

TRACK: A Transition Resource to Advocate through Community Knowledge

A resource guide designed to assist students with disabilities in South Mississippi in transitioning out of the school system to community engagement.

TRACK is a tool to assist the student and family in exploring options, making important decisions, and designing an individualized, step-by step, organized plan.

TRACK equips, enables, and empowers students to achieve their maximum potential for self-advocacy and inclusion into their communities.



2021 TRACK:
A TRANSITION RESOURCE
TO ADVOCATE THROUGH
COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE



TRACK is a FREE publication. A downloadable, online version is available with an interactive table of contents and web links that hyper-link to the listed organization's website at www.DisabilityConnection.org.

To submit changes or additions for future publications, please email Office@DisabilityConnection.org

This project was supported, in part by grant number 2001MSSCDD, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.



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Dear Friends,

We are grateful for the opportunity to produce TRACK, a family guide to transition services designed to assist both families and professionals. TRACK provides the information and resources that can improve the transition planning process from school to work and independent adult living for students with disabilities in South Mississippi.

The primary purpose of the education guaranteed to students with disabilities is to “prepare them for employment and independent living” (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004). Federal and state initiatives to improve outcomes of youth with disabilities have resulted in significant improvements in graduation rates, access to quality education, enrollment in post-secondary education, and employment.

Youth face significant challenges as they prepare for their transition to adult life. TRACK is developed to assist students and their families in a more successful transition through a higher level of knowledge and to assist them to be more independent in advocating for improvements in their educational, health, and social outcomes. The authors of this guide include family members of adults with special needs who have also engaged in the transition from school-based services to adult supports.

This Guide builds Disability Connection's history of advocacy for transition age youth with disabilities and provides assistance to their families. TRACK provides them with a clear, concise, and easy-to-follow tool for the transition from school to work and adult life.

We wish each and every student and family great success in this journey.

The Staff of Disability Connection



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INTRODUCTION

Mississippi students with disabilities who receive special education services are entitled under federal and state laws to receive appropriate transition services to support their movement beyond school. Each student has different individual disabilities that include, but are not limited to, physical disabilities, vision impaired, learning disabilities (ADD, ADHD), etc. Mississippi has a long tradition of providing transition planning for students with the most significant disabilities to access needed adult services. This TRACK Guide is intended to assist parents, students, and the professionals who serve them to better understand these requirements and improve their access to appropriate transition services and community resources. The TRACK guide is intended to provide individuals and their families with sufficient information to make “Informed Choices” about not only transition, but life options.

SECURING BENEFITS

Of all the things that parents worry about as the student approaches transition, financial and medical benefits may be the most common. Medical care and financial benefits are tied to the calendar, and they will automatically disappear or convert if research is not done for the appropriate options needed.

Social Security Benefits

The two federal disability programs are Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). To apply, you can contact the Social Security field office nearest you, or you can call Social Security at 800-772-1213. You can also start an application online.

I. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

SSI may be received as a person's only income, or may be received in addition to another source of income, such as Social Security. SSI is a guaranteed minimum income amount for the elderly, the blind, and those with disabilities. SSI benefits are not paid to dependents or survivors, as compared to the Social Security programs. To meet the

non-financial guidelines for SSI, an individual must prove they are age 65 or older, blind, or disabled, as defined by the Social Security disability standards. SSI is a needs-based program that provides monthly payments to people with disabilities who have limited income and resources. When a student turns 18, he or she becomes eligible for SSI regardless of the parent's income. If the student was already approved for SSI payments before their 18th birthday, they will need to go through a redetermination of eligibility at age 18.

SSI eligibility is the gateway to other important programs, particularly access to the Medicaid health care program. It can also be the entry into a variety of vocational training, day programs, and group home programs.

Because SSI is only available to people with fewer than \$2,000 in assets, it is important to safeguard the student's eligibility by putting any money for their future, including inheritance, life insurance payment, or legal settlement, in a Special Needs Trust.

There are a number of Work Incentive programs that allow the student to work and continue receiving SSI benefits, both while he or she is a student and afterwards. These programs may allow your child to deduct certain disability related expenses from their income total. For more information on Ticket to Work and Community Work Incentives contact MDRS at 228-575-4064.

2. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

Unlike SSI, which is needs based, SSDI is an entitlement program. The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program pays benefits to adults who have a disability that

began before they became 22-years-old. It is considered a “child’s” benefit because it’s paid on a parent’s Social Security earnings record. The child does not have to have a work record to receive these benefits, and assets do not determine eligibility. For an adult with disabilities to become entitled to this “child” benefit, one of his or her parents must be receiving Social Security retirement or disability benefits or have died and worked enough to qualify for Social Security. After two years of collecting SSDI payments, the special needs adult will also receive Medicare. In many cases, an adult who has had special needs since childhood will receive SSI benefits until his or her parents retire and then switch to the SSDI program, which has a higher benefit and more flexible rules about income and assets.

The Social Security administration developed the ABLE account for individuals who have a documented disability prior to their 26th birthday which allows individuals to save money earned.

Medical Coverage & Waivers

I. Private Health Insurance

If you have private insurance, it’s important to review your policy carefully so that you know what will be covered when your child reaches age 18. Under the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”), private insurance policies will continue to cover your child under your policy until age 26.

Because your private insurance policy may not cover all the drugs or services your child needs, it may be important to have Medicaid or Medicare coverage to fill these gaps. For

that reason, make sure that claiming your child as a dependent will not jeopardize their eligibility for these programs.

2. Medicaid

Medicaid is a federal health insurance program for people of all ages who lack the income or resources to pay for health care. Access to Medicaid is granted when an adult begins receiving SSI. These benefits are particularly important if your child has medical needs because Medicaid may pay for medication and equipment that insurance doesn't cover. Medicaid pays providers of health care services, such as doctors, hospitals, pharmacies and nursing facilities. Be sure the provider you see accepts Medicaid before you receive a service. If your child has been approved for Medicaid benefits before they turned 18, he or she will have to reapply after they turn 18.

3. Medicare

Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people over 65 and some younger people with disabilities. Access to Medicare is granted two years after a special-needs adult begins receiving SSDI. While not every medical provider accepts Medicaid, most everyone accepts Medicare.

4. Medicaid Waivers (START EARLY-WAITING LISTS ARE LONG)

The services the student will need after exiting school are dependent on the Medicaid waivers. A Medicaid waiver is a provision in Medicaid law which allows the federal government to waive rules that usually apply to the Medicaid program. Thanks to these waivers, states can provide services to their residents that wouldn't usually be covered

by Medicaid. Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD) Waiver provides day services-adults, in-home respite, prevocational services, supervised living, support coordination, supported employment, supported living, specialized medical supplies, therapy services, behavior support services, community respite, crisis intervention, crisis support, home and community supports, host home, in-home nursing respite, job discovery, shared supported living, and transition assistance. Medicaid waiver referrals are made to South MS Regional Center (SMRC), the evaluation site for the coastal 6 counties. They can provide you with the current list of licensed providers in your area.

UNDERSTANDING TRANSITION SERVICES

Transition and Transition Services

Transition is a bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the opportunities and risks of adult life. For students with disabilities, each stage in transition requires thoughtful planning to ensure that they are able to transition from one level to the next level smoothly. This Guide is developed to assist a student receiving special education services as they exit from high school. This transition requires research of relevant information, preparation, adequate support after exit of post-secondary education, and secure future opportunities and services. Transition services are services school districts provide to transition-age students in special education to prepare them for post-secondary education, employment, and independent living. The necessary transition services vary from student to student according to individual needs.

Eligibility for Transition Services

In Mississippi, Policy 7219 requires transition services to begin at age 14. All students with an Individualized Education Program

(IEP) are eligible for transition services. The IEP must be updated annually.

Transition Laws and Guiding Principles

I. What does IDEA 2004 say about Transition?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal special education law that ensures all students with disabilities have access to a free, appropriate public education. IDEA recognizes the importance of preparing youth for success after high school and states that transition planning for students who receive special education services and have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must begin by age 16. The IEP is a legally binding written education plan developed by a school-based team in accordance with state and federal special education laws that describe the academic needs of a student and the accommodations required for a successful academic experience. The IEP specifically lists the detailed plan of how to accomplish the academic goals of the student based on curriculum mandates. The IEP indicates who should be involved in the team of educational professionals that will be working with the student. Transition planning means evaluating needs, strengths, and skills required for a student to move from high school to postsecondary life. It requires a student's measurable postsecondary goals to be based upon chronological age-appropriate assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills.

2. What does the Rehabilitation Act say about Transition?

The federal Rehabilitation Act has a similar definition of transition services using an outcome-oriented approach with a focus on career development, competitive employment in the integrated labor market, and self-sufficiency of the individual. The coordinated set of activities shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment, and other post school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Parent and Student Participation

1. What is the Parent's Role in Transition Planning?

The best advice for parents beginning this process is to **START EARLY!** As a parent of a youth with disabilities, understanding the transition planning requirements in IDEA can help you work with your child's IEP team to plan appropriate transition goals and services.

Parents have a key role in preparing their son or daughter for the transition from school to work and adult life. Hopefully, the process was already started when the student was in elementary and middle school, and the student has begun to learn about different jobs and participate in community and school activities. Parents need to provide their child with opportunities to assist in developing independent living skills such as performing household chores, taking care of hygiene needs, and advocating for themselves.

It is important for parents to share their child's strengths, needs, interests, and dreams at annual IEP meetings to

assist staff in beginning the planning for future transition services. The parent's most important role in the transition process is to ensure that the student's voice is heard, and that all team members listen and support him/her in developing the skills he/she needs to live an independent and meaningful adult life.

2. What is the Student's Role in Transition Planning?

Students are at the center of the transition planning process, and should be encouraged and supported to take an active role in this process. This can be done through activities such as: participating in, or leading, their annual IEP meeting; developing their own vision for their future to share at the IEP meeting; identifying career options that match their interests and skills; taking courses in school to prepare them for postsecondary goals.

Students need to begin to explore options available after school exit. This may include: developing a portfolio of interests and experiences; visiting college programs; job-shadowing at a work-site; or contacting the appropriate agency to apply for services.

One of the most helpful activities that students can pursue while still in school is to obtain work experience during high school: a summer job, an internship, volunteering at a local community organization. Research has shown that students who have work experience during high school are more likely to get and keep a job after high school, and they increase the possibility to earn more money. This is where networking with family, friends, neighbors, teachers, and local businesses can help to locate job possibilities in the community. The student will have the opportunity to learn

work habits and new skills as well as develop self- confidence and friends in the workplace.

