

Career Success Guide

This resource guide is designed to assist individuals with disability in South Mississippi with eliminating barriers to employment.

- The Career Success Guide is a tool to assist in exploring options, making important decisions, and designing an individualized, step-by-step, organized plan for employment.
- The Career Success Guide equips, enables, and empowers an individual to achieve their maximum potential for self-advocacy and inclusion into their community.

High Expectations for Employment

The Career Success Guide is a tool aimed at improving employment outcomes for individual with developmental disabilities (DD). We hope to build high expectations for employment and share tips for success.

This guide will help you to think about what questions to ask, things you can do, and identify resources to access, that assist you in finding a job, career, or volunteer position of your choice.

There are strategies and skills that can be an advantage in obtaining and retaining employment. These skills can assist an individual to have the job and/or career they choose based on their likes, dislikes, gifts, talents and abilities. Also, college or other continuing education opportunities might be part of the picture.

The family, extended family, and community partners play an important role in support. Employers, support coordinators, case managers, teachers, counselors, therapists and others can use this guide to help individuals with DD think about and plan for the future, supporting a trajectory toward real jobs and community engagement.

Potential employers and community members can use this tool to better understand the goals and needs of individuals seeking employment. It can also be used for professional development for those who support individuals and families.

This guide provides strategies to guide a person's journey as they move closer to their desired result. It is not intended to be all inclusive, but is a starting place to individualize the planning process to meet needs.





The Career Success Guide 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

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The information in this guide is not legal advice. Every individual’s situation is unique, and the law is always evolving. To see if laws cited here are still current at the time that you are reading this guide, you may check with an advocacy organization.



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Chapter I Introduction

Where To Start

People with disabilities have a wide range of abilities, interests, and goals, just like anyone else. They want to work for the same reasons as anyone else: to earn a living, gain independence, contribute to society, develop new skills, and experience a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Unfortunately, many people with disabilities face significant barriers to employment, due to discrimination, inaccessible workplaces, lack of accommodations, and employers lack of knowledge. However, with the right support and resources, people with disabilities can be successful in a wide range of jobs and careers.

Moreover, working is an important part of being integrated into society, feeling valued, and contributing to one's community. It can also provide opportunities for social interaction, personal growth, and a sense of accomplishment.

Overall, people with disabilities want to work because they have skills, talents, and aspirations like everyone else, and they want to have the same opportunities to succeed in their chosen careers.

Competitive, integrated employment is an important goal for people with disabilities. This includes their desire to be paid a

wage comparable to what other employees without a disability are receiving for the same type of job. Work should be performed at a location where the employee with a disability interacts with other employees without disabilities in comparable positions and also provides opportunities for advancement the same as other employees who do not have disabilities and work in similar positions.

Why Do We Work

The common answer for why a person wants to work is to make money to support themselves financially and to purchase the things they want. But work is also an opportunity to build friendships, learn new things, and achieve a sense of accomplishment, competence, and pride! Working gives people something to do with their time, adds structure to their day, builds social networks, and helps people attain a sense of purpose. Work is an important part of adult identity, and this is as true for individuals with disabilities as it is for anyone. Having the right job can increase our satisfaction, happiness, and quality of life.

People with disabilities want to work, and are able to work if given the support, preparation, and training they need to be successful. Beginning as early as childhood, families, schools, friends, community members, support coordinators, and other supporters can encourage the child to develop a healthy vision for their future that includes what kind of job they would like to have. All children dream about what they want to be when they grow up, and children who happen to have a disability or special healthcare need are no different.

As children prepare to leave high school, they begin to focus on options for the transition to their new future: such as college, continuing education, jobs, or careers. Sometimes people with disabilities encounter barriers to employment. Some common barriers include not knowing what kind of job they want to do, not having the skills needed for a particular job, not having work experience, concern about losing benefits, and additional issues such as transportation and needed accommodations.

We shouldn't discourage anyone who is entering this transition time of their lives. We should encourage them in the exploration of their dream vocation and assist them in ways to move toward achieving it. The choice they make does not have to be for a lifetime, because as adults, it is not uncommon to change our course of study, change a job, or even a career.

Assessing Skills & Interests, & Career Exploration

When you look for a career path that you hope is both challenging and satisfying, consider your personality, your hobbies, your likes and dislikes, your skills, and your experience. Consider the things you do well, and how these skills could be useful in a career or work-setting. Choice of employment is based on factors such as the individual's Unique Strengths, Interests, Resources, Experiences, Abilities, Priorities, Concerns, and Informed Choices.

Think of anything that you do better than average. What do you most enjoy? Are you patient? Tolerant? Do you have good listening skills? Are you a good reader? Good with math and counting? Do you like to interact with groups of people, or do you prefer activities with just a few people? Do you like to clean? Wash the car? Cook? Would you like to be involved in child-care? Pet-care? Can you operate any machinery? Can you use a computer? If you have skills that you feel especially good about, it is okay to present your best skills to the employer on your resume.

Employment Options

When looking for employment, consider the kind of job you want to do or would have fun doing, as well as the level of support you will need to secure and maintain a job. There are basic levels of employment support for individuals with developmental disabilities.

- **Competitive Employment** is a full-time or part-time job paid at market wages with no long-term support. The employer hires the individual based on their skill set and needs of the business.
- **Supported Employment** provides assistance to people with disabilities in earning and retaining competitive jobs in integrated work environments. Supported Employment relies on providers who are licensed by the Department of Mental Health. A provider of Supported Employment services pairs an individual with a Job Coach, whose initial task is to negotiate with an employer regarding the terms of employment as well as the accommodations that will be provided for the employee. The Job Coach then transitions to become a hands-on support system, providing on-the-job training for the individual while they learn to navigate their specific job duties and build their role in their workplace. This type of position also meets the employer's business needs and can still include "**Customized Employment,**" where a job is created to meet the unique skillset of the individual. Supported Employment requires

either a Home & Community Based Waiver or, approval under the ID/DD Community Support Program (1915i). For both programs the individual must meet eligibility requirements. If the individual is eligible, they are placed on a state-wide waiting list. To qualify for 1915i, you must be diagnosed IDD, over age 18, completed high school education, and have full Medicaid benefits. The evaluation site for Home and Community Based Waiver and 1915i is South Mississippi Regional Center.

- **Self-Employment** is the choice for individuals who do not prefer traditional employment but would like to do a job for themselves that provides an income.
- **Volunteer Employment** is a job that someone does without pay, usually to benefit the community. Volunteer jobs can lead to paid employment by providing work experience, or they can be an end to themselves, providing the volunteer with community socialization, and purpose.

Chapter 2

Education Opportunities

In today's job market, more and more employers are requiring that their employees have a high school diploma or some college education. There are organizations who can help you obtain the academic support you need to achieve your career goals.

Hope Adult Learning

Hope Adult Learning offers adult reading classes and English Language Learning classes to assist adult students to reach their personal reading goals by providing tutors in their area.

Literacy Council of Jackson County

Literacy Council of Jackson County offers adult reading classes and English Second Language classes to assist adult students to reach their personal reading goals by providing tutors in their area.

Mississippi Library Commission

Mississippi Library Commission has public libraries in each region throughout Mississippi that offer a variety of pre-employment classes to assist patrons such as computer classes, resume and job

workshops, technology classes, building your own website, and more. Their website offers quick links to assist you in finding the library in your community.

Gulfport Job Corps

Gulfport Job Corps can assist students in earning a high school diploma or the equivalent through classroom and online programs. In several areas, including English Language Learning, reading, writing, science, and math, they have tutoring options. Through partnerships with local community colleges, you can earn college credit while in the program. The center will arrange transportation and make sure you have what you need for your classes. Most students live in a dorm while attending school.

KOPC Workforce Development

KOPC Workforce Development provides a no-cost, 10-week, workforce training program, for ages 18-50, in basic general construction and basic electrical wiring. There is classroom and field training with licensed contractors. It includes resume writing and financial literacy training.

High School GED or HiSET Programs

If you are 18 or older, and do not have a high school diploma, you can earn a high school equivalency, called a GED or HiSet, which is a recognized alternative to a high school diploma. Having a High School Equivalency means a person is 20% more likely to get a job and keep it. It also means earning 14% more income. Many jobs and training programs require that you have one or the other.

MS Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC)

MGCCC offers Adult Education (AE) classes for those who do not have a high school diploma. Classes are located at the Jackson County Campus, the Harrison County Campus, the Perkinston Campus, the George County Center, and the West Harrison County Center. The College's AE program provides individuals the opportunity to take classes that prepare them for a high school equivalency test (GED or

HiSET) and to improve their reading, writing, language and/or math skills. Students may also earn a National Career Ready Certificate, Smart Start Certificate/Credential and explore Career Technical education, and Workforce training options.

