



2015
two thousand fifteen



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
REHABILITATION SERVICES

State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report

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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 Bryant and Members of the Mississippi Legislature:

Thank you for the opportunity to share a few of the many accomplishments of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services and the State Rehabilitation Council in 2015. In July, I became the newly appointed Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. After 23 years of service to state government, the past 15 at MDRS, I am honored to be leading an agency dedicated to such a noble mission.

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 vocational rehabilitation services to Mississippians with disabilities. At MDRS, we continue to strive to meet the needs of Mississippians with disabilities who rely on our services to become successfully employed.

In 2015, the Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind have served 19,344 job seekers with significant disabilities and achieved outstanding ratings in client satisfaction surveys. This year, we have achieved our goal of assisting over 4,600 people enter into the workforce and become successfully employed leading to economic independence.

Our successes could not be realized without our outstanding staff at MDRS who consult 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.

Sincerely,

Chris M. Howard
Executive Director

Dear Governor Bryant and Members of the Mississippi Legislature:

On behalf of the State Rehabilitation Council, I am happy to share the annual report of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS).

The State Rehabilitation Council is a mandated body that advises the staff of MDRS on behalf of state citizens who experience physical and mental impairments that significantly impact their employment. MDRS utilizes a variety of individualized services to support these citizens to obtain their employment goals.

We are happy to report the last year's successes which have not only made significant impacts in individuals' lives; but also significant impact to the state and national economy. Citizens who experience disability have much to add to the workplace – and their contribution adds tax dollars to strengthen the economy.

MDRS provides a unique return on investment of state and federal funds targeted to support individuals with disabilities returning to work after the receipt of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

We look forward to working with the staff of the MDRS and expect to see continued excellent outcomes for the citizens of Mississippi who experience disability.

Sincerely,

State Rehabilitation Council
Mary Lundy Meruvia, Chairperson
Tanya Bradley
Jan Cloud
Lee Cole
Pam Dollar
Steve Gray
Cliff Hardin
Shannon Hood
John McGinn
Bradley Porche
Maria Portera
Presley Posey
Cassandra Singleton
Scott Stanford
Mark Yeager

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

In, 2015 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) **assisted 19,344** 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 • Intellectual and Developmental Disorders • Traumatic brain injuries • Orthopedic impairments • Speech impairments • and many others

4,605 SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

ABILITYWORKS

AbilityWorks is a network of 17 community rehabilitation programs that provides vocational assessment, counseling and guidance, job placement services, 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 offer includes 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 successful employment outcomes**.

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 2015, **Deaf Services were provided to 3,219 Mississippians**, resulting in **1,247 successful rehabilitations**.

TRANSITION SERVICES

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.

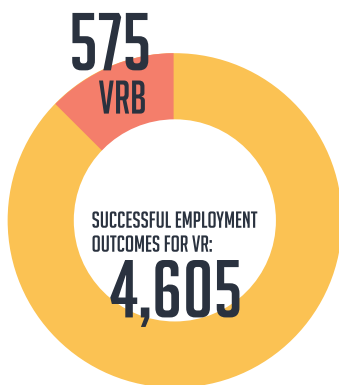
Examples of transition services are vocational-technical training, vocational evaluation, work adjustment training, on the job training, job search skills, and work experience programs. In FFY 2015, the **Transition Program served approximately 3,072 students** and placed **408 in successful employment outcomes**.

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 2015, **803 individuals received Supported Employment services**, and **57 resulted in successful employment outcomes**.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FOR THE BLIND



Of the 4,605 successful employment outcomes by VR, **575 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.

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.

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 2015, the Addie McBryde Center provided training to **167 consumers**.

Independent Living Services for the Blind (ILB) enables eligible consumers to receive peer group counseling, assistive technology evaluation, adjustment services, orientation and mobility training, personal adjustment instruction and training in techniques for daily living. In 2015, ILB served over 2,000 consumers through indirect services such as health fairs, vision screening, peer groups, and outreach. Furthermore, **ILB provided direct services to 616 consumers** 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.

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 military base cafeterias. In 2015, **thirty seven (37) individuals operated successful businesses** as BEP vendors.