GRADUATION AND EXITING OPTIONS

Standard High School Diploma

There are three pathways to achieve a standard high school diploma: Traditional, District, and Career Pathways. The Traditional option requires students to earn 24+ Carnegie Units. The District option requires students to earn a minimum of 21 Carnegie Units and a passing score on required examinations. Career Pathways option requires students to earn a minimum of 21 Carnegie Units, of which 4 have to be in Career and Technical Education, and achieve passing scores on examinations.

General Education Diploma (GED)

The GED option is a viable option for students who have capabilities to complete high school requirements but are behind in credits and are at risk of leaving school. The GED option is offered by a select number of school districts. It is also offered at the community college and the WIN Job Center.

Certificate of Completion

A student with disabilities who is not able to meet the requirements of a standard diploma will exit with a Certificate of Completion. The State has developed assessments in all the mandated tested areas and a Severely Cognitively Delayed (SCD) student can receive an Alternate Diploma. The tests are administered by teachers who read the questions and the student's method of response is individualized.

For students receiving special education services it is important to note that entitlement to special education services and transition services will end when the student exits high school. A student can graduate and re-enroll in school and receive services until the age of 21.

Summary of Performance (SoP)

SoP or a Transition Portfolio are required after exit from Special Education. SoP is designed for the student who will exit with a standard high school diploma, or due to exceeding the age of eligibility. It provides a summary of academic achievement and performance along with recommendations concerning how to assist the student in meeting post-secondary goals. It assists the student in transition from high school to higher education, training, and/or employment.

Transition Portfolio

A Transition Portfolio is created for each student with a disability who exits without a standard high school diploma. It is a practical tool to document the efforts and preparation of students for independent adult living.

POST-SCHOOL OPTIONS

Whether the student goes on to a postsecondary education or not, he or she will have many decisions to make. Depending on the level of their abilities, this may mean finding employment, enrolling in a day program, or locating full-time housing.

Transition planning should include preparation in these areas, but they are typically not part of the school curriculum:

Medical and Healthcare

It is important for the student to have access to their medical providers. Getting routine checkups to identify potential health issues is an important step to physical and mental wellbeing.

Vocational, Employment, Employment Waivers

Suggestions for the most appropriate type of employment for the student can be included in his/her IEP. If your child wants competitive employment, but based on the student's capabilities and interests, you or the IEP team believes he/she is best suited for supported employment, it does not mean they can never

move over to competitive employment. The IEP team does not make the decision relative to the appropriate placement for employment. That is usually done in collaboration with MDRS (VR) or other mental health agencies.

As part of transition, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) looks at a student to determine if they are competitively employable. Individuals that have a physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability who have barriers to employment may be deemed eligible for VR services. After evaluation and assessment, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor determines eligibility for VR and/or referrals are made to South MS Regional Center (SMRC) for employment services. If eligible for VR services, the student may receive vocational counseling, evaluation, job placement, and/or job coaching to help him/her become employed.

If referred to SMRC for services, an evaluation is given, and if they meet the requirements for enrollment in the ID/DD Home and Community Based Waiver Program, his/her support coordinator from SMRC will assist in developing employment supports.

The Medicaid waiver list is long and to ensure there is no interruption of services, the waiver for employment services should be made as early as possible, preferably in junior high and be in place before the student exits high school.

Through the advice of a Social Security benefits planner, you can identify how working will impact benefits from the Social Security Administration such as SSI or SSDI and health insurance from Medicaid and Medicare. It may be helpful to contact a benefit's planning counselor through Social Security or Vocational Rehabilitation (MDRS) to obtain individualized help with these questions.

When looking for employment for the student, consider the kind of job the student wants to do, is capable of doing, as well as the level of support he/she will need to obtain and maintain a job. There are basic levels of employment support for individuals with

intellectual and developmental disabilities.

1. Competitive Employment

Competitive Employment is a full or part-time job, paid at market wages with no long-term support. The employer hires the individual based on their skillset and needs of the business.

2. Supported Employment

Supported Employment services may be provided to individuals who have disabilities and require ongoing support services to succeed in competitive employment. This type of position also meets the employer's business needs and will include "customized employment," where a job is tailored to meet the unique skillset of the individual and fulfill a need of the employer.

a. The IDD Community Support Program (1915i)

The IDD Community Support Program (1915i) offers support and services for people with IDD and autism spectrum disorders. The first step in accessing this support is to call South MS Regional Center (SMRC) to determine eligibility. If you are determined eligible, services will begin immediately. A targeted case manager will be assigned to assist you with services. The qualifications for the 1915i are as follows: the person must be diagnosed IDD or Autistic, be over age 18, completed high school education, and have full Medicaid benefits.

Employment services available through the 1915i include:

Prevocational Services

This service teaches pre-employment skills and explores job opportunities.

Supported Employment

This service provides a job coach to assist in finding a job and training the person to work independently.

b. The ID/DD Home and Community Based

Waiver program

The ID/DD Home and Community Based Waiver program provides individualized support for people with IDD. The first step in accessing this service is to call South MS Regional Center (SMRC) to determine eligibility. If you are determined eligible through an evaluation, you are placed on a state-wide waiting list. The ID/DD waiver waiting list is years long, so it is better to get on list early. You can always change your mind and be removed from any services you no longer need.

Employment services available through the ID/DD Waiver include:

Supported Employment

This service provides a job coach to assist in finding a job and training the person to work independently.

Job Discovery

This service is time limited and used to develop employment goals.

3. Self-Employment

Self-Employment: a job developed by an individual that will provide an income.

4. Volunteer Employment

Volunteer Employment: a job that someone does without

pay, usually to benefit the community. Volunteer jobs can lead to paid employment by providing work experience through “On the Job” training (OJT), mentor experience, or providing the volunteer with community and purpose.

Post-Secondary Education

Every student with a disability is in an individual situation, and the nature of their disability dictates the choice of a college program, a vocational program, self-employment, or supported employment. Students who graduate with a standard diploma may qualify for a college or vocational program while students with a certificate most times pursue other options to obtain employable skills. Students without a standard diploma do not qualify for financial aid.

Students with disabilities who are interested in post-secondary education and training may want to apply to 4-year or 2-year college programs or pursue specialized training at a vocational or technical school. They will need to consult with a guidance counselor, visit college programs, learn about financial aid options, register for SAT or ACT tests, and complete college applications during high school. It will also be important for students and their parents to understand the important legal and programmatic differences between high school and college. High school is an entitlement program with legal obligations to comply; while college is not an entitled program and is based on eligibility and choice. Which means that some of the guidelines that apply to high school do not apply to the college environment.

There is no special education in college, the high school IEP may be used in guidance of academic accommodations, but the accommodations specified in the IEP are not a mandatory obligation of the college. However, there are Special Population Counselors available to assist with options. While laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation

Act provide access with accommodations, students must meet admission criteria defined as “otherwise qualified.” These are civil rights protections, not entitlements to services. Students must self-identify if they want reasonable accommodations provided, and they must request services such as a note-taker from the Disability Services office at the college. They will need to provide appropriate documentation of their disability as defined by the college. The student is considered as an adult expected to make decisions and to self-advocate while in college.

Finances

It is valuable for the student to understand money basics, including the purpose of money, how to count money, how to make change, and how to budget their money so that funds are available to pay expenses at the end of the month. It is important to safeguard his/her money so that it is not lost or stolen. ABLE accounts are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families. These accounts are an option to saving money that will not affect their public benefits. However, a student must have his/her disability determined prior to age 26.

Independent Living; Living Arrangements; Day Services; Housing

The student may need assistance in providing for his/her own physical care and well-being, such as purchasing proper food, clothing, and shelter. The parent should assure the student will live harmoniously in a group setting, respecting others’ needs for quiet, privacy, and cleanliness.

Not every young adult is suited for postsecondary school or employment. Some will be better suited to a day program. These programs vary in their emphasis, with some taking participants out into the community and others offering most of their services in a center. It is recommended to tour different programs to de-

termine the best option.

1. The IDD Community Support Program (1915i)

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Independent living services available through the IDD Community Support Program include:

Day Services Adult

This service assists individuals in obtaining the greatest level of independence while supporting them in activities that are meaningful to them.

Supported Living

Supported living provides limited support of up to four hours per day for persons who can live independently in their own home or apartment. The support helps provide access to the community, pay bills, shop for groceries, access medical care, and other personal assistance as needed.

2. ID/DD Home and Community Based Waiver Program

ID/DD Home and Community Based Waiver Program provides individualized supports and services to assist people in living successfully at home and in the community. The first step in applying for the waiver is calling SMRC to arrange for an evaluation. If a person meets the requirements for enrollment in the ID/DD Waiver,

his/her Support Coordinator will assist in developing a Plan of Care for the individual. The Plan of Care will outline the type and amount of ID/DD Waiver services a person is requesting. The individual must also indicate their choice of a provider for each service.

Independent living services available through the ID/DD Waiver include:

Home and Community Supports

This service is generally provided a few hours per day to assist an eligible individual with activities such as bathing, meal preparation, eating, dressing, shopping, leisure activities, community integration, and light housekeeping.

Day Services-Adult (DSA)

These services are designed to assist and support individuals in retaining and/or improving skills which afford them the greatest level of independence possible. Transportation is provided.

Supervised Residential Habilitation

Supervised community living means a staff person is on site, 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Transportation to and from day programs and community activities is provided, as well as support with shopping and assistance with individual finances.

Legal Decisions

Once your child turns 18, the law presumes that they have the capacity to make their own medical, personal, and financial decisions, regardless of disability. If you feel that your child does not have the ability to make safe and informed decisions in important areas such as living arrangements, school, and work or understanding the implications of signing documents, there are a variety of legal options.

1. Age of Majority

State minor laws set out what is known as the “age of majority,” or the age at which a citizen is considered an adult in the eyes of the law. Unless there is a court-appointed guardian or conservator, or the student chooses to share decision-making with parents, the student has the right to make decisions and must sign all consent forms. Mississippi’s age of majority is older than most states, at 21 years old. However, minors do have some legal rights and responsibilities. For example, under Mississippi law, 18-year olds can enter into contracts and settle personal injury lawsuits. If the student is not ready to take on full decision-making responsibility when he/she turns 18, there are other options such as shared decision-making that can be explored.

