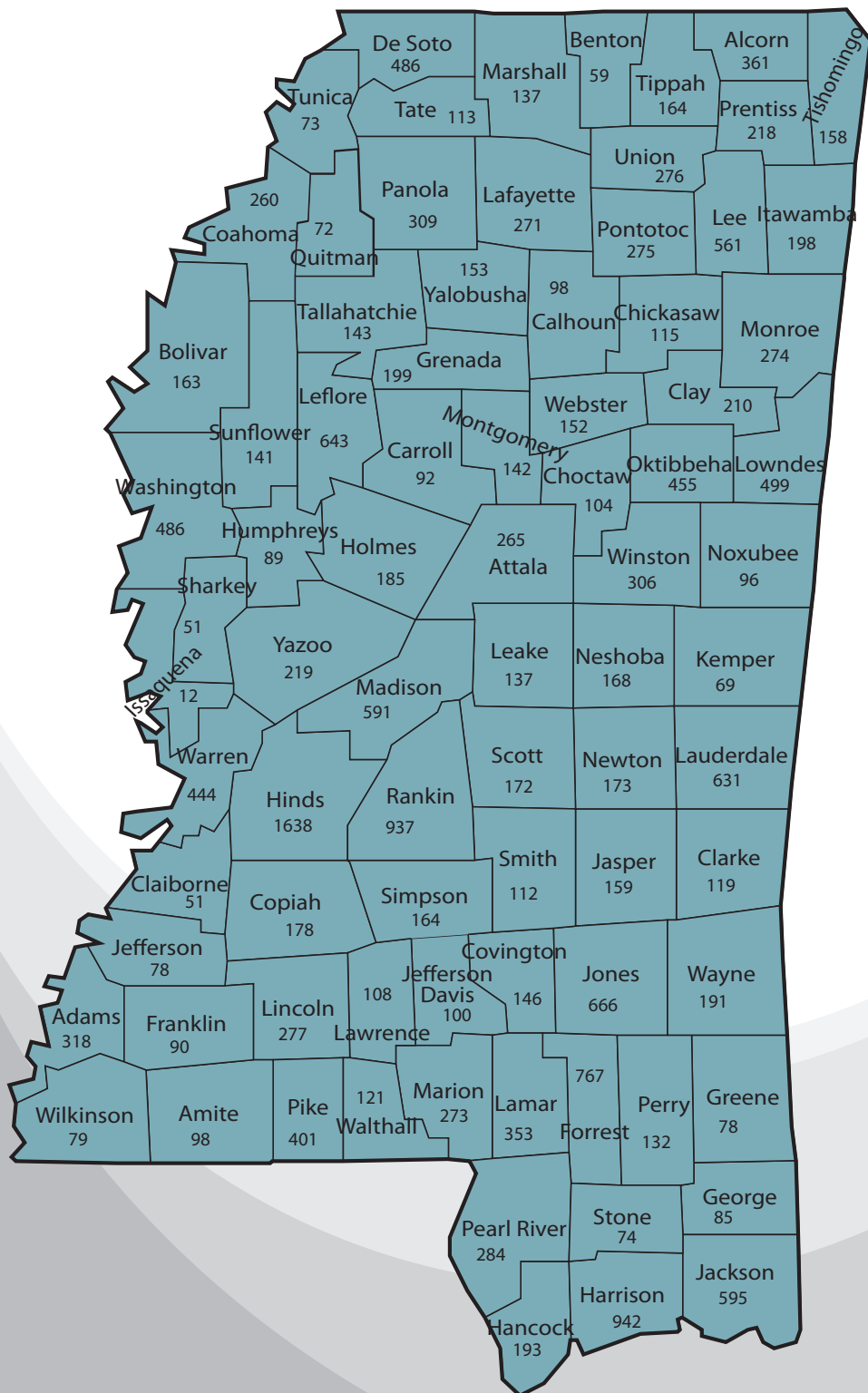
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## **Supported Employment**

The Supported Employment Program is a specialized placement and training program to assist those individuals with severe disabilities in finding and maintaining employment. Choice of employment is based on such things as the individual's: unique strengths, interests, resources, capabilities, abilities, priorities, concerns, informed choice.

Working together, trained vocational counselors and job placement specialists provide support needed for the individual to prepare for and secure an appropriate job match, as well as to retain or regain employment. During FFY 2012, 917 individuals received Supported Employment services, and 74 resulted in successful employment outcomes.

# Clients Served Per County



# Success Stories

Letecia Rader is a young woman from Biloxi, MS who has made impressive strides in her rehabilitation since she began receiving services from MDRS. She is diagnosed with Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva, which is a very rare connective tissue disorder. It is also called Stone Man Syndrome due to the fact that it causes fibrous tissue to be ossified when damaged.