UNDERSTANDING STEPS TO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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

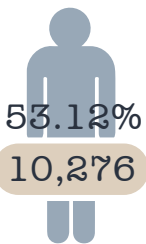
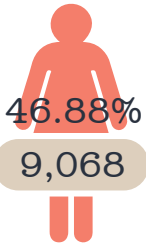
Program Funding: Title One Section 110 Match Funding

	2015
Section 110 Grant	\$44,536,766 (78.7%)
State Match	\$12,053,788 (21.3%)
Total Funding	\$56,590,554 (100.0%)

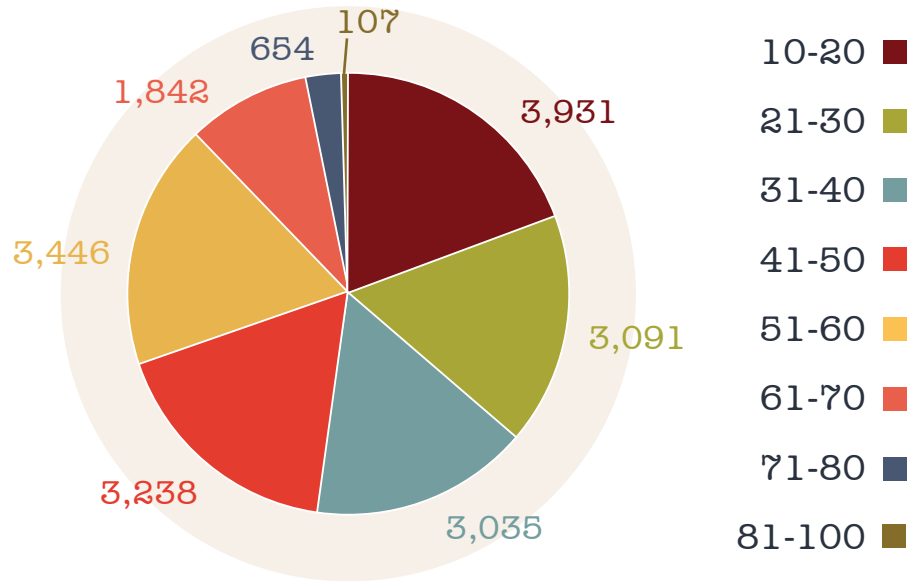
IN DEPTH LOOK AT VR & VRB

Demographics of Persons Served

Gender



Age at Application



Education Level at Application

No Formal Schooling	.10%
Elementary Education (Grades 1-8)	3.24%
Secondary Education (No High School Diploma)	17.46%
High School Graduate or Equivalency Certificate	34.88%
Post-Secondary Education (No Degree)	14.27%
Post-Secondary Education (Academic/Associates Degree)	6.90%
A Degree of Vocational Technology Certificate	.58%
Bachelor's Degree	6.21%
Master's Degree or Higher	2.33%
Special Education (completion or attendance)	13.98%
Education Not Listed	.04%

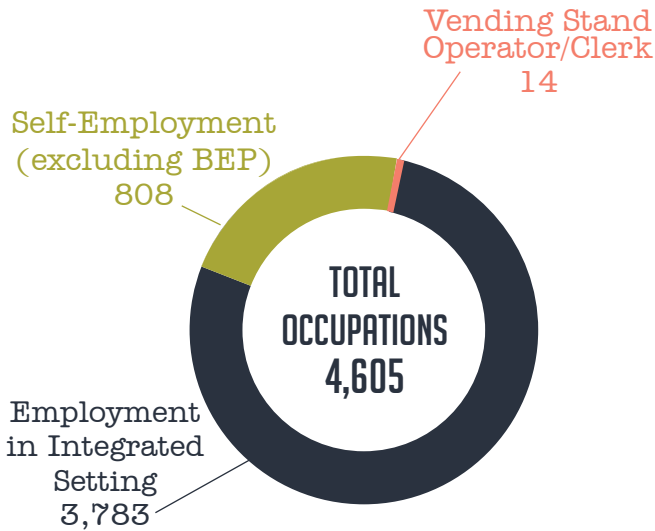
Race

American Indian or Alaskan Native	.25%
Asian	.27%
Black or African American	43.44%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	.06%
Multi-racial	4.01%
White or Caucasian	51.88%
Race not listed	.08%