2. Guardianship & Conservatorship

A guardian or conservator (terminology varies from state to state) has received legal authority to make certain decisions on behalf of a person with a disability who has been deemed “incapacitated,” meaning that he/she can’t participate meaningfully in decisions about their life. Only individuals with mental health, intellectual, or medical disabilities so severe that they cannot make informed decisions for themselves would meet the criteria. The arrangement is usually done with the help of an attorney, as it requires court appearances and ongoing interaction with the court. Guardianship or conservatorship can be limited to certain areas such as medical care.

A new Mississippi Guardianship and Conservatorship Act (called the GAP Act) went into effect on January 1,

2020. The GAP Act, named for guard and protect, substantially revises Mississippi's guardianship and conservatorship laws. The new GAP Act defines a guardian as "a person appointed by the court to make decisions with respect to the personal affairs of the ward." A "conservator," on the other hand, is defined as "a person appointed by a court to make decisions with respect to the property or financial affairs of a ward." These definitions make it clear that under the Gap Act only a conservator has the power to deal with the real property of a ward, and then only to the extent expressly set out in a court order.

3. Durable Power of Attorney

Durable Power of Attorney allows a person with a disability to give someone else the power to make financial or health care decisions for him/her. It is simpler and less costly to set up than guardianship or conservatorship.

4. Advanced Medical Directives & Living Wills

Advanced Medical Directives and Living Wills allow a person with a disability to state their intentions about medical treatment in the event they become too ill or incapacitated to participate in decisions about their care.

5. Trusts

Setting up a Special Needs Trust, sometimes called a Supplemental Needs Trust, will create financial stability for both your child and for future caregivers.

Determining whether you should pursue guardianship or conservatorship is a difficult individual decision determined

on need. The purpose of this trust is to protect the rights of the most vulnerable individuals who are unable to make independent life decisions. With the appropriate guidance and information, this trust will determine what kinds of decisions a young adult with special needs can handle on their own and what aspects of their life will need someone to retain authority. It is designed to hold and protect financial assets for the benefit of a disabled beneficiary. The trust is a legal structure used to collect and manage the assets and may receive contributions from a variety of sources.

Voting

At age 18, the student should register to vote. To vote, you must register either in person at the Circuit Clerk's Office, Municipal Clerk's Office, or at a Public Service Agency (like DPS), or mail-in registration application at least 30 days prior to the date of the election. It is the law that males register for the draft between the ages of 18-25, no matter the level of functioning. In MS, you are automatically registered when you get a State ID or Driver's License.

Driver's License

You can get your first regular driver's license at the age of 16.5 if you have held your intermediate license for at least 6 months. If you have never held a license or permit, you may get your regular license at the age of 17 without applying for a learner's permit. You will have to produce all required documentation, pass a written test, vision test, and a road skills test.

KNOWING YOUR CHILD'S RIGHTS

In order to make sure you get the most out of the assistance granted to the student, you need to be familiar with the federal laws that protect your child and give them certain rights. It is important to learn the laws and teach the students these rights in order to help them fully understand the self-advocacy process.

Over the years, the US federal government has enacted several laws that grant rights to individuals with special needs that include a free and appropriate education and a lack of discrimination in the workplace. There are four laws critical for families planning the transition to adulthood.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Signed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1973, it protects individuals from discrimination based on their disability, and it was the first law of its kind to protect the rights of people with special needs. The law applies to any program, organization, or employer that receives financial assistance from ANY federal department or agency. It also extends to any local education agency, vocational education system, or school system. Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act establishes Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). It requires school districts to provide FAPE to any qualified person with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the person's disability. FAPE states that students with special needs must be placed in the same education settings as students without special needs as frequently and as appropriate as possible to the individual education needs of the special need student. Students with special needs must receive specialized education services and support free of charge.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Signed into law in 1990 by President George H. W. Bush, this act prohibits discrimination against persons with special needs and ensures that they receive equal opportunities in: employment (Title I), state and local government services (Title II), public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation (Title III), and Telecommunications Relay Services (Title IV). In 2008 major amendments were made to the law, and President George W. Bush signed into law the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA)

Signed into law in 2008, this Act expanded the definition of "disability" as "An impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment" that applies to both the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADAAA broadened the definition of "major life activities" to include "major bodily functions."

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

In 2004, the law was amended and reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA)

by President George W. Bush. It defines Transition Services as a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within a results-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. It requires public schools to create an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student every year until the student is 21 years old.

For a more in-depth look at what this law grants your child, see numbers 8 through 10 on the US Department of Education's website. It provides these regulations and rights, and a step-by-step list of the special education process.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act

Signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2006, this act states that individuals with special needs must be provided equal access to a vocational education. The funds made available through this law can be used to pay for the vocational education services laid forth in an IEP that was developed in accordance with IDEA.

SELF-ADVOCACY

Self-advocacy comes down to six key components:

- 1. Understanding your disability and being able to explain your disability either through words, pictures, or gestures**
- 2. Knowing your rights and responsibilities that are protected by law**
- 3. Speaking up for yourself and your interests**
- 4. Asking for what you need in order to live day-to-day**
- 5. Negotiating on your own behalf so that your needs and wants are met**
- 6. Utilizing the resources that are available to you**

These are all needed in order for an individual to advocate for him/herself. Self-advocacy should begin early and can start by making small everyday decisions. Starting with small decisions that affect your life allows you to build upon a foundation of self-confidence.

Self-Advocacy gets stronger through listening and learning. This can be accomplished by learning how to problem-solve, learning how to speak up for yourself, asking for what you need, making your own decisions and choices, learning how to get information of interest to you, knowing your rights and responsibilities, reaching out to others when you need help and friendship, and learning about self-determination.

Good self-advocacy skills will empower you to have control over the decisions that impact your everyday life. They will give you the confidence to make the choices that will make you happy and content.

A LIFELONG SUPPORT NETWORK

As children move toward adulthood, they must have competent and caring adults in their lives who will be there for them – as friends, mentors, guardians or caregivers. Before the student graduates, it is time to make arrangements with who will be part of their transition team, support the student, and accept responsibility for his/her care if that becomes necessary.

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RESOURCE GUIDE

Activities and Entertainment

Name: Biloxi's Special Needs Program

- Biloxi Parks & Recreation Department

Office Phone: (228) 388 - 7170

Website: <https://www.biloxi.ms.us/residents/parks-recreation/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers year around activities and events for residents of all ages with mental and physical disabilities.

.....

Name: Disability Connection

- Events

Office Phone: (228) 604 - 4020 (Gulfport)

Alternate Phone: (228) 870-7775 (Ocean Springs)

Website: www.disabilityconnection.org

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Hosting events and programs for people with disabilities such as: Arbor Day Run/Walk/Roll, Art Ability Fair, "I Love My Playground Party", and Community Resource Fairs. Call to be added to event e-newsletter, join our social media networks or see our calendar at www.DisabilityConnection.org.

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Name: **Disability Connection Community Playgrounds**
- Accessible Playgrounds
Office Phone: (228) 832 - 8620 (Harrison County Parks & Recreation)
Alternate Phone: (228) 875 - 4236 (Little Children’s Park Ocean Springs)
Address: Bruce Ladner Memorial Park, Hwy. 53, Gulfport
- Little Children’s Park - 400 Washington Ave., Ocean Springs
Website: www.DisabilityConnection.org
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Fully accessible playgrounds designed with special consideration of children and adults with disabilities. Restrooms and/or pavilions are available during events by prior arrangement.

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Name: **Dream Program**
Office Phone: (228) 472 - 5054
Address: 3827 Bienville Blvd.
- Ocean Springs, MS 39564
Website: www.dreamprogram.net
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in organized sports, classroom and social activities. All programs are free to participants and their families and include: basketball, softball, bowling, flag football, music classes, arts & crafts, therapeutic horseback riding, water fitness and swimming classes, social dinners and dances and floats in Mardi Gras Parades.

.....

Name: **Lynn Meadows Discovery Center**
Office Phone: (228) 897 - 6039
Address: 246 Dolan Avenue
- Gulfport, MS 39507
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Sensory Friendly Day - exclusive event for children/families with Autism Spectrum Disorders and sensory processing differences, to have a fun and interactive learning experience. Free Friday: Last Friday of every month admission is free from 5pm-8pm. Museums For All Program for EBT Cardholders: must show EBT Card and valid ID. (Note: EBT cards are not accepted for payment). Call for prices and schedules.
Additional Services: Open on Monday in summer.

.....

Name: MS Coast Special Needs Soccer Association

Office Phone: (228) 860-3903

Website: www.mcsnsa.org

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Fosters physical, mental and emotional growth of Mississippi's youth with special needs through soccer at all levels and ability of play.

.....

Name: MS Gulf Coast Buddy Sports

Office Phone: (228) 860 - 9055

Address: 23155 Stablewood Circle

- Pass Christian, MS 39571

Website: www.msgulfcoastbuddysports.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides recreational and leisure opportunities free of charge, for youths/adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other special needs. Offers Buddy Ball baseball, Kicking it with Buddies Kickball and Fishing with Buddies.

.....

Name: MS Gulf Coast YMCA

Office Phone: (228) 875 - 5050

Address: 1810 Government Street

- Ocean Springs, MS 39564

Website: www.mgcymca.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 5:00 AM - 8:00 PM

- Saturday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

- Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Ask about special rates and scholarship opportunities.

.....

Name: MS Gulf Coast Youth For Christ

Office Phone: (228) 864 - 0788

Address: 111 Pass Road

- Gulfport, MS 39507

Website: www.coastyfc.com

- Monday - Saturday 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Outreach to teens 6th-12th grade.

Additional Services: The Xtreme Teen Center is located at: 1501 24th Ave., Gulfport, MS 39501 & Thrift Mart located at: 111 East 34th Street, Gulfport, MS 39507.

.....

Name: **MS Talking Book Services**
- MS Library Commission
Office Phone: (800) 446 - 0892
Alternate Phone: (601) 432 - 4151
Address: 3881 Eastwood Drive
- Jackson, MS 39211-6473
Website: <https://mlc.lib.ms.us/tbs/>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers a free public library service for eligible Mississippi residents who are unable to read standard print due to a visual, physical or organic reading disability.

.....