HiSET (High School Equivalency Program)

HiSET provides the opportunity to earn a state-issued high school equivalency credential, allowing you to advance your career, join the military, begin a training program, or continue your education. Affordability, accessibility and flexibility have made HiSET the nation's fastest-growing high school equivalency test.

Pascagoula Adult Learning Center

Pascagoula Adult Learning Center can help you work toward a high school equivalency diploma and get you ready for a job where you will earn a life-sustaining wage. They offer free academic/HSE classes in reading, writing, math, high school equivalency preparation, academic refreshment for college entrance, refresher for Employment, refresher for Employment Advancement, Employability Skills Training, ACT Work Keys/HiSET Testing, and Workforce Credentials. Adult Learning Center can help you get job skills with Smart Start and ACT Work Keys computer instruction.

College Degree Programs

The Gulf Coast has a variety of college options to suite each individual. You can obtain disability accommodations including a range of services, equipment, and modifications designed to allow you to do your best. Accommodations vary according to the disability. Ask to speak to the office that provides Student Support Services that specifically assist individuals with disabilities.

Coast colleges have on-line supports to help students with disabilities. For the contact information for these offices, refer to the Resource Directory at the back of this Guide.

- **MS Gulf Coast Community College:** www.mgccc.edu
- **University of Southern Mississippi:** www.usm.edu
- **William Carey University:** www.wmcarey.edu

Career & Technical Education

High school seniors who want to enter the workforce as soon as possible after they graduate frequently choose a technical certification or earn an occupational license in a skilled trade like cosmetology, massage therapy or plumbing. Completing a postsecondary vocational program doesn't prevent someone from eventually obtaining a bachelor's degree.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast has a variety of trade school programs. Looking for a trade school is no different than shopping for any other important purchase. These programs have a cost. Some trade schools have been known to mislead students about their chances of getting a job, the qualifications of instructors, and outdated training equipment, so do the research.

You can find good trade programs that are hosted by local schools and colleges. Contact these schools for information on their trade programs.

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC)

MGCCC has 10 campuses including Gulfport, Perkinston, and Gautier. MGCCC offers a variety of academic and career programs. Whether your goal is to enter the workforce or continue your education at a University, MGCCC offers hundreds of career-technical and academic programs designed to meet the educational needs of students who are seeking preparation for immediate employment or advancement within career fields.

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Out-of-School Youth Program

MGCCC Out-of-School Youth Program, part of the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act, is designed to help high school graduates, college graduates, and youth who may need a High School Diploma gain Financial Literacy Skills, Job Searching Skills, Interviewing Strategy Skills, Career Guidance, Life Skills, and Paid Work Experience. Supportive services are available and paid incentives are awarded for successful completion of program requirements.

Pearl River Community College

Pearl River Community College has campuses in Poplarville, Hattiesburg, and Waveland. They have Technical Programs designed to prepare students for technical positions in business and industry, and Career Programs designed to prepare students for entry-level employment in the workforce.

Harrison County Career & Technical Education Center

Harrison County Career & Technical Education Center enrollment is open to students from Harrison Central, West Harrison, and D'Iberville High Schools. Students apply for a 2-year program during the 9th or 10th grade. Applications are accepted during the year prior to enrollment.

Hancock Career Technical Center

Hancock Career Technical Center offers classes in Architecture and Drafting, Automotive Service Technician, Construction and Carpentry, Precision Machining, Culinary Arts, Early Childhood Education, Health Sciences, Educator Preparation, Polymer Science, Law and Public Safety, Welding, Engineering, Work Based Learning, Exploring Computer Science, and Smart Start Pathways.

Jackson County Technology Center

Jackson County Technology Center offers classes in Automotive, Construction, Information Technology, Instrumentation and Controls, Maritime, Medical, Teacher Academy, Welding, and Work-Based Learning.

Pearl River Central High School Program

Pearl River Central High School Program offers two-year Career and Technical programs in a variety of occupational fields. These programs are designed to educate students on the core elements of various trades providing the foundation and essential skills for them to join the workforce.

Stone County Career and Technical Department

Stone County Career and Technical prepares students for workforce by offering technical programs.

George County Career and Technical Center

George County Career and Technical Center prepares students for workforce by offering technical programs, exposes students to different career fields, motivates them to think about their personal college and career path, and integrates the development of 21st century pre-professional skills.

Chapter 3

Employment Assistance Programs

Several organizations provide useful information and guidance for the applicant as well as Human Resource staff who will help employees with disabilities in maintaining employment.

Career Counselors

If you want help identifying the type of career that you want to pursue, or you need assistance with employment, you might start by talking to a Career Counselor. You can find a Career Counselor at coast colleges: MS Gulf Coast Community College, The University of Southern Mississippi, or William Carey College.

Mississippi Department Of Mental Health Programs

The Home & Community-Based ID/DD Waiver

The Home & Community-Based Waiver provides individualized supports and services to assist people in living successfully at home and in the community and are an alternative to care in institutional

settings. If a person meets the requirements for enrollment in the ID/DD Waiver, his/her Support Coordinator from South Mississippi Regional Center 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. Services through the ID/DD Waiver program include Community Respite, Day Services-Adult, Prevocational Services, Supported Employment, Job Discovery, Supervised Living, Shared Supported Living, Supported Living, Host Homes, Home and Community Supports, In-Home Respite, In-Home Nursing Respite, Behavior Support, Crisis Intervention, Crisis Support, Transition Assistance, and Therapy Services.

- **Job Discovery** is the foundation of customized employment. It results in the development of a plan for achieving integrated employment and/or business plan development for self-employment. It is designed to assist with volunteerism, self-determination and self-advocacy, identifying wants and needs for supports, job exploration, job shadowing, informational interviewing and employment preparation. Job Discovery is time-limited. Job Discovery is a more intensive service than Supported Employment and is typically provided to people who have not been able to maintain or find jobs for extended periods of time.
- **Supported Employment** offers an opportunity to work in a competitive setting, with all of the benefits of employment, including competitive wages. The assistance provided is individualized and long-term while the employee is learning the social and work skills necessary for success. If you qualify for the Home & Community Based Waiver or the 1915i, you may choose Supported Employment services. South Mississippi Regional Center will provide you a list of licensed agencies that provide this service.

The IDD Community Support Program (1915i)

The 1915i is a Mississippi Medicaid funded program through the Mississippi Department of Mental Health. It is available to adults (18 years and older) with an intellectual/developmental disability who have completed their formal education. Specific needs-based criteria must be met. Each person enrolled is provided a Targeted Case Manager who assists with accessing services and coordinates and monitors individualized, person-centered service provision. Services through the IDD CSP include Day Services-Adult, Prevocational Services, Supported Employment, and Supported Living.

Mississippi Department Of Rehabilitation Programs

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

VR is a state agency funded by the U.S. Department of Education that provides services to all disability groups.

VR offers customized and individualized training and supports tailored to a person's specific needs and job goal. They provide vocational and rehabilitative services to individuals with disabilities to help them prepare for, secure, regain or retain employment. VR Specialist will further explore work interests, work values, work preferences, working condition preferences, training, job skills, work history, and support network. A Benefits Orientation will be provided so that the person may make an appropriate job goal and a plan to reach that goal. Together, the person can make a choice about working, after knowing how federal, state, and local benefits may be affected. VR assists students with a range of services from interviewing skills to appropriate workplace dress attire. VR teaches this curriculum as agreed upon by school personnel and provides technical assistance as needed.

VR helps people prepare for, find, and keep jobs and to help businesses recruit, train, and retain employees with disabilities. The services offered vary and depend upon the person's employment needs and interests.

Services may include:

- Assessment of vocational needs to determine interests, skills, and needed services.
- Development of an Individualized Plan for Employment that outlines goals and services needed.
- Coordination of services to reach the employment goal.
- Post-employment services to help the person keep the job once employed.

To qualify for Vocational Rehabilitation, a person must have the following:

- **Impairment:** This is a diagnosed impairment, also known as a disability. This could be some type of physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability.
- **Impediment to Employment:** Evidence shows that the impairment has caused problems in past employment, current employment, or would cause some problems preparing for and getting employment in the future.
- **Need for Services:** Evidence shows that VR services would help the person obtain and keep successful employment.

Transition Service Programs

Transition Services work with eligible secondary school students with disabilities to enable them to transition from school to subsequent work environments. VR works cooperatively with the Mississippi Department of Education and local school districts in planning and implementing a variety of programs designed to provide training and assistance for students with disabilities to support them in making the difficult transition from school to work.