IN DEPTH LOOK AT VR & VRB

Status of Persons Rehabilitated

Employment Status of Persons Rehabilitated

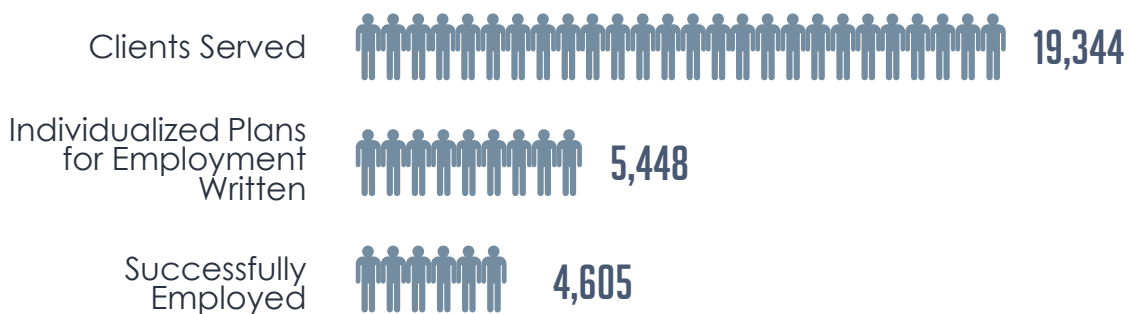


Employment in Integrated Settings

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	8
Education, Training, & Library	6
Protective Service	2
Personal Care	2
Construction/Extraction Operations	1
Business and Financial Operations	1