Name: **Salvation Army Kroc Center**
Office Phone: (228) 207 - 1218
Address: 575 Division Street
- Biloxi, MS 39530
Website: www.krocmscoast.org
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers athletics, aquatics, health/wellness, performing and visual arts, and play care.

.....

Name: **Special Olympics Mississippi**
Office Phone: (601) 856 - 7748
Address: 2906 North State Street, Suite 206
- Jackson, MS 39216
Website: <http://specialolympicsms.org/>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for all children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

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Community Resources

Name: Assurance Wireless

Office Phone: (888) 321 - 5880

Website: <https://www.assurancewireless.com/>

Documents Required: Assurance Wireless is a federal Lifeline Assistance program.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: The Assurance Wireless provides eligible low-income free monthly data, unlimited texting, and free monthly minutes. Plus a free phone.

.....

Name: Boat People SOS

Office Phone: (228) 436 - 9999

Address: 181 Lameuse Street

- Biloxi, MS 39530

Website: www.bpsos.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers Vietnamese interpretation/translation, immigration and naturalization services, OSHA safety training, domestic violence assistance, financial literacy classes, Disaster Case management, workforce development, and Community Health Worker.

.....

Name: Department of Motor Vehicles

- MS Department of Public Safety

Office Phone: (601) 987 - 1212

Website: https://www.ms.gov/dps/license_renewal

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Driver's license information, renewals, ID Cards, manuals, exam scheduler and change of address information.

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Name: **Driver’s License**
Website: <https://driving-tests.org/mississippi/drivers-license-guide/#lev-el-5>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides information on how and where to get a permit or driver’s license.

.....

Name: **El Pueblo**
- Program of Seashore Mission
Office Phone: (228) 436 - 3986
Address: 425-B Division Street
- Biloxi, MS 39530
Website: <http://www.elpueblo-ms.org>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Free or Reduced Cost Services: A program of Seashore Mission that serves the immigrant community through the provision of legal services (especially to victims of violence), family literacy program, English as a Second Language classes, translation services, and advocacy.

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Name: **Hancock Resource Center**
Office Phone: (228) 463 - 8887
Address: 454 Hwy 90, Suite B
- Waveland, MS 39576
Website: <http://www.hancockhrc.org>
Hours of Operation: Monday 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM
- Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Eligibility Requirements: Reside in Hancock County, with exception of Veteran services.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Housing solutions for those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless, veteran housing and employment services, transitional housing and support for domestic violence survivors, home rehabilitation and repair, mortgage delinquency and foreclosure assistance, and advocacy services for parents whose children are in CPS custody. Also provides Hancock Youth Leadership Academy and Hancock Youth for Positive Efforts, youth organizations dedicated to substance use prevention.
Additional Services: Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) - Veteran’s Administration; Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP) - Dept. of Labor; Abused Women’s Stabilizing Housing Assistance Program (AWSHA) - Dept. of Justice. Kindergarten preparation, renters and life skills classes.

.....

Name: MS Department of Human Services

Office Phone: (601) 359 - 4500

Address: 200 South Lamar Street

- Jackson, MS 39201

Website: <https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Services provided: Adult Protective, senior, early childhood care, Family caregiver support, TANF, SNAP, workforce development, youth services & more.

Additional Services: (800) 222-8000 Abuse Hotline - (800) 590-0818 Families First - (877) 882-4916 Child Support Enforcement - (800) 821-9157 Adoption Unit

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Name: Nourishing Place, The

- **Chapel in the Oaks**

Office Phone: (228) 596 - 1186

Address: 606 Tennessee St.

- Gulfport, MS 39507

Website: <http://thenourishingplace.org>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides individuals with food, after-school tutoring programs, and 24/7 free clothing and household items.

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Name: Selective Service Registration

Website: <https://www.sss.gov/register/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Online registration for the Selective Service (Draft).

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Name: Social Security Administration

- **Gulfport Office**

Office Phone: (877) 897 - 0609

Alternate Phone: (800) 325 - 0778

Address: 9394 Three Rivers Road

- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: <https://www.ssofficelocation.com/gulfport-social-security-office-so757>

Hours of Operation: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

- Wednesday 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- Documents Required:** Photo ID, Birth Certificate, W-2 Tax Return, DD214, Marriage Certificate, Divorce Decree, Death Certificate, Verification of income and Resources.
- Free or Reduced Cost Services:** SS cards, supplemental security income, cash benefits to limited-income individuals, seniors, survivors of deceased workers, and individuals with disabilities.

.....

Name: St. Vincent De Paul Society-Our Lady of Fatima Conference

Office Phone: (228) 388 - 1837
Address: PO Box 4098
- Biloxi, MS 39535

- Documents Required:** Photo ID, SS card plus SS and birth certificates for all children in the family; lease; utility bill; proof of income; SNAP benefit determination.
- Free or Reduced Cost Services:** For those residing in 39531 zip code and partial 39532 (north of Popp's Ferry Bridge up to but not crossing over Cedar Lake Blvd.), offers financial assistance (rent, utilities, food pantry, medications). Homeless assistance - showers, laundry, clothing, food, medication, transportation for verifiable social service appointments.

.....

Name: St. Vincent De Paul Society-St. James Conference

Office Phone: (228) 896 - 6059 - Church
Address: 366 Cowan Rd.
- Gulfport, MS 39507

- Website:** [http:// www.svdpbiloxi.org](http://www.svdpbiloxi.org)
- Hours of Operation:** Tuesday 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- Eligibility Requirements:** Reside in zip code 39507.
- Free or Reduced Cost Services:** Provides utility assistance and offers a food pantry.

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Name: St. Vincent De Paul Society-St. John Conference

Office Phone: (228) 864 - 2272 - Church
Address: 2414 17th Avenue
- Gulfport, MS 39501

- Website:** <http://www.svdpbiloxi.org>
- Hours of Operation:** Tuesday & Wednesday 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- Eligibility Requirements:** Reside in zip code 39501.
- Free or Reduced Cost Services:** Offers a food pantry.

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Name: St. Vincent De Paul Society-St. Joseph Conference

Office Phone: (228) 832 - 8244

Address: 12290 Depew Road

- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: <http://www.svdpbiloxi.org>

Hours of Operation: Monday & Thursday 10:00 AM - 11:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Reside in zip code 39503 and 39574.

Documents Required: Proof of residency, current utility bill, picture identification for HOH and SSN for all household members.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers a food pantry.

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Name: St. Vincent De Paul Society-St. Thomas the Apostle

Office Phone: (228) 822 - 0609

Address: 712 E. Beach Blvd.

- Long Beach, MS 39560

Website: <http://www.svdpbiloxi.org>

Hours of Operation: Monday & Thursday 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Reside in zip code 39560.

Documents Required: Must bring proof of residency, current bill, picture ID and SSN.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides financial assistance for housing, utilities, food, medicine and other necessities. Needs are met based on interview process.

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Name: Taxpayer Advocate Service

Office Phone: (601) 292 - 4800

Address: 100 West Capitol Street, Stop 31

- Jackson, MS 39269

Website: www.irs.gov/advocate

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides free assistance to taxpayers who have a hardship as a result of IRS issues. Also provides free assistance to those who have tried to resolve IRS issue, but are experiencing delays of 30 days or more.

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Name: **United Way 211**
- Resource Line
Office Phone: Dial 211
Website: <http://uwca.mycommunitypt.com/>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Lists resources available in community.

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Name: **United Way for Jackson & George Counties**
Office Phone: (228) 762 - 7662
Alternate Phone: (228) 762 - 8557
Address: 3510 Magnolia Street
- Pascagoula, MS 39567
Website: <http://unitedwayjgc.org>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Eligibility Requirements: Resident of Jackson or George Counties
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Free referrals to our agencies and resources for assistance with rent/mortgage, food pantries, utilities, medications, and medical equipment. Also provide domestic violence services, counseling, mentors, after school programs and more.

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Name: **Voter Registration**
Office Phone: (800) 829 - 6786
Website: <https://www.sos.ms.gov/elections-voting/pages/voter-registration-information.aspx>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Online portal for voter registration and election information.

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Name: **Women’s Community Support Center**
- Magdalene House
Office Phone: (228) 586 - 3510
Address: 10469 HWY 603
- Waveland, MS 39576
Website: www.womenscommunitysupport.org
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Eligibility Requirements: Serves Hancock and Harrison Counties.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: A faith based program for women over 18, who have graduated from residential drug/alcohol treatment facilities or released from incarceration. Offers work force development, anger management, parenting clases, money management, and life skills.

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Name: Women's Resource Center

Office Phone: (228) 897 - 8958

Address: 9155 Lorraine Road

- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: <http://wrcgulfport.org>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Tuesday 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

- Wednesday 10:00 AM - 1:30 PM

- Thursday 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Limited Ultrasounds, Prenatal and Parenting classes, Peer Counseling, Adoption Referrals for Birth Parents, Maternity and baby items, medical & community resources, caring and emotional support.

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Disability Specific Services

Name: American Printing House for the Blind

- **APH ConnectCenter**

Office Phone: (502) 895 - 2405

Alternate Phone: (800) 232-5463 (information & referral)

Website: www.aphconnectcenter.org

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides free services to those who are losing vision or those who need assistance related to vision loss and/or employment, housing, vision rehab., independent living and assistive technology training.

.....

Name: Arc of Mississippi, The

Office Phone: (601) 355 - 0220

Alternate Phone: (228) 497 - 1035 (Coastal Office)

TTY Phone: (601) 355 - 0220

Address: 704 N. President Street

- Jackson, MS 39202

Website: www.arcms.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Advocacy training, referral services, provides resources and support information to parents of children with disabilities, online direct support courses, educational advocacy for parents with school aged children and support for all people with disabilities, addiction prevention, legislative activities, supported decision making, community transition services and direct support professional services.
Additional Services: Serves the entire state.

.....

Name: Arc of Pearl River County, The
Office Phone: (228) 342 - 3095
Address: PO Box 1816
- Picayune, MS 39466-1816
Website: <https://thearc.org/chapter/the-arc-of-pearl-river-county/>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Advocacy training, referral services, provides resources and support information to parents of children with disabilities, online direct support courses, educational advocacy for parents with school aged children and support for all people with disabilities, addiction prevention, legislative activities, supported decision making, community transition services and direct support professional services.