- **The Transition and Youth Career Services Program** assists qualified individuals with disabilities from 14-24 years of age to transition out of school. VR Transition and Youth Counselors work together with classroom teachers to implement pre-employment transition services for eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities. Transition and Youth Career Services may consist of Assessment, Consultation, Individualized Plan for Employment, Assistive Technology, Job Search Skills, Technical Assistance, On-the-Job Training, Job Readiness, Supported Employment, Post-Secondary Education, Job Placement, Internship, and Apprenticeship.
- **Pre-employment Transition Services** may include Job Exploration Counseling, Workplace Readiness Training, Work-Based Learning Experiences, Counseling on Comprehensive Transition or PSED Enrollment, and Instruction in Self-Advocacy.
- **Career Exploration and Employability Skills Program** has a VR Transition Counselor and a classroom teacher who work together to implement a curriculum for students with disabilities. This program

assists students with a range of services from interviewing skills to appropriate workplace dress attire.

- **Job Readiness Training** is provided at a community rehabilitation program (CRP). The focus of this program is to provide students with disabilities an opportunity to do actual work in a structured environment. Students receive pay, training, vocational assessment and work evaluation.
- **Vocational Technical Training** can be an option for some students with disabilities who may choose to participate in programs such as welding and auto body repair through the school system. These students may also receive vocational assessment and evaluation through VR.
- **On the Job Training (OJT)** is an option for students near the end of their last year in school. This program differs from Job Readiness Training in that the student enters into an employee/employer relationship and the employer provides the training needed for successful job performance. The employer and VR agree on a fee that VR will pay the employer for the training. The employer receives technical assistance from a VR counselor and the employee receives vocational assessment, vocational counseling, and guidance.

The appropriate services for a student will be made through a decision by the student, through informed choice, and in coordination with the VR counselor and the school system. Each transition case is individualized.

MDRS Deaf Services Program

The Deaf Services Program provides specially trained counselors in deaf culture, audio metrics, and manual communications skills. Types of services include communication devices and interpreting services. Adequate communication skills are a prerequisite to meaningful counseling and guidance for people who are Deaf and use manual communication.

The Office on Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)

ODHH focuses on the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing and enhances services to this population. In addition, ODHH is charged with improving interpreter services in Mississippi by increasing the certification level of interpreters and maintaining a list of qualified interpreters.

The Deafblind Program

The Deafblind Program focuses on providing assistance to individuals in which a hearing and vision loss are present at the same time. Deafblindness is a unique disability and requires services to be specialized. Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD) and Rehabilitation Counselors for the Blind (RCB) work together with Supported Employment Counselors, Transition Counselors, and Independent Living Counselors, Employment Coordinators, and a Deafblind Specialist to provide services.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVRB)

OVRB is administered through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (VRB). They specialize in working with blind and low vision impaired individuals to optimize their opportunities for inclusion into the workforce, community, and home. OVRB has rehabilitation counselors who specialize in providing services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Counselors provide/coordinate services leading to employment which include: assessment, personal adjustment, vocational training, counseling, physical restoration, low vision aids, job placement, and follow-up. Services provided for blind or visually impaired individuals include but are not limited to: Orientation and mobility, Meal planning and preparation, Computer instruction, Communications, Recreation and physical conditioning, Independent Living Services for persons who are blind, and Vocational Rehabilitation counseling.

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

BEP provides support for self-employment opportunities in the food service industry for Mississippians who are legally blind. These BEP entrepreneurs operate a variety of businesses including vending machine routes, snack bars and cafeterias on military bases. Prospective BEP vendors receive training in several different subject areas including: Introduction to the Business Enterprise Program, personal care, business math, business management and record keeping, customer relations and salesmanship, inventory control, display (marketing), housekeeping skills, ServSafe, supervisory relations, and menu planning. The client is given the opportunity to demonstrate skill mastery through tests at the end of each training module.

After successfully completing the classroom training, clients are

placed with blind vendors in established BEP facilities to receive on-the-job training.

The Independent Living Services for the Blind Program

Independent Living Services provide services that enable blind or visually impaired individuals to meet their independent living goals.

AbilityWorks

AbilityWorks is a community rehabilitation program that provides vocational assessment, job training, and actual work experience for individuals with disabilities.

There is no better way to gain confidence as an employee than gaining actual work experience. At AbilityWorks, you will not only gain experience, but you will receive the support, counseling, instruction, and motivation you need to make it in the workplace. In order to participate in the AbilityWorks program you must be sixteen years of age or older and a Vocational Rehabilitation client or a referral from another source.

The staff at AbilityWorks will work with you to improve your skills in areas such as job-seeking, setting job goals, work experience, and work habits. During your time at AbilityWorks, you will perform work which is contracted by local businesses and industries.

Project SEARCH Mississippi

Project SEARCH Mississippi is a joint partnership between MDRS, a business, and a school district.

The Project SEARCH Program is a unique, business-led, nine-month employment preparation program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Students with disabilities experience total workplace immersion, classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through three different worksite rotations. The goal for each participant is competitive employment. To reach that goal, the program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent-living skills.

Additional Government and Nonprofit Employment Programs

MS Client Assistance Program (MSCAP)

MSCAP provides advocacy services for applicants of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind, and the Independent Living programs. They can assist you in understanding the services, how your eligibility is determined, resolve communication problems with the agency, investigate complaints, and assist with appeals when appropriate.

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

JAN is a free service that provides job accommodation information to employees requesting and negotiating reasonable accommodations in the workplace under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Living Independence for Everyone of Mississippi, Inc. (LIFE of MS)

LIFE provides a transitional service for students getting out of high school and wanting to enter the workforce or go to college. A HOT (Healthy Opportunity Transitioning) Specialist will be assigned to guide you through this process.

Project START

Project START (Success through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology) provides access to and the acquisition of Assistive Technology to Mississippians of all ages and all disabilities. Through the Device Loan, Device Reutilization and Computer Refurbishment Program, Project START increases access to appropriate assistive technology devices. They provide information on tools and services that can help a person with a disability perform activities that might otherwise be difficult, whether at home or in the workplace.

Mississippi State University (MSU)

MSU specializes in assisting people who are blind or have low vision and are trying to find and maintain employment. They provide guidance on how service providers can help when meeting with potential employers and insight into what employers think about hiring people with blindness or low vision. They also assist those with traumatic brain injuries and those who are SSDI recipients. Their website has a significant amount of information and resources for those who are blind or have low vision.

MSU provides a list of online resources for job seekers and an advice document that provides information and recommendations about disclosing vision impairment to employers.

MSU has assistive technology for the workplace such as computer screen reading software, an optical character recognition system, video magnifiers, and a money identifier.

MSU provides resources and information for making your documents more accessible, and documents that provide steps to accessing a QR code for iPhone and Android.

Career Advantage for VIPs is an MSU step-by-step online program with eight instructional modules that cover the processes of self-assessment, career exploration, job searching, resume development, job accommodations, decision making, the job interview process, talking to employers about vision loss, and more.

Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center for the Blind

The Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center offers traditional instruction that helps an individual manage with the sight they have, including use of magnifiers, ranging from hand-held devices to computer image magnification software and closed-circuit television systems for printed image enlargement. The Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center is a comprehensive personal adjustment center for adults who are blind, visually impaired or deaf-blind. The Center is located in Jackson on the campus of the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Clients participate in additional activities in the Achieving Milestones Class focusing on adjustment to vision loss, confidence building, resume writing, interviewing and utilizing resources in the community. Classes to support employment include GED Preparation, Vocational Evaluation, and Advanced Communication, Training in Braille, adaptive equipment,

handwriting, keyboarding, and use of the personal computer utilizing both magnification and screen readers.

Mississippi Partners for Informed Choice (M-PIC)

M-PIC program provides Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. The purpose of M-PIC/WIPA is to help beneficiaries receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits to understand how work may affect their benefits. This program employs specially trained Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) and each serves a specific region of the state.

Disability Rights MS

Disability Rights is Mississippi's Protection and Advocacy System. They support the rights of an employee with disabilities in the workplace. They have offices in Jackson and Gulfport and serve in a state-wide capacity.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

SCSEP is an income generating Training Program for seniors, 55 years of age and older, who want to enhance and update their job skills while earning a wage. SCSEP places you with organizations and pays your wages as you perform regular part-time training in your area.

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps works with various community organizations to support their goals, meet their needs, and create lasting change. Every year, AmeriCorps enrolls more than 200,000 individuals to serve organizations making a difference in communities across America in six categories: Disaster, Education, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Veteran and Military Families. AmeriCorps has the opportunity for an individual to channel their passion into service, kickstart a career, or make an impact in their community.

AmeriCorps Seniors

AmeriCorps Seniors program matches seniors to service opportunities through non-profit, faith-based, and community organizations. Seniors, age 55 and older, can bring their unique skillsets and experiences to help American people and communities thrive. There are several programs to fit a variety of interests such as mentoring students, a Foster Grandparent program, Senior Companions, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and many more.