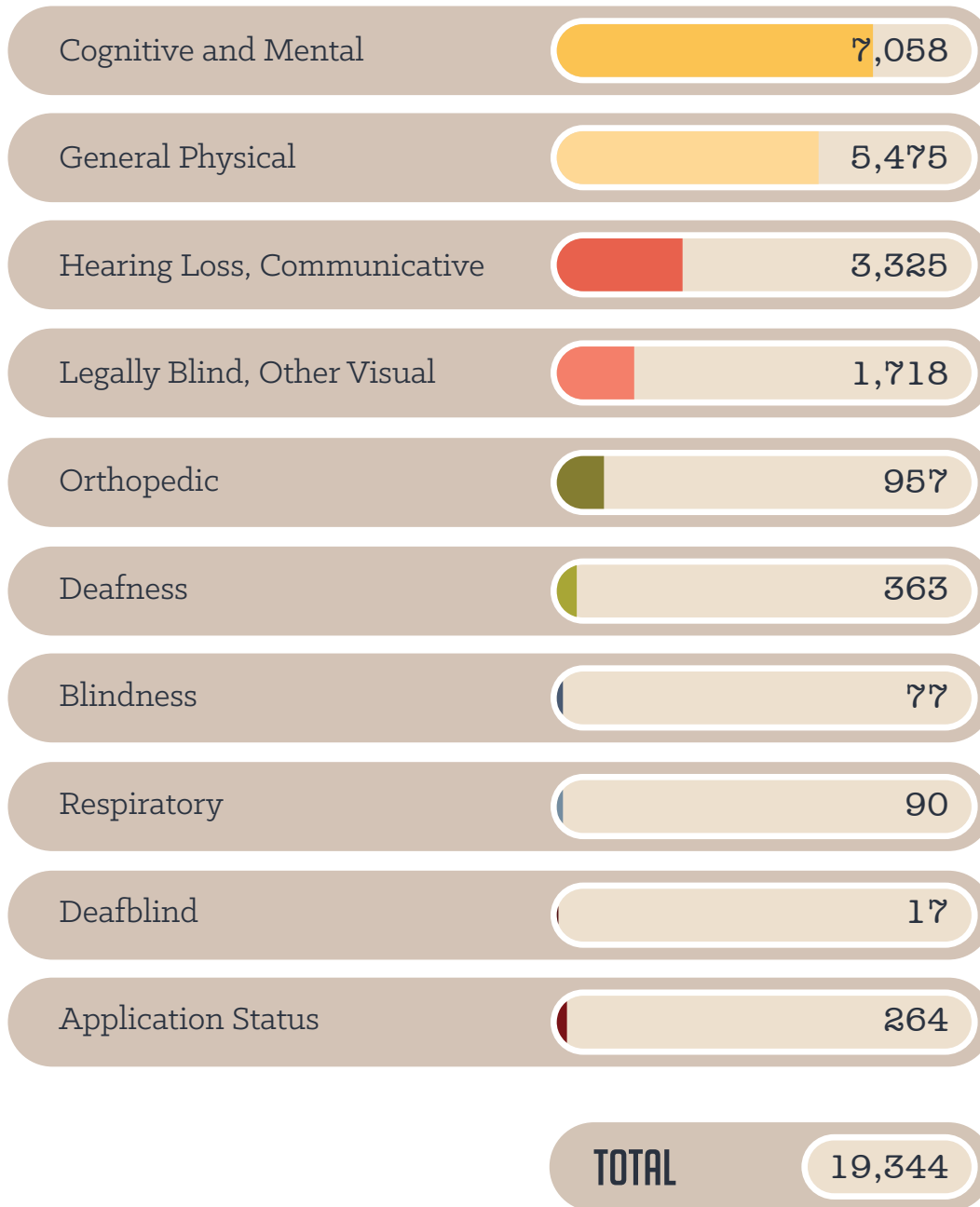
3,783

Clients Served and Closed for 2014



IN DEPTH LOOK AT VR & VRB

Persons Served by Primary Disability



CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Annual 2014-15 Results for the Closed Ended Questions

The ratings for the various services consumers received are presented below using the average (mean) score given to each item by all respondents interviewed. If an item did not apply to a particular respondent or if the consumer did not know or refused to rate an item he/she is not included in calculating the average score for that item. The seven items rated are in Table 1 (to get an exact wording, see the questionnaire.) Chart 1 is included for an easy visual comparison. The respondents were asked to rate the items (Questions 1-9) 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.

Table 1
Service ratings by consumer

Rate the following items on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very bad and 5 being very good.

The help provided by the VR staff at the time you applied for VR services.	1,035	4.71
The help provided by the VR staff during the planning of your services.	1,032	4.69
The help provided by the VR staff when you were receiving your VR services.	1,028	4.71
The help you received from other agencies or service providers.	205	4.34
Your employment outcome.	614	4.32
Employment benefits provided by your new employer.	326	3.73
Overall, how do you rate the services you received?	1,023	4.70

Number of Consumers	Average Rating (mean)
1,035	4.71
1,032	4.69
1,028	4.71
205	4.34
614	4.32
326	3.73
1,023	4.70

Type of Consumer Surveyed

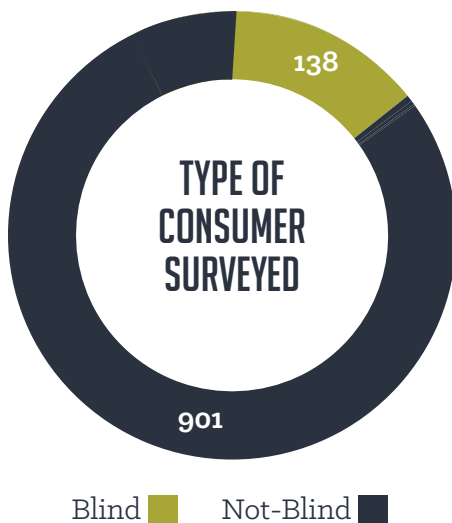
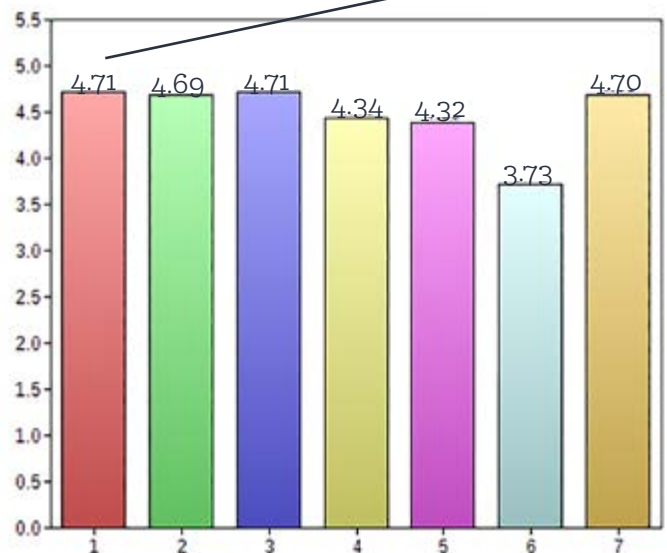