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Name: Arc of the Gulf Coast, The
Office Phone: (228) 325 - 8786
Address: 3109 Gulf Avenue
- Gulfport, MS 39501
Website: www.arcms.org
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Advocacy training, referral services, provides resources and support information to parents of children with disabilities, online direct support courses, educational advocacy for parents with school aged children and support for all people with disabilities, addiction prevention, legislative activities, supported decision making, community transition services and direct support professional services.

.....

Name: Brain Injury Association of Mississippi
Office Phone: (601) 981 - 1021
Alternate Phone: (800) 444 - 6443 Help Line
Address: 1640 Lelia Dr., Ste 100
- Jackson, MS 39216
Website: <https://www.msbraininjury.org/>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Local organizations for people with brain and spinal cord injury, that provide advocacy, information, resource library, support groups, and prevention education.

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**Name: Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities
- MS Parent Training & Information Center**

Office Phone: (601) 969 - 0601

Address: 2 Old River Place, Suite M
- Jackson, MS 39202-3435

Website: www.msccd.org or www.mspti.org

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Advocates for and promotes the full and equal participation of all Mississippians with disabilities in all aspects of life. MSPTI helps parents navigate child's rights in school system.

.....

Name: de l'Epee Deaf Center

Office Phone: (228) 897 - 2280

TTY Phone: (228) 206 - 6062 (Video Phone)

Address: 1450 North St.
- Gulfport, MS 39507

Website: www.deafcenter.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Hearing or speech/language impairment.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides food pantry, resources and events for Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals, resources for parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, offers free American Sign Language classes.

.....

Name: Disability Connection

Office Phone: (228) 604 - 4020, Gulfport Office

Alternate Phone: (228) 870 - 7775, Ocean Springs Office

Website: <http://www.disabilityconnection.org>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Services are free. By appointment only. Eligibility varies on each program & services are on a case-by case basis.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Specializes in serving children & adults with disabilities, however, referral services are free to everyone. Programs include: MS Coast Community Resource Guides, Employment Connection (eliminating barriers to employment), Community Assist (resource information, referrals & medical equipment), the MS Coast Heritage Information Center (43 films and travel information), events, DC Community Playground, Advocacy, and the Community Calendar.

.....

Name: **Gulf Coast Down Syndrome Society**
Office Phone: (228) 323-7654
Address: PO Box 654
- Gautier, MS 39553
Website: www.gcdss.org
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Supportive network for individuals with Down syndrome and their families.

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Name: **Independent Living for the Blind**
- **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind**
Office Phone: (228) 897 - 6925
Alternate Phone: (662) 320 - 6656
Website: <https://www.mdrs.ms.gov/VocationalRehabBlind/Pages/ILB.aspx>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Eligibility Requirements: Age 55 & up must provide evidence of Legal Blindness by a medical report. Age 18 & up must provide evidence of Legal Blindness by medical report and evidence of one significant disability.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides assistance with low vision equipment and adjustment to blindness including optional orientation, low vision assessments in home, and mobility training at the Addie McBryde School for the Blind in Jackson.

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Name: **Institute for Disability Studies**
- **The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park**
Office Phone: (228) 214 - 3400
TTY Phone: (888) 671 - 0051
Address: 730 East Beach Blvd.
- Long Beach, MS 39560
Website: www.usm.edu/ids
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers resources for Transition to Adulthood at <https://www.usm.edu/ids/transition-to-adulthood.php>. Provides support and resources for individuals with disabilities, families and professionals at no cost. Services include: inclusive art and recreation, family support and engagement, inclusive volunteer opportunities, employment training and transition support. Also houses an extensive lending library offering assistive technology devices and recreational equipment for a no-cost 90 day loan. Browse the library at <https://ids.myturn.com/library>.

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Name: LIFE of MS

- **MS Center for Independent Living**

Office Phone: (228) 357 - 5120

Alternate Phone: (800) 748 - 9398

Address: 16145 Orange Grove Road

- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: www.lifeofms.com

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides transition services, advocacy, skills training, peer support, information/referrals, and loan closet for medical equipment.

Additional Services: Free services to Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, George, Stone and Pearl River Counties. By appointment only.

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Name: MS Centers for Autism & Related Developmental Disabilities

Office Phone: (228) 396 - 4434

Address: 4061 Suzanne Dr., Suites C & D

- D'Iberville, MS 39540

Website: www.mscentersforautism.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides a center based program in which basic skills are taught to enhance learning. Free or low cost based on income if qualify; accepts most insurances, including Medicaid.

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Name: MS Department of Mental Health-IDD Services

Office Phone: (877) 210 - 8513

- Jackson, MS 39201

Website: www.dmh.ms.gov/service-options/idd-services

Free or Reduced Cost Services: ID/DD Waiver and IDD Community Support Programs that provide services for persons with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorder. Eligibility is determined by South MS Regional Center Diagnostic Services @ 228 - 867 - 1320.

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Name: MS Hearing-Vision Project
- USM

Office Phone: (228) 214 - 3340 Gulf Park Campus

Alternate Phone: (601) 266 - 4568 Hattiesburg Campus

Website: www.usm.edu/hearing-vision

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides training and assistance to families, administrators, educators and service providers of children (birth to 22) who have both a hearing and a vision impairment, also referred to as deaf-blind. Services are offered to families, educators, administrators and service providers of these children. All services are confidential and are provided at the request of families, educators, administrators and service providers.

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Name: MS Insurance Department

Office Phone: (601) 359 - 3569

Alternate Phone: (800) 562 - 2957

- Jackson, MS 39205

Website: <http://www.mid.ms.gov>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides insurance information for adults with special needs.

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Name: MS Paralysis Association

Office Phone: (601) 326 - 2654

Address: 350 W. Woodrow Wilson Ave., Suite 130

- Jackson, MS 39213

Website: <http://www.msparalysis.org>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides people living with paralysis financial assistance for adaptive equipment; home and vehicle modifications; peer support; scholarships; introduction to wheelchair sports programs.

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Name: MS Relay Service

Office Phone: (601) 936 - 5012

Alternate Phone: (601) 206 - 0206 (Videophone)

TTY Phone: (601) 709 - 4624

Address: 460 Briarwood Drive Ste 400

- Jackson, MS 39206

Website: www.mississippirelay.com

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: State of Mississippi residence.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Free service that provides full telephone accessibility to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, or have a speech disability. Offers three options for getting a CapTel phone, go to www.Mississippirelay.com/getcaptel

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Name: MS Society for Disabilities

Office Phone: (601) 982 - 7051

Address: 1675 Lakeland Drive, Suite 303
- Jackson, MS 39216

Website: <http://www.msdisabilities.com/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM- 4:30 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: MS-CAP (Mississippi Client Assistance Program) is a program dedicated to assisting clients in the navigation, advocating, and mediation of services provided through the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. Serves entire state.

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Name: Office of Special Disabilities

- **MS Department of Rehabilitation Services**

Office Phone: (228) 575 - 3785

Address: 13486 Fastway Lane
- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: <http://www.mdrs.ms.gov>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides services to individuals with severe disabilities and serious limitations, may include: home modifications, specialized medical equipment, personal care attendant services and some vehicle modifications.

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Name: Project START

- **MS Department of Rehabilitation Services**

Office Phone: (601) 853 - 5249

Alternate Phone: (800) 852 - 8328 (MS only)

Address: 1281 Highway 51 North
- Madison, MS 39110

Website: www.msprojectstart.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Device Loan - provides short term loans of Assistive Technology devices. Device Re-utilization - Supports the exchange, repair, recycling of AT devices. Device Demonstration -

Demonstrate a variety of AT devices. Training/Public Awareness - Provide training, technical assistance & public awareness.

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Name: South Mississippi Regional Center

Office Phone: (228) 868 - 2923

Address: 1170 W. Railroad St.
- Long Beach, MS 39560

Website: www.smrc.state.ms.us

Hours of Operation: 24/7

Eligibility Requirements: For any ID/DD services contact Diagnostic Service Department at 228-867-1321.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Provides diagnostic services, IDD Community Support Program, Home and Community Based ID/DD Waiver Program, Community Home Programs, and provides 24-hour, seven day per week habilitative, therapeutic, and medical care treatment.

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Name: Vocational Rehabilitation For the Blind

- **MS Department of Rehabilitation Services**

Office Phone: (228) 897 - 6925

Address: 10162 Southpark Drive
- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: <http://www.mdrs.ms.gov>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Visually impaired or blind.

Documents Required: Visual exam/medical records

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Assists individuals seeking to gain or retain employment. Offers counseling and guidance, vocational assessments, training opportunities, job placement and follow up, assistive technology, adjustment services, as well as, orientation and mobility services through Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, and more.

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Disaster / Emergency Services

Name: American Red Cross-Gulfport

Office Phone: (228) 896-4511

Address: 612 E. Pass Road
- Gulfport, MS 39507

Website: <https://www.redcross.org/local/mississippi.html>
- Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Disaster services and disaster recovery services provided.

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Name: FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency

Office Phone: (800) 621 - 3362

Website: www.fema.gov

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Supports citizens and first responders before, during, and after emergencies.

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Name: Hancock County Emergency Management

Office Phone: (228) 255 - 0942

Address: 18333 HWY 603
- Kiln, MS 39556

Website: <https://www.hancockcounty.ms.gov/departments/emergency-management-e-911-fire-department/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides information and planning for the public in preparation for emergencies.

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Name: **Harrison County Emergency Management**
Office Phone: (228) 865 - 4002
Website: <https://www.msema.org/>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides information and planning for the public in preparation for emergencies.

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Name: **MEMA-Mississippi Emergency Management Agency**
Office Phone: (866) 519 - 6362
Website: www.msema.org
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides information and planning for the public in preparation for emergencies.

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Name: **Pearl River County Emergency Management**
Office Phone: (601) 795 - 3058
Website: <http://www.pearlrivercounty.net/civdef/>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides information and planning for the public in preparation for emergencies.

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Name: **Stone County EOC/911**
- Stone County Emergency Management
Office Phone: (601) 928 - 3077
Address: 533 First St South
- Wiggins, MS 39577
Website: www.stonecounty.com
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- 24/7 for emergencies
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides information and planning for the public in preparation for emergencies.

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Name: **US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**
- Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance
Office Phone: (202) 708 - 1112
TTY Phone: (202) 708 - 1455
Website: <https://www.hud.gov/states/mississippi/DREA>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides Mississippians information on disaster assistance, shelters and preparing for a disaster.