Chapter 4

Job Skills Training Programs

Company training programs are learning opportunities offered to employees to introduce them to the industry and help enhance their skill set. Most of these entry-level programs are open to hire a person with disabilities as long as they can do the vital components of the job.

On-the-Job Training Programs are primarily offered after a person is hired so you will probably be paid while training. The employer identifies the person being interviewed as someone whose skills and desires would be a good fit for their business. Since they are investing time and money for training, you should not accept this position unless you feel very certain you want to work for this company for a long time. Be sure to read the contract as to any minimum time you are expected to work in order for the company to invest in your training.

Women in Construction-Moore Community House

The Women in Construction pre-apprenticeship job training program is designed to prepare women for careers in non-traditional career pathways that meet the needs of families, as well as the demands of the advanced manufacturing industry and skilled craft trades. This program creates an avenue for women to pursue careers that promote self-sufficiency, as well as to improve the outreach, training, placement, and retention of women in apprenticeship and nontraditional occupations.

Goodwill's Career Connections Center

The Career Connections Center serves as a “one-stop” shop for career development and training. Although the services are for the general public, they strive to serve disadvantaged populations such as: Veterans of War, Justice-involved citizens, the homeless, minority populations, residents with low-to-moderate income, and other groups or individuals who have barriers to employment. Services include personal and career assessment, job exploration, job application, business writing, resume design, interview coaching, and dress-for-success. In addition, the Career Connections Center offers digital training so that job-seekers may understand the significance of computer and technology expertise in today's workplace. This training is executed through a platform titled: NorthStar. This platform allows users to build skills in key areas such as: Internet basics, Windows, Mac, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Docs, social media training and others. Users are given the opportunity to earn certificates in over 18 areas.

Their newest service is called “Mission-in-Motion” in which the success/career coach takes the above services to other non-profit agencies, businesses/industries, and social agencies. One part of “Mission-in-Motion” is an exciting new program called TransfrVR which will permit job-seekers to use virtual reality simulators to actually participate in and experience customized career paths. Some of these jobs include robotics, carpentry, first responders, automotive service technician, crane operation, plumbing, welding, and food and beverage work.

Gulfport Job Corps

Gulfport Job Corps educates and trains highly-motivated young people ages 16-24 for successful careers in the nation's fastest-growing industries. Gulfport Job Corps Center provides hands-on training for eligible young people to provide them the skills to become employable and independent and place them in meaningful jobs or further education.

Employment options include Automotive and Machine repair, Construction, Finance and Business, Health Care, Homeland Security, Hospitality, Information Technology, Manufacturing, Renewable Resources, and Transportation. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

University of Southern Mississippi -Institute for Disability Studies (IDS)

IDS has several opportunities to prepare you for employment in both virtual and in-class sessions through campuses in Gulfport and Hattiesburg.

- **USM-IDS Summer Enrichment Academy** consists of a 2-week pre-employment training portion followed by a 90-hour paid internship. It provides in-person options to youth and young adults wanting to increase their employability skills.
- **ToTAL Ambassadors** is a self-advocacy program for student's 10th grade through college that includes activities to strengthen self-advocacy and leadership skills. Classes include Adulting Training (virtual training on advocacy and real-world living skills), Getting College Ready Training, Job Club, Self-awareness Training, Socialization Groups, Bridge Training (pre-employment training), Getting Career Ready, Getting Ready to Work, and Self-Advocacy Ambassadors.
- **R.I.S.E. To the Top Program**, a collaboration with the School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Professional Development, includes Inclusive Classes, Person-Centered Planning, Independent Living Skills Training, Pre-Employment Training, Peer Mentoring Services, Service-Learning Experiences, Employment Internships, and Participation in Student Activities.
- **Get Employment Ready** is an individualized training series that helps students gain workplace readiness skills. This training is virtual and targets 9th-12th graders or college students with disabilities. Students learn how to get ready for employment and will create an e-portfolio including a mini person-centered plan, resume, elevator speech, career interest inventory, personal disability review, disclosure statement, and more.
- **Career Informational Interview** virtual events will showcase local businesses. Students will have the opportunity for career exploration by asking business owners questions as they share about their job duties and experiences.
- **Getting Ready for College** is a college preparation training series that helps students better navigate their transition from high school to college. Students create an e-portfolio.

Climb CDC Workforce Training Institute

The Workforce Training Institute focuses on workplace-based learning, life skills development, conservation service work, appreciation of diversity, civic responsibility, and career development. The training is facilitated through lecture and lab training.

- **Youth Build** is a community-based alternative education program that provides job training and educational opportunities for at-risk youth ages 16-24. Youth learn construction skills while constructing or rehabilitating affordable housing for low-income or homeless families in their own neighborhoods. Youth split their time between the job site and the classroom, where they earn their high school diploma or equivalency degree. YouthBuild includes significant support systems, such as mentoring, follow-up education, employment, personal counseling services, and participation in community service and civic engagement.
- **Climb CDC's Culinary and Hospitality Program** provides the opportunity to earn nationally recognized certifications in the Culinary and Hospitality fields. Possible certifications include ServSafe; Manage First; Customer Service Excellence Training (CSET); Starbucks Barista Certification; and Skills, Task and Results Training (START). Participants will interact with local chefs and industry leaders, receive internships with local restaurants, casinos, coffee shops, and cafes, and receive job placement.
- **Climb CDC's Construction Program** prepares participants for employment in construction related fields. Participants have the opportunity to obtain certifications from The National Center for Construction, Education, and Research (NCCER) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and First Aid. Participants receive on-the-job training and internships with construction trade companies.
- **Climb CDC-Conservation Corps (CCC)** is a conservation workforce that engages motivated young adults, ages 18 and up, to complete challenging and impactful environmental and service projects throughout Mississippi. Projects may include trail construction & maintenance, habitat improvement, hazardous fuels reduction, re-vegetation, invasive species treatment, and local environmental service projects. CCC provides an opportunity for members to learn about the local environment, environmental issues, and get introductions to recreation and resource management careers as well as professionals in the industry.

- **Family Enrichment Center** is a Drop-In Resource Center operated by Climb CDC. Resources and outreach are targeted toward homeless youth ages 16-24 who live, work, or attend school in Harrison County, however, no youth in need are turned away. Climb CDC provides individualized case management, connections to resources, improved access to services and supports, and assistance with basic needs. All services are offered free of charge. The Drop-In Center offers access to the Internet, charging of electronics, case management and resource referrals. The Center provides courses such as parenting, career readiness, life skills and leadership, anger management, and character development.
- **Climb CDC Academy** provides the opportunity to achieve academic goals such as obtaining a High School Diploma or Workforce Certification. They have dedicated classrooms for this purpose and skilled, invested instructors, ready to guide and teach each participant on their own skill and readiness level.

Chapter 5 Job Search Services for People with Disabilities

MS Department of Employment Services (MDES)- called WIN Job Center

WIN Job Center is the Career One Stop and American Job Center for the southern 6 coastal counties. They offer training, referrals, career counseling, job listings, help with unemployment taxes, skills assessments, resume building, interview tips, and similar employment-related services.

The centers help to find education and training, certifications, apprenticeships, benefits, and resources. Services available include phone, fax, copier, resume preparation, career planning & assessment, access to training information, and a Resource Center.

Assistance to people with disabilities includes all services available in the Job Center from the time the client enters until he/she is occupationally adjusted and involved in meaningful work.

MDES has auxiliary aids and services available upon request to those with disabilities. There are offices in the coastal area, or you can search for a job on-line by registering with MDES Online Services.

MDES – Access & Mississippi Works App

This app provides a convenient way to search and apply for jobs, register with MDES, build an employment profile, and see job match information.

The O*NET Resource Center

O*NET is the nation's primary source of occupational information. Valid data are essential to understanding the rapidly changing nature of work and how it impacts the workforce and U.S. economy. At O*Net On-line you can identify skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities, and interests associated with more than 900 occupations. This website could assist you in selecting a career that fits your skills and desires. You can browse by abilities.

Chapter 6

Preparing for the Interview

Prepare an Effective Resume

The best way to impress employers is with a great resume and cover letter. The internet has numerous websites that provide sample templates that can help with writing a resume. Just be certain it is a free resource.

- Steps for making a good resume.
- Pick a resume design and layout.
- List your contact information, education, work experience, and accomplishments.
- Showcase your skills.
- List other personal strengths that you want the employer to know.

First Impressions

There is nothing more important during an in-person interview than good grooming, appropriate clothing, and cleanliness. As an employee you will represent the company, and, in the interview, the

Employer will be deciding if your appearance and personality are a good fit.