Chart 1
Average Consumer Ratings



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:

- It appears to be very responsive to the new WIOA law as well as consumer need and satisfaction.
- It appears to be responsive to the law, regulations and best practices; as well as SRC and consumer report.
- Good report.
- The reports given by OVRB demonstrated that the counselors are clearly connecting with the clients to show that they are making meaningful and effective connections to the clients.
- Continue to encourage the counselors to have more one on one contact with their clients.
- Great point made about transportation for VRB clients.
- Continue outreach to both Transition students as well as the general public.
- Continue marketing to let Mississippi Citizens with disabilities be aware of the excellent support services.
- OVR and OVRB are providing great services.

Agency Response: OVR/OVRB will continue to move forward to fully implement changes to the program mandated by WIOA. Providing quality client services is a number one priority of both divisions. Staff trainings and communications continue to address and encourage proper monitoring of clients cases during the rehabilitation process. Structured monitoring of cases will also assist in resolving client issues early in the rehabilitation process that will ultimately promote the highest quality of services.

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

- Good report, shows that staff is making a genuine effort to engage the client. It seems that good staff and client relationship is actually happening.
- Consumer satisfaction is high, indicating that consumer need is being met.
- Proud to hear so many positive comments, good report!
- I believe they are doing a great job and hope it will continue with the new regs and combinations that will happen.
- I am glad to hear the plan for interim satisfaction surveys to be done – this could be done in house with low costs.
- There is a need to do a midterm client satisfaction assessment (if it is not already being done) through the service delivery system to determine if the services are satisfactory, if that is the course that will bring a successful outcome.
- If it is not being done, should there be a one year follow-up after the client has successfully completed the program to determine the impact of the success?
- I would like to have the surveys in a more accessible format so that I may thoroughly read them.
- Overall, clients are pleased with services they are receiving throughout the state.
- Client satisfaction at case closure is high indicating that customer needs and expectations are being met.
- Interested to hear about plans for interim satisfactions.
- Overall comments were very good, however there will always be complaints.

Agency Response: OVR/OVRB has started preliminary work on the implementation of consumer satisfactions surveys during the rehabilitation process. We will continue to work until this process is in full implementation. OVR/OVRB feels that this process will also assist in improving the quality of services provided to our clients.

OVR/OVRB AGENCY RESPONSE

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:

- I think MDRS provide most services in house which is both cost effective and I believe, higher quality.
- Very impressed with Addie McBryde Center- if funds are available and since there is a waiting list could a 2nd center be established?
- Consider expanding area where waiting list occurs. (Addie McBryde)
- In order to answer the question, we need more information about the providers. When reviewing potential service providers we should be provided some historical overviews of their past performance.
- Appears successful.

Agency Response: OVR/OVRB utilizes providers statewide in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. Along with future implementation of the consumer satisfaction survey, OVR/OVRB will look for ways to further assist in determining the overall performance of service providers. The information obtained will continue to assist the counselors in providing information to our clients in making choices regarding service providers.

SRC comments and/or recommendations concerning the Business Relations Services Program, VR Policy, State Plan Hearing and Development, or other SRC business:

- Business Relations program is good "foremost" and in good direction to bring good relationship for the business world. Addie McBryde is always doing a good job.
- Excellent services – all responsive to new trends, (business relations) and consumer needs.
- I think transportation needs to be looked at more. I think it's getting better and is great in some areas.
- There is a concern for the timeliness and notification of the [State Plan] hearing. Consider the recommendations that we discussed at the board meeting.
- Transportation needs still a problem especially in rural communities.
- MDRS staff will need to find inroads into the State Workforce System to be provided the input needed for state citizens with disabilities to have the same access as other job seekers have.