Educational & Training Opportunities

Name: CLIMB CDC

- **Community Development Corporation**

Office Phone: (228) 864 - 6677

Address: 1526 Mills Avenue

- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: <http://www.climbcdcc.org>

Eligibility Requirements: Low to moderate income.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Workforce Training Institute, employment or small business training, housing rehabilitation project and rebuild projects for low income citizens, Culinary & Hospitality Program, academics, Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps.

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Name: Families First/MCEC

- **MS Community Education Center**

Office Phone: (228) 897 - 5627

Address: 10260 Larkin Smith Drive

- Gulfport, MS 39503

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Workforce development and training; online high school diploma program.

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Name: Gulfport School District

- **Community Education**

Office Phone: (228) 896 - 7622

Address: 100 Perry Street

- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: <http://www.gulfportschools.org/domain/94>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers community education classes.

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Name: Hope Adult Learning
Office Phone: (228) 806-4673
Website: www.hopeadultlearning.com
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Tutors provide basic adult literacy and pre-GED reading skills development for all adults, including adults with dyslexia.

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Name: Moore Community House-Women in Construction
Office Phone: (228) 436 - 6601
Address: 684 Walker Street
- Biloxi, MS 39530
Website: <http://MooreCommunityHouse.org>
Eligibility Requirements: Must be 18 years or older.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Construction skills training program for local women.

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Name: MS Department of Education-Office of Special Education
- Secondary Transition
Office Phone: (601) 359 - 3498
Website: <https://www.mdek12.org/OSE/PP>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Procedures for State Board Policy 74.19 Volume V: Secondary Transition (https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/documents/revised-volume-v---secondary-transition-1-28-16_20160128150950_219697_20160708142156_291779.pdf)

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Name: MS Gulf Coast Community College-Harrison County
Office Phone: (228) 896 - 2504
Address: 2226 Switzer Road
- Gulfport, MS 39507
Website: www.mgccc.edu
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Ask how to qualify for low cost, continuing education, Veteran and senior programs.

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Name: MS Gulf Coast Community College-Jackson County
Office Phone: (228) 497 - 7732

Address: 2300 Hwy. 90
- Gautier, MS 39533
Website: www.mgccc.edu

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Ask how to qualify for low cost, continuing education, Veteran and senior programs.

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Name: MS Gulf Coast Community College-Perkinston

Office Phone: (601) 928 - 6325

Address: 51 Main Street
- Perkinston, MS 39573

Website: www.mgccc.edu

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Ask how to qualify for low cost, continuing education, Veteran and senior programs.

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Name: MS Parent Training & Information Center

Office Phone: (601) 969 - 0601

Website: <http://www.mspti.org>

Eligibility Requirements: Age birth to 26.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides families of children with disabilities information, resources, support and training that allows your child to meet his or her educational goals.

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Name: University of Southern Mississippi

Office Phone: (228) 865 - 4500

Website: <https://www.usm.edu/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Ask how to qualify for low cost, continuing education, Veteran and senior programs.

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Employment, Job Training and Career Development

Name: **Ability Works**
- **Division of MS Department of Rehabilitation**
Office Phone: (228) 897 - 7616
Address: 10280 Larkin Smith Dr.
- Gulfport, MS 39503
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides employment assistance and workforce training for individuals with disabilities.

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Name: **Disability Connection**
- **Supported Employment & 1915i**
Office Phone: (228) 604 - 4020
Address: 700 Pass Rd., Gulfport, MS 39501
Website: www.disabilityconnection.org
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- (by appointment only)
Eligibility Requirements: Must have Medicaid Waiver for Supported Employment services and full Medicaid Benefits for the 1915i.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides Job Coaches who assist individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in finding and keeping competitive employment.

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Name: **Goodwill Industries Of South Mississippi**
- **Workforce Development**
Office Phone: (228) 863 - 2323 Ext. 101
Address: 2301 31st Street

- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: www.goodwillsms.org

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Goodwill provides no cost resources to the community to include job readiness training, computer skills, resume development, interview upskilling, and more.

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Name: South MS Regional Center

- **Supported Employment & 1915i**

Office Phone: 228 - 867 - 1321

Address: 1170 W Railroad St, Long Beach, MS 39560

Website: <http://www.smrc.state.ms.us/>

Eligibility Requirements: Must have Medicaid Waiver for Supported Employment services and full Medicaid Benefits for the 1915i.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides IDD Community Support and Home and Community-Based ID/DD Waiver programs. Both programs provide supported employment, but you must meet a specific needs-based criteria to qualify for services. Call to request a list of service providers.

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Name: Vocational Rehabilitation

- **MS Department Of Rehabilitation Services**

Office Phone: (228) 575 - 3785 (Gulfport)

Alternate Phone: (228) 497 - 0231 - Gautier, (601) 798 - 7811 - Picayune, (601) 947 - 4271 - Lucedale

Address: 13486 Fastway Lane # D

- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: www.mdrs.ms.gov

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Consumers must have a disability and need assistance in going to work.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Assists people with disabilities to prepare for employment through counseling, assistive technology, job training and job development.

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Name: WIN Job Center

- **MS Department of Employment Security**

Office Phone: (228) 897 - 6900 (Gulfport)

Alternate Phone: (228) 762 - 4713 (Pascagoula)

Address: 10162 Southpark Dr.

- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: <http://mdes.ms.gov>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides job and case management, resume preparation, interviewing and dressing for success classes. Offers special veterans services. Call # for all other WIN Job Center phone numbers in the lower 6 counties.

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Financial

Name: Mississippi Able
Office Phone: (888) 609 - 3469
Website: <https://www.mdrs.ms.gov/Pages/able-act.aspx>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Savings accounts for individuals with disabilities which will not affect their public benefits. These accounts can be used for daily transactions and/or long-term savings.

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Food

Name: Brother's Keeper Ministries
Office Phone: (601) 795 - 3173
Address: 208 N. Main Street
- Poplarville, MS 39470
Hours of Operation: Monday - Tuesday - Thursday 9 AM - 12 PM & 1PM - 3PM
- Friday 9AM - 12 PM
Eligibility Requirements: Income-based, Pearl River County only.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Food pantry and SNAP application assistance only. Call before coming for evaluation.

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Name: Feed My Sheep

Office Phone: (228) 864 - 2701

Address: 2615 19th Street
- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: <http://feedmysheepgulfport.org>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides free lunch to people experiencing homelessness, are homebound or needy in the Gulfport area.

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Name: Feeding The Gulf Coast

- Benefits Enrollment Center

Office Phone: (228) 896 - 6979

Address: 1501 34th Street
- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: <https://www.feedingthegulfcoast.org/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: SNAP Application Assistance, find local food pantries and soup kitchens in your area, Low income home energy assistance, Medicare Extra Help Program, & Medicare Savings Program.

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Name: Hancock County Food Pantry

Office Phone: (228) 467 - 2790

Address: 9972 Hwy. 603
- Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

Website: <http://www.hancockcountyfoodpantry.org/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Resident of Hancock County; low-income.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides food items and personal hygiene products to families living in Hancock County.

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Name: Loaves And Fishes

Office Phone: (228) 436 - 6172

Address: 610 Water Street
- Biloxi, MS 39530

Website: <https://loavesbiloxi.com/>

Hours of Operation: Main Dining Hall @ 610 Water St. - Free Breakfast (9:00 AM - 10:30 AM) & Lunch (11:30 AM - 12:30 PM) Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers free meals. On 1st & 3rd Thursday, community give away of groceries, between 10am - 11am. Cold weather

shelter in D'Iberville as needed.

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Name: **Seashore Mission**
Office Phone: (228) 313 - 1477
Alternate Phone: (228) 234 - 2814
Address: 856 Division Street
- Biloxi, MS 39530
Website: <https://seashoremision494763781.wordpress.com>
Hours of Operation: Monday, Thursday, Sunday 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides day services including showers, laundry, telephone use, and case management to individuals experiencing homelessness.

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Name: **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**
- **Harrison County Department Of Human Services**
Office Phone: (228) 897 - 5600
Address: 10260 Larkin Smith Road
- Gulfport, MS 39503
Website: <http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-%28snap%29/>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Eligibility Requirements: Low wage, unemployed, receiving TANF, SSI or other assistance payments, elderly or disabled and living on small income.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides monthly food benefits. Will give you prompts to a list of all children and family services.

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Name: **Twelve Baskets Food Bank**
- **A Program of Catholic Charities**
Office Phone: (228) 822 - 0836
Address: 333 Cowan Rd.
- Gulfport, MS 39507
Website: <http://catholiccharitiesbiloxi.org/twelve-baskets-food-bank>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Call to find the local food bank or soup kitchen in your area.

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Health and Wellness

Name: **Bethel Free Clinic**

Office Phone: (228) 594 - 3640

Address: 1650 Carrol Drive
- Biloxi, MS 39531

Website: <http://bethelfreeclinic.org>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: First come, first serve basis

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Free walk-in clinic and medications as available for the uninsured or underinsured.

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Name: **Catholic Charities of South MS**

Office Phone: (228) 701 - 0555

Alternate Phone: (855) 847 - 0555

Address: Serving 17 Counties

Website: www.catholiccharitiesofsouthms.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Documents Required: Call main number to be connected to correct office to start case management process.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Financial assistance, infant and maternity care, disaster relief, representative payee services, budgeting education, food assistance, subsidized housing for seniors, migration & refugee services.

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Name: **Coastal Family Health Center - Bay St. Louis**

Office Phone: (228) 463 - 9666

Address: 109 Hospital Road
- Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

Website: <https://coastalfamilyhealth.org/locations/bay-st-louis-3/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Documents Required: Income based sliding scale fee; some qualify for free services.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides family practice, pediatrics, behavioral health, lab, telepsychiatry, social services, and medication assistance.

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Name: Coastal Family Health Center - Biloxi

Office Phone: (228) 374 - 4991

Address: 715 A Division St.
- Biloxi, MS 39530

Website: <https://coastalfamilyhealth.org/locations/biloxi/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM; some extended hours at select locations.

Documents Required: Income based sliding scale fee; some qualify for free services.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides adult internal medicine, family practice, pediatrics, Women’s health & prenatal care, dentistry, optometry, mental health, substance abuse counseling, HIV care & testing, pharmacy, lab, radiology, social services and healthcare for homeless.