- Show up on time.
- Dress the part- research the type of clothing that is worn by employees and dress to impress with cleanliness and neatness a top priority.
- Bring only the essentials.
- Be nice to the receptionist and any employees you meet.
- Put your phone away.
- Have everything you bring neat, organized, and accessible.
- Be friendly, relaxed, and confident.
- Be fully attentive as the interviewer speaks, give him/her your eye contact, and if possible, find a way to connect with the interviewer.
- Provide honest, simple answers to the questions you are asked.

Sample Questions an Employer Might Ask

Some employers require a Personality Test to identify your integrity and evaluate if you will be a good team member. It is a good idea to spend time thinking about how you would answer tough questions that an employer may ask. Sample questions could be: Do you have the same core values inside and outside of the workplace? How would you act if a manager or a coworker gave you a task that violates company policy? Have you lied to your manager in a previous role? If you see another employee stealing something, would you report this to your manager?

When and How to Disclose a Disability

While it is not necessary to tell your employer that you have a disability at any specific time, you should inform your employer and request a “reasonable accommodation” when you first realize that an accommodation is necessary in order for you to successfully fulfill the essential functions of your job. Waiting until after your employer has fired you is too late to request accommodation. In order to

prove that your employer engaged in discriminatory hiring or firing based on your disability, you must first be able to show that your employer had knowledge of your disability.

During an interview, it is possible that you will face the decision of whether or not to talk about, or “disclose,” information about your disability. Typically, the reason for disclosure is to ask for an accommodation in order to perform the job for which you are applying. An accommodation is modifying a job, the job site, or the way things are done in order to enable you, due to a disability, to have an equal opportunity for employment.

Reasons to Disclose Your Disability

- To obtain protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Required in order to request job accommodations.
- Relieve the stress you may feel about “hiding” a disability.
- Makes your employers better able to respond to sudden symptoms or hospitalization.
- Disclosure to a supervisor is kept confidential by law.

Reasons Not to Disclose your Disability

- There is no need for accommodations.
- Hiring or promotion chances may be negatively affected due to stigma.
- To protect your privacy.
- Fear of an employer or coworker’s reactions to you or your work.
- People not respecting your privacy and confidentiality.
- Being held to a different standard.

If you want to understand the rights of the Employer and Employee concerning the disclosing of a disability, detailed information is available at the EEOC website.

Refer to “Enforcement Guidance: Preemployment Disability-Related Questions and Medical Examinations.”

If You Want to Disclose, How Should You Do It?

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) states that employers cannot ask questions that will likely reveal the existence of a disability before making a job offer.
- You may want to wait until you form a relationship with your boss, prove your abilities, and feel confident with your job.
- Let your employer know you have a medical disability. Steer clear of medical terms and a specific diagnosis. Instead, provide examples of how your disability affects you i.e., “I have a medical condition that affects my concentration.”
- Provide information about the existence and extent of your disability or diagnosis, how your condition may limit your functioning in the job, and the accommodations that address these barriers. YOU DO NOT need to disclose your entire medical record.
- Focus on your abilities, not disabilities.
- Prepare and practice what you will say ahead of time.
- List your strengths and qualifications related to this job, and provide examples of how your experiences with a disability will positively affect your work performance.
- Share what issues you may face in the workplace due to your diagnosis and stay positive of how you would handle it.

To Whom Do You Disclose

- You are only required to share disability information with the person/s in the workplace who is involved with approving or providing accommodations.
- You can choose whether or not to tell other people at the workplace.

How to ask for Reasonable Accommodations

If you need a Reasonable Accommodation, which is a change or adjustment to a job or work environment, you should tell your employer that you have a disability, how your disability interferes with your ability to do your job functions, and what accommodations you need in order to do your job functions. Although you may make your request orally or in writing, it is a better practice to put your request in writing so you have a record of it.

If you are unable to get reasonable accommodations at work, Disability Rights can help you understand how to make the request and what documentation you will need. (See the section “Things the employer should know” to learn about ‘Reasonable Accommodations’)

Thank You Notes

It is always a good idea to send a thank you note to the person who interviews you. If the company is interviewing several people for the job, a written note puts you above the rest.

Chapter 7 Federal Laws

Federal anti-discrimination laws define protected characteristics, describe the companies that are affected by the regulations, and provide government agencies to accept complaints of violations and enforce the laws.

There are six important federal laws that protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination in employment and the job application process

- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Rehabilitation Act
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act
- Civil Service Reform Act
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and guarantees equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities

in employment, transportation, public accommodations, state and local government services, and telecommunications. Two sections of the ADA relate to employment.

- **Title I:** Employment prohibits covered employers from discriminating against people with disabilities in all employment-related activities, including hiring, pay, benefits, firing and promotions. Covered employers include private businesses, educational institutions, employment agencies, labor organizations, and state and local government entities with 15 or more employees.
- **Title II:** State and Local Governments protect people with disabilities from discrimination in state and local government services, programs and activities. It prohibits all state and local government entities, regardless of how many people they employ, or whether they receive federal financial assistance, from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in employment.

The Rehabilitation Act

The Rehabilitation Act authorizes funding for various disability-related purposes and activities, including state vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs, independent living programs, training and research, and the work of the National Council on Disability. It also includes three sections that prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities by specific types of employers: federal agencies, employers/businesses contracting with federal agencies, and programs receiving federal financial assistance.

- **Section 501** of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits federal employers from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities and requires them to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities.
- **Section 503** of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits employment discrimination based on disability and requires affirmative action in the hiring, placement and advancement of people with disabilities by federal contractors or subcontractors who have federal contracts or subcontracts in excess of \$10,000.
- **Section 504** of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities by federal agencies, or by programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance or are conducted by a federal agency.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The WIOA consolidates federal job training and employment programs, including employment and training services for adults; dislocated workers and youth; and Wagner-Peyser employment services administered by the Department of Labor (DOL); adult education and literacy programs; and Vocational Rehabilitation programs for individuals with disabilities administered by the Department of Education (DoED). WIOA's Section 188 prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities who apply for, participate in or are employees of any program or organization that receives federal financial assistance under WIOA; or that provides programs/activities as part of the One-Stop system.

The Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA)

The VEVRAA requires employers that have federal contracts or subcontracts entered into before December 1, 2003 of \$25,000 or more and/or federal contracts or subcontracts entered into on or after December 1, 2003 of \$100,000 or more to provide equal employment opportunities for certain veterans with disabilities. VEVRAA's Section 4212 specifically prohibits discrimination against covered veterans with disabilities in the full range of employment activities.

The Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA)

The CSRA, which covers most federal agencies, contains several rules designed to promote fairness in federal personnel actions and prohibit discrimination against applicants and employees with disabilities.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employer actions such as termination based on discrimination. Employees cannot be fired because of their national origin, race, color, religion, or sex, and the Americans with Disabilities Act prevents discrimination based on mental and physical handicaps. However, businesses with fewer than 15 employees are not bound by these laws.

Chapter 8

Things Employers Should Know

Disability Inclusion should be part of a company's marketing and corporate mix. Companies that offer the most inclusive working environments for employees with disabilities outperform their competitors. People with disabilities are virtually an untapped market with an estimated \$22 billion in buying power.

Each year a Presidential Proclamation urges all Americans to embrace the talents and skills that individuals with disabilities bring to our workplaces and to promote the right to equal employment opportunity for all people. Every day, Americans with disabilities enrich our communities and businesses. They are leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators, each with unique talents to contribute and points of view to express.

Together we can uphold the ideals of equal access and equal opportunity.

Why an Employer should Hire Individuals with Disabilities

There are certainly challenges and barriers that people with disabilities face when they are seeking employment in this age of on-line applications. On the positive side, 65% of people with disabilities who work in a competitive setting have been there three years or more, showing they are faithful employees.

People with disabilities are skilled at adapting to new or difficult situations. When a company taps a diverse talent pool, employers find their workforce to be more productive and better at problem solving. Despite common misconceptions, employees with disabilities are loyal, consistently rating higher than their non-disabled peers when it comes to the number of missed days at work, daily punctuality or adhering to a consistent work schedule, and staying on the job in their roles for longer tenures. People with disabilities are motivated to work. Research shows that having people with disabilities in the workplace improves staff morale, strengthens teamwork, and elevates both the quality and pace of work that other staff produce.