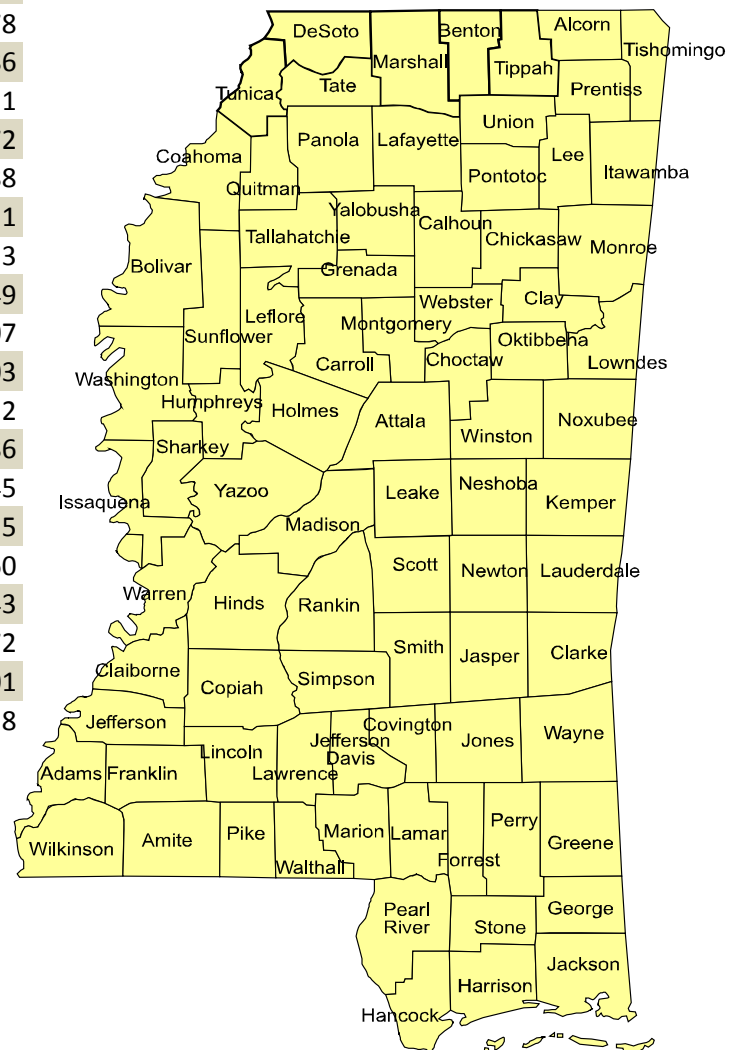
Agency Response: MDRS will continue to enhance and develop our Business Relations program. This program will be and is very important in our ability to provide vocational rehabilitation services to businesses.

The SRC has expressed its concerns regarding the timeliness and notification of hearings. We will continue to provide guidance and recommendations where appropriate to help ensure that the individuals with disabilities in the state have a voice and their concerns are acknowledged. MDRS does have a long history of working with individuals with disabilities and will utilize this expertise in working with the state workforce board and the local boards.

CLIENTS SERVED

Per County

Adams	266	Monroe	196
Alcorn	271	Montgomery	145
Amite	102	Neshoba	149
Attala	214	Newton	169
Benton	57	Noxubee	76
Bolivar	206	Oktibbeha	454
Calhoun	100	Panola	325
Carroll	87	Pearl River	219
Chickasaw	123	Perry	99
Choctaw	100	Pike	333
Claiborne	59	Pontotoc	288
Clarke	115	Prentiss	237
Clay	154	Quitman	74
Coahoma	202	Rankin	825
Copiah	165	Scott	120
Covington	131	Sharkey	48
DeSoto	466	Simpson	154
Forrest	779	Smith	78
Franklin	85	Stone	86
George	88	Sunflower	151
Greene	62	Tallahatchie	172
Grenada	192	Tate	88
Hancock	130	Tippah	121
Harrison	923	Tishomingo	133
Hinds	1316	Tunica	49
Holmes	170	Union	207
Humphreys	84	Walthall	103
Issaquena	8	Warren	312
Itawamba	150	Washington	486
Jackson	523	Wayne	145
Jasper	124	Webster	155
Jefferson	86	Wilkinson	60
Jefferson Davis	51	Winston	143
Jones	596	Yalobusha	172
Kemper	60	Yazoo	201
Lafayette	363	Out of State	58
Lamar	390		
Lauderdale	571		
Lawrence	91		
Leake	109		
Lee	708		
Leflore	531		
Lincoln	214		
Lowndes	448		
Madison	504		
Marion	208		
Marshall	131		



DISTRICT I

(Calhoun, Coahoma, Desoto, Lafayette, Marshall, Panola, Tate, Tunica, Quitman, Yalobusha)

51 County Road 166

Oxford, MS 38655

(662) 234-3171 **OVR** (662) 234-6092 **OVRB**

DISTRICT II

(Alcorn, Benton, Itawamba, Lee, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union)

2620 Traceland Drive

Tupelo, MS 38801

(662) 842-1010 **OVR**

615-A Pelham Dr.