Ms. Rader used vocational rehabilitation services to continue her education and graduate from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in anthropology. Due to the significance of her disability, she also utilized special disability programs. Through OSDP she was provided with a personal care attendant to help her with activities of daily living.

Since her graduation, she has moved back home with her parents where she works as an intern at Keesler Air Force Base in the medical center. She works 40 hour weeks and truly loves her job. Letecia is extremely motivated and hopes to be accepted into graduate school to get her Master's Degree in anthropology.

In the meantime, between work and weekends, she plans to enroll in some junior college courses to build her GPA for graduate school. Ms. Rader is a very hardworking young woman, and she continues to improve her life on a daily basis.

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Imelda Williams is a counselor for the deaf and hard of hearing for MDRS. Born with a hearing impairment, Imelda had a hard time accurately interpreting individuals in her life growing up. Imelda learned to read lips, but still had communication issues as a student in the public school system, which at that time had minimal accommodations for the deaf and hard of hearing. It wasn't until Imelda graduated high school and enrolled in Mississippi Delta Community College that life took a turn for the better. A professor at MDCC suggested that she enroll at Hinds Community College (HCC) and learn American Sign Language (ASL). While at HCC, she learned sign language and met other students with hearing impairments which helped her sharpen her skills in the art of ASL.

Imelda continued her education at Delta State University where she earned her bachelor's degree. Today, Imelda is pursuing her Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling through Auburn University while working as a counselor. She loves her job and enjoys helping individuals overcome their personal communication barriers as she once did. We are very fortunate to have Ms. Williams on board with us.

# Success Stories

Johnathan Jones began working with vocational rehabilitation as a transition student in 2009. Mr. Jones has an intellectual disability as well as Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). While in school Johnathan participated in job readiness training until his graduation in May 2010 with a certificate of completion.

Johnathan stayed busy in his spare time volunteering in his community at Ocean Springs Nursing Home, Lord is My Help soup kitchen, and at the food bank for his church, the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Ocean Springs. During the summer of 2010 Mr. Jones decided he wanted to go to work. After several months with no success, Johnathan struggled to keep his spirits up.

In May of 2011, MDRS began a new relationship with Gulf Ship, a shipyard in Gulfport. Johnathan interviewed there as a food service worker in the canteen area and got the job. He did on the job training for an extended period of time until he mastered the duties of his position. Since then he has received more job duties and responsibility.

The report from the Gulf Shrimp Human Resources manager stated that Jonathan was a dependable, hard worker and his co-workers loved him. He always showed initiative and his employer wished they could hire more people with Johnathan's work ethic. Mr. Jones is still employed with Gulf Ship working 40 hours a week with a benefits package. His perseverance and will to succeed has made him a shining example to all of us.

# Field Office Locations

## District I

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

## District II

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

## District IV

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

## District V

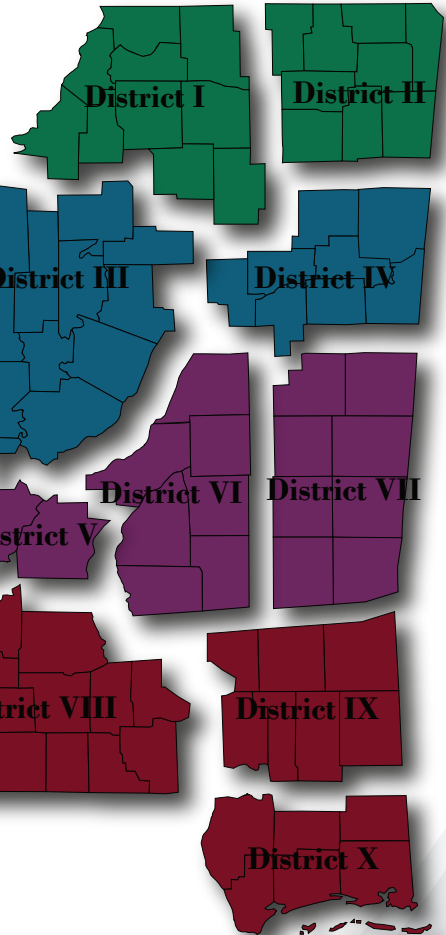
3895 Beasley Road  
Jackson, MS 39213  
OVR: (601) 898-7004  
2550 Peachtree Street  
Jackson, MS 39296  
OVRB: (601) 987-7403

## District VI

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

## District VII

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



## District VIII

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

## District IX

17 John Merle Tatum  
Industrial Drive  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
OVR: (601) 545-5619  
OVRB: (601) 545-5613

## District X

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

**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: JOYCE WHITE**

**POST OFFICE BOX 1698**

**JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39215-1698**

**1.800.443.1000**

**WWW.MDRS.MS.GOV**



**Mississippi Department of  
Rehabilitation Services**

*Providing the freedom to live*