Supported Employment

- **What is Supported Employment?** Supported Employment provides individualized and long-term employment assistance to individuals with intellectual disabilities. It offers those who qualify with an opportunity to work in a competitive setting alongside coworkers without disabilities. Participants receive all of the benefits of employment, including competitive wages, while learning social and work skills necessary for success. A team of committed professionals work together to reduce and eliminate the barriers to employment caused by disabilities. The program provides a Job Coach on-site with the employee until job stabilization is secure. The employee receives the support needed to prepare for, retain, or regain employment. (Refer to 'Disability Specific Services')
- **How does Supported Employment work?** The MS Department of Mental Health approves the License for Provider Organizations to offer this Medicaid funded program. Licensed Providers find employment and provide a Job Coach for individuals with intellectual disabilities who qualify. Each individual participating will first receive a Job Discovery so that they can be matched with the best job for their skills and interests. If they choose a path of traditional employment, the Provider will identify employers that suit their desire and abilities and may connect the individual through customized employment. The Provider will assist with resumes, on-line applications, and job interviews. Some Providers will provide transportation and assist with other needs to eliminate their personal barrier to employment.
- **Why is it good to have a Job Trainer or Job Coach?** Job Coach services are designed to support an individual with intellectual disabilities' success as independent workers. They assist individuals with special needs who have the potential for independent employment, but need specialized, short-term, on-the-job support

and training to succeed.

- **How does the Job Coach support the employer?** The Job Coach ensures the individual worker and employer have clear expectations regarding assigned tasks/job duties, provides training of specific job duties, models appropriate work-related behaviors, increases the individual's work speed, monitors the individual's behavior at a job site, continues to train the worker—maximizing work performance according to employer expectations and standards, and retrains the individual if work requirements or supervision changes.

Customized Employment

- **What is Customized Employment?** Customized employment (CE) is a process through which the relationship between employer and employee is negotiated and personalized in a way that meets the needs of both. CE has been used to respond to increasing requests for greater workplace flexibility, and it is a powerful tool that increases opportunities for people with disabilities. As a creative, flexible and voluntary process, CE benefits both the employer, who profits from a person's skills and experience, and the person, with just the right skills to accomplish some, but not all, functions of a particular job. CE allows employers and employees the opportunity to overcome obstacles by negotiating individual tasks and/or reassigning basic duties, with the ultimate goal being improved overall workplace productivity.

- **How does Customized Employment Work?** Customized employment starts with the development of an employment plan based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs and interests of the job candidate. A representative of the job seeker, or the job seeker, presents a preliminary proposal to an employer.

Many employers have negotiated an individualized job that meets both the applicant's employment needs and the employer's business needs. The negotiation can occur in numerous ways. The intent of customized employment is to align the job seeker's profile to a collection of job tasks that help an employer meet a specific need.

According to a 2006 study published in the Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling, several employers who used CE strategies reported that doing so helped them meet a specific production or sales goal, increased customer satisfaction, improved operations, freed other employees to handle customers, and reduced backlogged work.

Reasonable Accommodation

Working with an employee with disabilities can initially be challenging for human resources (HR) managers and supervisors, especially if they are unaware of the various accommodations available. Employers, under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), must provide people with disabilities Reasonable Accommodations.

Under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done during the hiring process. These modifications enable an individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity not only to get a job, but successfully perform their job tasks to the same extent as people without disabilities. The ADA requires reasonable accommodations as they relate to three aspects of employment.

- Ensuring equal opportunity in the application process.
- Enabling a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job.
- Making it possible for an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

Whether an accommodation is reasonable in a particular case involves an analysis of the facts of the particular situation, including the cost of the accommodation and the employer's ability to pay for it.

Accommodations are sometimes referred to as “productivity enhancers.” Reasonable accommodations should not be viewed as “special treatment,” and they often benefit all employees. For example, facility enhancements such as ramps, accessible restrooms, and ergonomic workstations benefit more than just employees with disabilities. Examples of reasonable accommodations include making existing facilities accessible; job restructuring; part-time or modified work schedules; acquiring or modifying equipment; changing tests, training materials, or policies; and providing qualified readers or interpreters. Many job accommodations cost very little and often involve minor changes to a work environment, schedule or work-related technologies.

Samples include

- Physical changes such as installing a ramp, modifying a rest room,

or modifying the layout of a workspace.

- Accessible and assistive technologies such as accessible or screen reader computer software or using videophones to facilitate communications with colleagues who are deaf.
- Accessible communications such as providing sign language interpreters, closed captioning at meetings and events, or making materials available in Braille or large print.
- Policy enhancements such as modifying a policy to allow a service animal or adjusting work schedules so employees with chronic medical conditions can go to medical appointments and complete their work at alternate times or locations.
- Service animals are considered a reasonable accommodation under the ADA. A trained service animal should be permitted if the animal is not disruptive, and if their function is related to the employee's disability. If needed, request extensive information about an employee's disability and how the presence of their service animal will improve their job performance.

Organizations Providing Employers Support

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

is an ODEP-funded technical assistance center, providing free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations. JAN can also provide information about disability etiquette in various workplace settings including speaking engagements and customer service environments.

Mississippi Relay

Mississippi Relay is a no-cost service that enables people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind or those with a Speech Disability to place and receive phone calls. If an employee is not able to hear or understand phone communications at a satisfactory level, and as a result may be prevented from having equal access to telephone

communications, he/she can apply for a free phone. Specialized equipment devices are available for deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech disabled individuals who require such devices to utilize the Mississippi Relay. Types of equipment available include a text phone (TTY), a Voice Carry-Over (VCO) phone, a Hearing Carry-Over (HCO) phone, a phone designed to assist individuals who have a speech disability, a CapTel phone, a Smartphone, and a flasher to indicate the person's phone is ringing with an incoming call.

Mississippi State University (MSU)

MSU has assistive technology for the workplace such as computer screen reading software, an optical character recognition system, video magnifiers, and a money identifier. They can provide the employer with resources and information for making your documents more accessible, and documents that provide steps to accessing a QR code for iPhone and Android.

The Institute for Disability Studies (IDS)

IDS at the University of Southern Mississippi provides technical assistance, training, resources and supports for Mississippians with disabilities and their families.

MS Department of Rehabilitation's Office of Business Development (OBD)

OBD is committed to being a valuable resource for any business. Business Development Representatives help to customize recruitment efforts and provide a variety of services to employers at no cost. OBD seeks to support employers in sourcing, hiring and retaining qualified candidates with disabilities. OBD also offers business customers a variety of technical assistance, local and national resources, assistive technology support, ADA information, and other support services such as: Recruitment and referral of pre-screened qualified applicants; On-site review to become acquainted with specifications of the job description; On the Job Training (OJT) and wage reimbursement for job training/job tryout; Consulting, technical assistance, job coaching, follow up and support; Pre-employment services: sourcing qualified applicants for internships, mentoring opportunities, and training customized to the business' needs; assistance with Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC); Staff training on disability awareness, accommodations and education;

and retention programs to support employees who develop or acquire a disability.

AbilityWorks-Business and Employer Service

Ability Works provides subcontracts with local industries. Products are brought into the center where various operations are performed by people with disabilities just as they would be in the industries that subcontract with the program. Some of the services and products AbilityWorks offers include collating and sorting, packaging and handling, assembly work, product reworking, product reclamation, grounds maintenance, housekeeping and quality reviews.

MS Department of Employment Services (MDES)

MDES offers employers many helpful services - posting jobs, recruitment, help with unemployment taxes and more.

Family First Braille

Family First Braille assists employers and employees converting documents or signs into Braille.

Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC)

WOTC is a federal tax credit available to employers for hiring and employing individuals from certain WOTC targeted groups who have faced significant barriers to employment. Employers must apply for and receive a certification verifying the new hire is a member of a WOTC targeted group before they can claim the tax credit.

After the required certification is secured, taxable employers claim the WOTC as a general business credit against their income taxes, and tax-exempt employers claim the WOTC against their payroll taxes. Ask your CPA to connect your business to someone qualified to provide this information.

The credit available ranges from \$2,400 up to \$9,600, depending on the targeted group and qualified wages paid to the new employee generally during the first year of employment. Generally, the credit

is 40% of qualified first-year wages for individuals who work 400+ hours in their first year of employment.

How the Employer gets the WOTC Certification

The employer must file a WOTC certification request with their state workforce agency. Employers must receive a certification verifying that the new hire is a member of a targeted group before they can claim the tax credit. To verify whether a job applicant is a first-time, qualifying member of a targeted group, employers must submit IRS Form 8850, together with ETA Form 9061 or ETA Form 9062, to the state workforce agency in which your business is located within 28 calendar days after the new hire's start date. (Typically, Form 9062 is provided by a partnering agency. If an employer is not working with a partnering agency, they can fill out Form 9061 with the applicant). You can find these forms on the WOTC website. You'll need to refer to your state workforce agency's website for instructions on submitting the forms.

If the new hire meets the eligibility requirements, the employer will receive a certification (ETA Form 9063) from their state workforce agency. Taxable employers can claim the WOTC as a general business credit against their income taxes. For more information about claiming the credit, see the instructions on the IRS.gov website.