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Name: Coastal Family Health Center - D’Iberville

Office Phone: (228) 392 - 4153

Address: 3446 Big Ridge Road
- D’Iberville, MS 39540

Website: <https://coastalfamilyhealth.org/locations/diberville/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Documents Required: Income based sliding scale fee; some qualify for free services.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides family practice, substance abuse services, behavioral health, lab, psychiatry, social services, and medication assistance.

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Name: Coastal Family Health Center - Gulfport

Office Phone: (228) 864 - 0003

Address: 15024 Martin Luther King Blvd.
- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: <https://coastalfamilyhealth.org/locations/gulfport/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Documents Required: Income based sliding scale fee; some qualify for free services.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides family practice, adult internal medicine, pediatrics, OB/GYN, WIC, dentistry, optometry, behavioral health, telepsychiatry, lab, ultrasound, social services and medication assistance.

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Name: Coastal Family Health Center - Pass Christian

Office Phone: (228) 452 - 6284

Address: 257 Davis Avenue
- Pass Christian, MS 39571

Website: <https://coastalfamilyhealth.org/locations/pass-christian/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Documents Required: Income based sliding scale fee; some qualify for free services.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides family practice, lab, behavioral health, telepsychiatry, social services and medication assistance.

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Name: Coastal Family Health Center - Saucier

Office Phone: (228) 832 - 7223

Address: 23453 Central Drive
- Saucier, MS 39574

Website: <https://coastalfamilyhealth.org/locations/saucier/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Documents Required: Income based sliding scale fee; some qualify for free services.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides family practice, pediatrics, lab, behavioral health, telepsychiatry, WIC, social services and medication assistance.

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Name: Good Rx

Office Phone: (855) 213 - 1275

Website: <https://www.goodrx.com/discount-card>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Free prescription drug savings/discount card. Can be used for every member of household, including pets.

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Name: Hancock County Health Department

- **MS State Department of Health**

Office Phone: (228) 467 - 4510

Address: 856 Highway 90

Disability Connection

- Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

Website: www.healthymys.com

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides WIC & SNAP locations and healthcare.

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Name: Harrison County Health Department

- **MS State Department of Health**

Office Phone: (228) 863 - 1036

Address: 1102 45th Ave.

- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: www.healthymys.com

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides WIC & SNAP locations and healthcare.

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Name: Magnolia Medical Foundation

Office Phone: (228) 860 - 7530

Alternate Phone: (601) 613 - 3737

Address: 11975 Seaway Road, Suite B239

- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: www.magnoliamedicalfoundation.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides diabetic prevention, diabetes education and training, teen pregnancy prevention and health education promotion and training. This service is offered at a cash discount and is free to those unable to pay.

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Name: Manna Ministries

Office Phone: (601) 799 - 2121

Address: 120 Street A, Suite A

- Picayune, MS 39466

Website: <http://mannaministry.net>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Appointments available Tuesday - Thursday 8 AM - 3 PM, call to schedule appointment.

Documents Required: Uninsured

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Free primary care medical clinic, access to prescribed medications, laboratory testing & dental services. Free after-school tutoring program for grades 1 - 3 who are not reading at grade level.

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Name: MS Division of Medicaid

- Central Office

Office Phone: (601) 359 - 6050

Alternate Phone: (800) 421 - 2408

Address: 550 High Street, Suite 1000

- Jackson, MS 39202

Website: <http://www.medicaid.ms.gov/>

Eligibility Requirements: Call to be directed to Medicaid office in your county.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides Medical coverage for low income families, individuals with disabilities, and the elderly.

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Name: MS Drug Card

Website: <https://mississippidrugcard.com/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Free pharmacy coupons, coupons are active and can be used immediately, discounts on brand & generic drugs.

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Name: MS State Department of Health

Office Phone: (601) 576 - 7400

Website: www.healthymms.com

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Promotes health protection, health promotion and health planning throughout your life.

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Name: Pearl River County Health Department

- MS State Department of Health

Office Phone: (601) 798 - 6212

Alternate Phone: (601) 798 - 5354 Environmental Office

Address: 7547 Highway 11 North

- Carriere, MS 39426

Website: www.healthymms.com

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides WIC & SNAP locations and healthcare.

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Name: **Pink Heart Funds**
Office Phone: (228) 575 - 8299
Address: 5095 Beatline Rd.
- Long Beach, MS 39560
Website: <https://pinkheartfunds.org/>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides wigs to individuals who have undergone chemotherapy or experience extreme Alopecia or other hair loss diseases. Provides breast prostheses, bras, lymphedema sleeves to those who have had lumpectomies or mastectomies.

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Name: **Sola Extends Women’s Clinic**
- **Sola Church**
Office Phone: (228) 547 - 5103
- Gulfport, MS 39501
Website: www.solachurchgc.com
Hours of Operation: Third Saturday of every month 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Eligibility Requirements: For uninsured women
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides a free women’s clinic: exams, breast care, OB-GYN care, mental health counseling, referral services and more.

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Name: **St. Vincent de Paul - Community Pharmacy**
Office Phone: (228) 374 - 9097
Address: 715 B Division Street
- Biloxi, MS 39530
Website: <http://www.svdprx.org/>
Hours of Operation: Thursday 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Walk-In Help
Eligibility Requirements: Interviews by appointment only.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides prescription medication and wellness assistance, collects unexpired medication.

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Name: **Stone County Health Department**
Office Phone: (601) 928 - 5293
Address: 1510 Central Avenue East
- Wiggins, MS 39577
Website: www.healthymys.com
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides WIC & SNAP locations and healthcare.

Housing and Utilities

Name: Biloxi Housing Authority

Office Phone: (228) 374 - 7771

Address: 330 Benachi Avenue

- Biloxi, MS 39530

Website: www.biloxihousing.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

- Closed every other Friday.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Affordable housing for low to moderate income individuals which is income based and includes Project Based Section 8, VASH, Tenant Based Section 8, and rent based on income for qualifying applicants. All housing is located within the limits of the City of Biloxi. Applications accepted online.

.....

Name: Community Care Network

- **Sue's Home**

Office Phone: (228) 215 - 2662

Website: www.ccnms.org

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides faith-based transitional housing for women and children. Not an emergency shelter. Rental assistance for those who qualify.

.....

Name: FHA Resource Center, The

- **HUD Housing**

Office Phone: (800) 225 - 5342

Website: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/housing/sfh/fhare-sourcectr

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides programs that include: HUD rental assistance, privately-owned subsidized housing, and public housing voucher program.

.....

Name: Jackson County Civic Action Committee
Office Phone: (228) 769 - 3292
Address: 5343 Jefferson Avenue #2
- Moss Point, MS 39563
Website: <http://jccivicaction.org/>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program), Community Service Block Grant, Case Management Services, Weatherization Referrals, and Income tax preparation assistance.

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Name: Mercy Housing And Human Development
Office Phone: (228) 896 - 1945
Address: 1135 Ford St.
- Gulfport, MS 39507
Website: <http://www.mhhd.org>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- Or by appointment
Free or Reduced Cost Services: First time homebuyer's education, community health advocacy, estate planning workshops, credit and rental counseling, and VITA tax preparation.

.....

Name: MS Regional Housing Authority No. VIII
Office Phone: (228) 831 - 2992
Alternate Phone: (228) 248 - 1030
Address: 10430 Three Rivers Road Suite C
- Gulfport, MS 39503
Website: <http://www.mrha8.org>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Eligibility Requirements: Income based.
Documents Required: Proof of income, birth certificate, SS card, and picture ID.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides low-rent housing, home ownership and rental assistance.

.....

Name: Open Doors Homeless Coalition
Office Phone: (228) 604 - 2048
Address: 11975 Seaway Road Suite B220

- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: <http://www.opendoorshc.org/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides Continuum of Care to create and implement solutions to homelessness. Includes: outreach & coordinated entry, prevention & diversion, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing.

.....

Name: PRVO - Pearl River Valley Opportunity

Office Phone: (228) 231 - 1314

Address: 808 Hwy 90

- Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Only serves Hancock County

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Utility assistance to low income individuals. Must complete a pre-application @ www.virtualroma.mdhs.ms.gov.

.....

Legal Services

Name: Disability Rights Mississippi

Office Phone: (800) 772 - 4057 Intake #

Alternate Phone: (601) 968 - 0600

Address: 5 Old River Place, Suite 101

- Jackson, MS 39202

Website: www.drms.ms

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Eligibility Requirements: To start the intake process please call the Jackson Office at 1-800-772-4057.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides services statewide to protect legal rights so individuals can have full inclusion in their jobs, homes, schools, and community.

Additional Services: Gulfport Office: 11975 Seaway Road, Suite B248, Gulfport, MS 39503

.....

Name: GAP Act
- Land Title Association of MS

Website: <https://ltams.org/gap-act-mississippi-guardianship-and-conservatorship-act/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: A law that allows judges to tailor guardianship and conservatorship orders to the needs of the person, allowing vulnerable adults to maintain some independence. Full Senate Bill can be found at: <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2019/pdf/SB/2800-2899/SB2828SG.pdf>

.....

Name: MS Center For Justice

Office Phone: (228) 435 - 7284 Coastal #

Alternate Phone: (601) 352 - 2269

Address: PO Box 1023

- Jackson, MS 39215-1023

Website: www.mscenterforjustice.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Free legal services to low income families in the area of fair housing, foreclosure prevention, expungement, HIV/AIDS discrimination, and immigrant rights. Biloxi office located at 963 Division Street.

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Name: MS Center for Legal Services

Office Phone: (228) 896 - 9148

Alternate Phone: (800) 498 - 1804 Intake #

Address: 520 E. Pass Road, Suite J

- Gulfport, MS 39507

Website: <http://www.mscenterforlegalservices.org>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Thursday 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Before speaking to an attorney, intake process must be completed.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides (non-criminal) legal advice, counsel, representation, and referrals for eligible low income individuals.

.....

Name: MS Volunteer Lawyers Project

Office Phone: (601) 960 - 9577

Website: <http://www.mvlp.net>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Thursday 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM
- Friday 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Eligibility Requirements: Must meet federal poverty guidelines and citizenship status. All prospective clients screened for eligibility by MVLP and Legal Services.