Tupelo, MS 38801

(662) 844-5830 **OVRB**

DISTRICT III

(Bolivar, Carroll, Grenada, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Washington, Yazoo)

201 Hwy 7 South

Greenwood, MS 38930

(662) 453-6172 **OVR** (662) 455-1432 **OVRB**

DISTRICT IV

(Clay, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Lowndes, Monroe, Montgomery, Oktibbeha, Webster)

207 Industrial Park Road

Starkville, MS 39759

(662) 323-9594 **OVR**

48 Datco Industrial Dr.

Columbus, MS 39704

(662) 328-8807 **OVRB**

DISTRICT V

(Hinds, Warren)

3895 Beasley Road

Jackson, MS 39213

(601) 898-7004 **OVR**

2550 Peachtree St.

Jackson, MS 39216

(601) 987-7403 **OVRB**

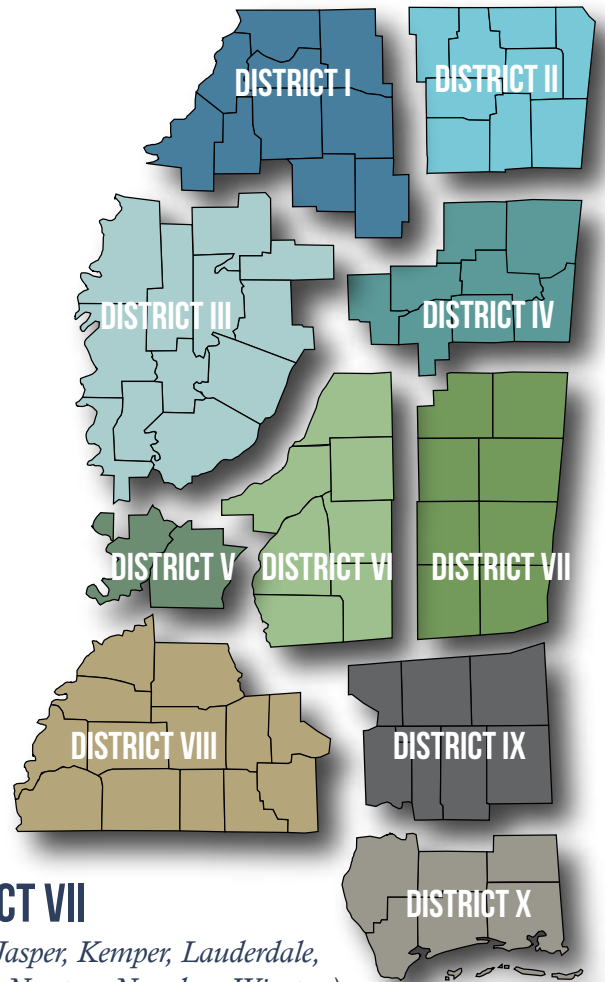
DISTRICT VI

(Attala, Leake, Madison, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, Smith)

1032 Center Pointe Blvd.

Pearl, MS 39208

(601) 709-5601 **OVR** (601) 709-5625 **OVRB**



DISTRICT VII

(Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Winston)

1003 College Drive

Meridian, MS 39307

(601) 483-3881 **OVR** (601) 483-5391 **OVRB**

DISTRICT VIII

(Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Copiah, Franklin, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lincoln, Lawrence, Marion, Pike, Walthall, Wilkinson)

1400-A Harrison Drive

McComb, MS 39648

(601) 249-2498 **OVR** (601) 684-3392 **OVRB**

DISTRICT IX

(Covington, Forrest, Greene, Jones, Lamar, Perry, Wayne)

17 J.M. Tatum Industrial Drive, Suite 130

Hattiesburg, MS 39401

(601) 545-5619 **OVR** (601) 545-5613 **OVRB**

DISTRICT X

(George, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, Stone)

13486 Fastway Lane

Gulfport, MS 39503

(228) 575-3789 **OVR** (228) 575-3788 **OVRB**

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: Betsy Simoneaux
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Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1698

1.800.443.1000
www.mdrs.ms.gov