Besides the WOTC, employers can take advantage of other hiring incentive programs such as the Federal Bonding Program, which provides fidelity bonds for "at-risk" job seekers, or the American Rescue Plan Act's Employee Retention Credit, a refundable tax credit against certain employment taxes.

Chapter 9

Self-Employment & Entrepreneurship

What is Self-Employment

Self-employment is an option for individuals with disabilities who are seeking a career, who do not feel the desire or ability for traditional employment, or want to be their own boss.

Be careful of ads that promote many different work-at-home jobs and businesses saying they promise you'll earn a living from home, even in your spare time. Don't take their word for it—many of these “jobs” are scams, or don't deliver on the claims they make. So do your own research, and learn about common work-at-home scams. The FTC's Business Opportunity Rule has safeguards in place to make sure you have the information you need to tell whether a work-at-home opportunity is a risky business. To get free information on consumer issues, check with your local consumer protection agency, your state Attorney General, or the Better Business Bureau.

Benefits of Self-Employment

- Control over where and when you work.
- Choice about who you wish to work with, including co-workers and clients.

- Ability to pursue the type of work that is your passion or hobby.
- Potential for financial independence.

Challenges of Self-Employment

- You not only do the core work, but you have to manage all of the facets of your business such as purchasing supplies, marketing, sales, and taxes.
- You will have financial insecurity, as you no longer receive a regular salary.
- You need to have self-motivation, because you are fully responsible to provide the service to those paying for the service, and in the deadline the service is promised.

Self-Employment Resources

Before starting your own business, do some research. There are numerous organizations who assist an individual with disabilities in access to funding and supports for this alternative to traditional employment. (See resources in back of Guide)

Chapter 10

Financial Planning

Managing your own money

It is valuable for you to understand money basics, including the purpose of money, how to count money, how to make change, and how to budget money so that bills are paid and some funds are available to pay expenses at the end of the month. It is important to safeguard your money so that it is not lost or stolen.

Identify a person you trust to assist you in making the decision of managing your money, including your employment income. You might find it best to open your own bank account with a trusted person's support.

Mississippi ABLE Savings Account

In addition to understanding and applying for benefits programs, it may be helpful to know about Mississippi ABLE, a special financial planning program designed for persons with disabilities.

ABLE accounts are a unique savings and investment vehicle for individuals with disabilities. There is no cost to open an ABLE account, but there is a small monthly fee to maintain the account. Anyone can make contributions to an ABLE account. ABLE also offers diverse investment options, ranging from FDIC insured to higher risk stock and bond options. While the Mississippi ABLE account offers a great way to save money, participants may also choose to withdraw their

money through real-time debit cards, electronic transfers, and/or paper checks.

ABLE allows Mississippians with certain disabilities to create tax-advantaged ABLE savings accounts to pay for qualified disability-related expenses such as education, housing, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology, personal support services, health care expenses, financial management and administrative services, and other similar expenses. It allows people to keep their public benefits and provides income tax and estate tax benefits.

Most importantly, ABLE accounts allow people with disabilities to save money without losing their eligibility for federally funded benefits such as Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). An individual who is working may contribute an additional amount not exceeding their income or the federal poverty level, whichever is less. The maximum balance for an ABLE account is \$235,000. Once an account goes over \$100,000, SSI benefits will be suspended. There is no limit for Medicaid eligibility. Other benefits are not affected by any account total. The account owner is the manager and beneficiary of the account. If the account holder dies, the state can claim any leftover money as payback for care paid by Medicaid after the ABLE account was opened.

Chapter 11 Transportation Resources

Coast Transit Authority (CTA)

ADA Paratransit Service

In accordance with Federal Law, curb-to-curb (door-to-door as needed) ADA Paratransit compliments CTA's Fixed Route service within the mandated $\frac{3}{4}$ mile service corridor.

ADA Paratransit is transportation service for people with disabilities in Harrison and Jackson County. You must make an appointment to ride ADA Paratransit. All trips are pay as you go, using correct change. Passes can be purchased, and each pass is good for one fare zone. Direct Support Professionals (DSP) and Personal Care Attendants (PCA) ride free of charge. Applications are available at the CTA office.

To Qualify...

- You must have a physical or mental impairment that prevents you from getting on, getting off, or riding any ADA accessible bus by yourself. You must need help from someone other than the bus operator.

- You must need a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and can, with that help, board, ride, and disembark the bus. ADA Paratransit is only justified if the boarding device cannot be used at a regular bus stop on a CTA Fixed Route.
- You must have a specific impairment related condition that prevents you from traveling to or from a bus stop. However, just because it is difficult getting to a bus stop, does not qualify you. Your condition must make travel to a regular stop impossible.

ADA Paratransit PLUS Service

ADA Paratransit PLUS is an expansion of the regular ADA Paratransit Service. The PLUS service is not required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), so the service operates differently than the regular ADA Paratransit service.

The goal of ADA Paratransit Plus is to provide transportation to people with disabilities that live outside of the mandated $\frac{3}{4}$ mile service corridors. The PLUS service is a county-wide service that is currently only available in Harrison and Jackson County. It is provided as capacity allows.

CTA Senior Citizens Transportation program

CTA Senior Citizens Transportation program offers discount fares on regular bus passes for eligible Senior Citizens age 60 and older in Harrison County. Senior citizens, age 90 and over, qualify for free transportation. CTA Senior Transport is limited to non-emergency, curb-to-curb service for medical appointments, grocery shopping trips, and transportation to a Senior Citizens' Center.

If you present a valid Medicare Card to any CTA Driver, it will allow you to ride the Fixed Route buses at a reduced fare.

Chapter 12 Success Stories

Disability Connection is a provider for Supported Employment, a program licensed by the MS Department of Mental Health. Those who qualify are provided a Job Discovery to assist them in finding a job that fits their skills and desires. Individuals are matched with a Job Coach who provides a hands-on support system and transportation. Disability Connection is proud of the success of our employed individuals and would like to highlight a few of them.

Todd -McDonald's



Todd works for the Descher Organization and has been employed with McDonald's for twenty-five years. He started in food service at the age of 18, following graduation from High School. He is responsible for cleaning the lobby and stocking the drink station. McDonald's drive-through is very busy, so Todd runs take-out orders to cars in the outdoor drive-through. In 2021 he was featured state-wide in a publication of the MS Department of Rehabilitation. Todd is outgoing, loves meeting new people, and likes to make his own decisions. He currently lives in his own apartment and has hopes to marry one day.

Kaleigh-Youth for Christ Thrift Store

Kaleigh works for Youth for Christ Thrift Store. Kaleigh lives with family and has several special friends. At Youth for Christ, she works independently, hanging donated clothing and organizing shelves. She doesn't really like to sweep, but with the help of her Job Coach, she does what's needed to keep the store clean and organized. Kaleigh likes to help others, has a great attitude, and is always smiling.



Joshua- McDonald's



Joshua is employed with McDonald's through the Descher Organization. He is responsible for cleaning the lobby, windows, and bathrooms five days each week. In March 2023, Josh won the Employee Award for Outstanding Service and Attitude. Josh has a friendly personality, and you will never see him without a big smile. Almost every day you will hear Josh say, "I love my job."

Kellie - Self Employed

Kellie does not feel suited for traditional employment, so she, with the help of her Job Coach, is looking at ways to start her own business. She is considering different hobbies and ideas of things she enjoys, that could be turned into an income. She is exploring the Vending Business, and considering items she can sell such as Paintings on Canvas and Repurposed Mardi Gras Beads.



Tenesha-McDonald's



Tenesha is employed with McDonald's through the Descher Organization. Her location is especially challenging to clean as it is much larger than most locations with two lobbies, a drink station, and a popular Play Place for the kids. She is responsible for cleaning everything, and loves getting to eat one of her favorite meals during the break. When

Tenesha is off work, she loves to clean her room, go shopping, and hang out with her friends. She is a hard-worker, with a friendly great attitude.

Gregory-Hardee's

Gregory has been employed with Hardee's through the CKE Restaurants for about five years. He works in the kitchen with an assorted list of food preparation duties. Gregory loves to work and his favorite free time is spent watching professional sports games like the Mississippi Sea Wolves, the River Dragons, and the Shuckers. Every week he plays baseball and goes bowling. He loves to cook and hang out with his family and his dog, Daisy. Gregory approaches every day with a combination of hard-work and fun.



Carlos-Mental Health Assoc. of South Mississippi



Carlos has been employed by the Mental Health Association of South Mississippi for about two years. Carlos is responsible for cleaning the office and day-center area which includes a kitchen, bathrooms, dining, and living areas. The staff enjoy Carlos because he always comes to work with a smiling face and fun attitude. Since he doesn't have to wear a uniform for work, you will see him sporting stylish clothes and fun jewelry. If you ask Carlos about work, he will always say how much he loves his job.