Documents Required: Depends on case matter.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers free legal services to indigent citizens on pro bono basis in the area of family law. Assists clients with civil legal matters, primarily in the following areas: uncontested divorces, emancipations, simple wills, adoptions, guardianships, name changes, birth certificate corrections, and conservatorship matters. No assistance for criminal matters is offered.

.....

Mental Health

Name: Families as Allies

Office Phone: (601) 355 - 0915

Alternate Phone: (601) 355 - 0915

Address: 840 E. River Place
- Jackson, MS 39202

Website: <http://www.faams.org/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Helps families with: telephone support and referrals, attend school, doctor and other meetings with families, parent to parent training, family to family support, advocate for ways to improve all the systems that serve children with mental health, behavioral or school issues.

.....

Name: Gulf Coast Mental Health Center-Crisis Stabilization Center

Office Phone: (228) 868 - 6524

Address: 15120 County Barn Road
- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: <https://gcmhc.com>

Eligibility Requirements: Resident Of Harrison, Hancock, or Stone Coun-

ty undergoing involuntary commitment process. Call CSU for commitment information.

Documents Required: Chancery Court Order for Commitment Evaluation.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers a residential treatment facility for civilly committed individuals. Provides crisis stabilization for acute mental health patients with placement assistance.

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Name: Gulf Coast Mental Health Center-Hancock County

Office Phone: (228) 467 - 1881

Alternate Phone: (800) 681 - 0798, 24/7 crisis hotline

Address: 819-B Central Avenue
- Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

Website: <http://www.gcmhc.com>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Eligibility Requirements: 1st time appointments should speak with Admissions Secretary

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers outpatient, medication clinic, and case management.

.....

Name: Gulf Coast Mental Health Center-Main Office

- Harrison County

Office Phone: (228) 863 - 1132

Alternate Phone: (800) 681 - 0798, 24/7 crisis hotline

Address: 1600 Broad Avenue
- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: <http://www.gcmhc.com>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers outpatient services, medication clinic, and case management for children and adults. Any resident of Harrison, Hancock, Stone, or Pearl River County may call 228-865-1735 to inquire about the intake process.

.....

Name: Gulf Coast Mental Health Center-Pearl River County

Office Phone: (601) 798 - 7001

Address: 211 Highway 11 South
- Picayune, MS 39466

Website: <https://gcmhc.com>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers outpatient, medication clinic, and

case management services.

.....

Name: Gulf Coast Mental Health Center-Stone County

Office Phone: (601) 928 - 2357

Alternate Phone: (800) 681 - 0798, 24/7 crisis hotline

Address: 200 Coastal Paper Avenue

- Wiggins, MS 39577

Website: <http://www.gcmhc.com>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers outpatient, medication clinic, and case management services. 1st time appointments speak with Admissions Secretary.

.....

Name: Gulfport Behavioral Health System

Office Phone: (888) 420 - 5144

Address: 11150 Highway 49 North

- Gulfport, MS 39503-4110

Website: <https://gulfportbehavioral.com/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers mental and behavioral health services to adults (18 and older), adolescents (12 to 17), pre-adolescents (8 to 11), and is the only provider to children (ages 4 to 7) in the six southern counties in Mississippi. Provides no-cost, confidential assessments.

.....

Name: Mental Health Association of South MS

- **Opal Smith Drop-In Center**

Office Phone: (228) 864 - 6274

Address: 4803 Harrison Circle

- Gulfport, MS 39507

Website: <http://msmentalhealth.org/>

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

- Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM - Drop-In Center

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Drop-In Center for adults living with mental illness. Homeless outreach services, supportive housing, wellness programs and education, certified peer support specialists & Mental Health First Aid classes.

.....

Name: **Mobile Crisis Response Teams**
- **Gulf Coast Mental Health Center**
Office Phone: (228) 863 - 1132 (Harrison County)
Alternate Phone: (228) 928 - 2357 (Stone County)
TTY Phone: (228) 467 - 1881 (Hancock County)
Website: <https://gcmhc.com/>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Free or Reduced Cost Services: After hours for all counties call: 800 - 681 - 0798.

.....

Name: **National Alliance On Mental Illness**
- **NAMI**
Office Phone: (601) 899 - 9058
Alternate Phone: (877) 210 - 8513, Crisis Hotline
TTY Phone: (800) 357 - 0388
Address: 2618 Southerland Street
- Jackson, MS 39216
Website: www.namains.org
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Free support groups for family and peers.

.....

National Resources

Name: **American Council of the Blind**
Office Phone: (800) 424 - 8666
Website: <https://www.acb.org>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Increases independence, security, equality and quality of life for all blind and visually impaired people.

.....

Name: **Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT)**

- **Council for Exceptional Children**

Office Phone: (412) 874 - 3111

- Pittsburgh, PA 15215

Website: <https://dcdt.org/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Established for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to career development and transition services for individuals with all exceptionalities across the life span.

.....

Name: Epilepsy Foundation

Office Phone: (800) 332 - 1000

Website: <https://www.epilepsy.com>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provide community services, public education, access to care campaign, and new therapies funding.

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Name: National Center for Learning Disabilities

Office Phone: (301) 966 - 2234

Website: <https://www.nclld.org>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides advocacy, scholarships, awards, and resources.

.....

Name: National Down Syndrome Society

Office Phone: (800) 221 - 4602

Website: <https://www.ndss.org>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Enhances quality of life for people with Down Syndrome.

.....

Name: National Health Information Center

Office Phone: (301) 565 - 4167

Website: <https://health.gov/nhic>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Health information referral service that connects health professionals with consumers who have health questions.

.....

Name: National Library Service for the Blind and Print Dis-

abled Library of Congress

Office Phone: (888) 657 - 7323

Website: <https://www.loc.gov/nls/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers free braille and talking book library services.

.....

Name: National Multiple Sclerosis

Office Phone: (800) 344 - 4867

Website: <https://nationalmssociety.org>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides resources to people who have been affected by MS.

.....

Name: Vulnerable Adult Abuse Hotline

Office Phone: (844) 437 - 6282

.....

Support Groups

Name: Alcoholics Anonymous (South MS Intergroup)

Office Phone: (228) 575 - 9225

Address: 19021 Commission Road
- Long Beach, MS 39560

Website: www.aagulfcoast.org

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides 24 hour crisis line for the southern six counties.

.....

Name: Gamblers Anonymous

Office Phone: (855) 222 - 5542

Website: <http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their

common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem.

.....

Name: Narcotics Anonymous

Office Phone: (844) 962 - 4673

Website: www.mgcana.org

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Non-profit fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. No dues or fees.

.....

Name: Overeaters Anonymous

Office Phone: (505) 891 - 2664

Website: www.oa.org

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offer 12-step program to anyone with any type of eating problem. No dues or fees. Online and telephone meetings available on website.

.....

Transportation

Name: Coast Transit Authority

Office Phone: (228) 896 - 8080 or (866) 206 - 8843

Alternate Phone: (228) 896 - 4010 To schedule pickup in Harrison, Jackson, Hancock Counties

Address: 333 DeBuys Rd.

- Gulfport, MS 39507

Website: <http://coasttransit.com/>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers transportation for individuals with disabilities for small fee. If needed, attendant adult rides free. Approved application required.

.....

Name: MDOT-Connect Mississippi

Office Phone: (601) 682 - 0701
Website: <https://mdot.ms.gov/connectms/>
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Connecting Mississippi through public transit.

Veteran / Military Services

Name: **Air Force Aid Society**
Office Phone: (228) 376 - 8728
Website: http://www.afas.org/location/state_mississippi.cfm
Hours of Operation: Monday - Thursday 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
- Friday 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Eligibility Requirements: Active duty, retired Air Force, Air National Guard, Reservists on active duty for more than 30 days, military spouses and children with member's approval.
Documents Required: A letter from 1st sgt., documentation of need and current leave and earning statement.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides financial assistance, interest-free loans and grants. Provides assistance with rent, food, utilities, emergency travel, and car repair.

.....

Name: **Biloxi VA Medical Center**
Office Phone: (800) 827 - 1000
Alternate Phone: (228) 523 - 5000
Address: 400 Veterans Ave.
- Biloxi, MS 39531
Website: <http://www.biloxi.va.gov/>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Eligibility Requirements: Veteran, referred by veteran's assistance.
Documents Required: Insurance card and/or Medicare.
Free or Reduced Cost Services: Provides hospitalization for general medical, surgical, illness, and out-patient treatment.

.....

Name: **Military OneSource**

Office Phone: (800) 342 - 9647

Website: www.militaryonesource.mil

Hours of Operation: 24/7

Eligibility Requirements: Active duty military, active national guard or reservists, wounded warriors, or separated from the military within the last six months.

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Offers information and referral help with locating needs for military families or families separating from the military. Includes information on child care, personal finances, emotional support during deployments, relocation information, and resources needed for special circumstances.

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Name: Welcome Home Resource Guide

- Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System

Website: <https://www.biloxi.va.gov/services/Welcomehome/Welcome-HomeResourcesGuide.pdf>

Free or Reduced Cost Services: Resource guide for Veterans and their families to assist with transition to life in community.

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• Appreciation to the Organizations
and Individuals who
Supported this Publication •

**Goodwill
South
Mississippi**

**David and
Mercedes
Huval**

**Chevron
Pascagoula
Refinery**

Leslie Owen

**MS Aviation
Heritage
Museum**

**Michael and
Cecilia
Neustrom**

**Justin
Chance**

**Matt and
Courtney Burke**

**Christene F.
Brice**

Jane Hardy

**Family First
Braille**

Diaz Insurance

**Coast Electric
Power Association**

Sarah Landry

**Monte and
Audie Dodson**

**Home
Instead**

**Richard and
Melissa Brown**

**Lindsay Hieser
McNally**

**Singing River
Services**

**Mental Health
of South MS**

**The Meeting Place
Business Incubator**

Disability Connection



TRACK was developed by Disability Connection through a grant from the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities (MSCDD). For more information you are welcome to call Disability Connection. An electronic, interactive, version of this TRACK Guide is available to access or for download at www.DisabilityConnection.org

Contact Disability Connection to receive e-newsletters about upcoming programs and events such as Art Ability Fair, Arbor Day Disability Run/Walk/Roll, Disability Connection Playground Party, and more.

Visit www.DisabilityConnection.org to view MS Coast Community Resource Guides, the Community Calendar, Employment Connection, Community Assist, and MS Coast Heritage Information Center.

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