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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.**Services Provided:** The Assurance Wireless provides eligible low-income free monthly data, unlimited texting, and free monthly minutes, plus a free phone.**Name: Back Bay Mission****Office Phone:** (228) 432 - 0301**Address:** 1012 Division Street
- Biloxi, MS 39530**Website:** <http://thebackbaymission.org>**Services Provided:** If criteria is met, they may provide uniforms and assist with getting state ID, birth certificates, SS Cards, and drivers license.**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

Services Provided: 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: 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

Services Provided: 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.



Name: FTC Business Opportunity Rule

Office Phone: (877) 382 - 4357

Website: <https://www.ftc.gov>

Services Provided: Ensures that prospective purchasers have the information they need in order to meaningfully assess the risks of buying a work-at-home program or any other business opportunity.



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/>

Services Provided: Provides Adult Protective services, senior services, early childhood care, family caregiver support, TANF, SNAP, workforce development, youth services and more.



Name: Small Business Administration (SBA)

Office Phone: (202) 205 - 6750

Alternate Phone: (800) 877 - 8339

- Washington, DC 20416

Website: <https://www.sba.gov/>

Services Provided: Offers flexible business loans tailored to your business needs and helps small businesses get funding by setting guidelines for loans and reducing lender risk.



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: www.ssa.gov

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.

Services Provided: SS cards, supplemental security income, cash benefits to limited-income individuals, seniors, survivors of deceased workers, and individuals with disabilities.



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

Services Provided: 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.



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

Services Provided: Free referrals to our agencies and resources for assistance with rent/mortgage, food pantries, utilities, medications, and medical equipment. Also provides domestic violence services, counseling, mentors, after school programs and more.

.....

Name: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

Office Phone: (800) 669 - 4000

TTY Phone: (800) 669 - 6820

Website: <https://eeoc.gov>

Services Provided: A U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guide to navigating an employee's rights under the ADA.

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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

Services Provided: 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: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Office Phone: (800) 514 - 0301

TTY Phone: (833) 610 - 1264

Website: <https://www.ada.gov/>

Services Provided: Civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

.....

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

Services Provided: Provides advocacy training, referral services, resources and support information to parents of children with disabilities, online direct support courses, educational advocacy for parents with school aged children, 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/>

Services Provided: Provides 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, support for all people with disabilities, addiction prevention, legislative activities, supported decision making, community transition services and direct support professional services.



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

Services Provided: 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: Business Enterprise Program
- MS Department of Rehabilitation Services

Office Phone: (601) 853 - 5280

Address: 1281 Highway 51

- Madison, MS 39110

Website: <https://www.mdrs.ms.gov/workforce/vrb/business-enterprise-program%E2%80%8B>

Services Provided: Provides support for self-employment opportunities in the food service industry for Mississippians who are legally blind. These BEP entrepreneurs operate a variety of businesses including vending machine routes, snack bars, and cafeterias on military bases.



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

Services Provided: 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 the 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.

Services Provided: Provides food pantry, resources and events for Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals, resources for parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, interpreting services, and American Sign Language classes.



Name: Disability Connection

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

Alternate Phone: (228) 870 - 7775 Office Cell

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.

Services Provided: Specializes in serving children & adults with disabilities, however, referral services are free to everyone. Programs include: MS Coast Community Resource Guide, The Family Resource Guide and TRACK (Transition Resources to Advocate Through Community Knowledge) Guide, 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 Playgrounds, and Advocacy.



Name: Disability Rights Mississippi

Office Phone: (800) 772 - 4057 Intake #

Alternate Phone: (601) 968 - 0600, Gulfport

Address: 11975 Seaway Rd., Ste B248

- Gulfport, MS 39503

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.

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



Name: Family First Braille

Office Phone: (228) 224 - 2920

Address: 11975 Seaway Rd. Suite A-320

- Gulfport, MS 39503

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

Services Provided: Provides resources for people with visual impairments and their families, custom Braille transcription service, and a free quarterly magazine.



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/workforce/vrb/independent-living-services>

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.

Services Provided: 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.



Name: JAN

- **Job Accommodation Network**

Office Phone: (800) 526 - 7234

Alternate Phone: (877) 781 - 9403

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

Services Provided: A free service that provides job accommodation information, requesting and negotiating reasonable workplace accommodations, and understanding ADA.



Name: LIFE of MS

Office Phone: (228) 357 - 5120, Gulfport Office

Alternate Phone: (601) 969 - 4009, Jackson Office

Address: 16145 Orange Grove Road

- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: www.lifeofms.com

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

Services Provided: Provide 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.



Name: MS ABLE

Office Phone: (888) 609 - 3469

Website: www.MississippiAble.com

Services Provided: A savings account for individuals with disabilities that will not affect public benefits. This account can be used for daily transactions and/or long-term savings.



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

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



Name: MS Partners for Informed Choice

Office Phone: (228) 575 - 4064

Alternate Phone: (866) 968 - 7842

Address: 13486 Fastway Lane

- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: <https://www.mdrs.ms.gov/workforce/vrb/informed-choice#>

Services Provided: Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) service can provide a Community Work Incentives Coordinator who can assist with understanding how working will affect your benefits, personalized work incentives planning, and support and resources you need to return to work.



Name: MS Relay Service

Office Phone: (601) 936 - 5012

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

TTY Phone: (601) 709 - 4624

- Jackson, MS 39206

Website: <https://mississippirelay.com>

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

Eligibility Requirements: State of Mississippi residence.

Services Provided: 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.



Name: MS Society for Disabilities

Office Phone: (601) 982 - 7051

- Jackson, MS 39216

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

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

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



Name: Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

Office Phone: (866) 487 - 2365

Website: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep>

Services Provided: ODEP is the only non-regulatory federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities.



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

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



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

Services Provided: Device Loan - provides short term loans of Assistive Technology devices. Device Re-utilization - Supports the exchange, repair, recycling of AT devices. Device Demonstration - Demonstrates a variety of AT devices. Training/Public Awareness - Provides training, technical assistance & public awareness.



Name: South Mississippi Regional Center

Office Phone: (228) 868 - 2923

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

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

Services Provided: 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 access to 24/7 habilitative, therapeutic, and medical care treatment.



Name: US Disability Chamber of Commerce

Office Phone: (512) 227 - 3771

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

Services Provided: Provides information and resources on how to start a business, how to become an entrepreneur, and how to support a disability-owned business. The Chamber also advocates for policy changes and works to ensure that the disability community is included in all aspects of the business world.



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

Services Provided: 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.



Name: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

- **U.S. Department of Labor**

Office Phone: (866) 487 - 2365

Website: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/>

Services Provided: Designed to help job seekers, including those with significant barriers to employment, access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.



Name: Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

- **U.S. Department of Labor**

Office Phone: (877) 872 - 5627

Website: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wotc>

Services Provided: The WOTC program is a federal income tax credit for employers who hire individuals with disabilities and others who face obstacles to employment.



Educational & Training Opportunities

Name: CLIMB CDC

- **Workforce Training Institute**

Office Phone: (228) 864 - 6677

Address: 1526 Mills Avenue

- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: <https://climbcdc.org>

Eligibility Requirements: Low to moderate income.

Services Provided: Programs include: Workforce Training Institute, employment or small business training, Culinary & Hospitality, academics, Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps. Offers YouthBuild, a community-based alternative education program that provides job training and educational opportunities for at-risk youth ages 16-24. Youth learn construction skills while constructing or rehabilitating affordable housing for low-income or homeless families in their own neighborhoods.

.....

Name: Families First/MCEC

- **MS Community Education Center**

Office Phone: (228) 897 - 5627

Address: 10260 Larkin Smith Drive

- Gulfport, MS 39503

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

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

Services Provided: Workforce development and training; online high school diploma program.

.....

Name: George County Career and Technical Center

Office Phone: (601) 947 - 3116

Address: 9284 Old 63 South
- Lucedale, MS 39452

Website: <https://gchs.gcsd.us/career-technical-education>

Services Provided: Prepares students for the workforce by offering technical programs, exposes students to different career fields, motivates them to think about their personal college and career path, and integrates the development of 21st century pre-professional skills.



Name: Gulfport Job Corps

Office Phone: (228) 870 - 7255

Alternate Phone: (800) 733 - 5627

TTY Phone: (877) 889 - 5627

Address: 3300 20th Street
- Gulfport, MS 39501

Website: <https://gulfport.jobcorps.gov/>

Eligibility Requirements: Must be 16 - 24 years old and low-income.

Services Provided: Job Corps is a tuition-free training and education program that connects eligible young men and women with the skills and educational opportunities they need to establish real careers.



Name: Hancock County Career Technical Center

Office Phone: (228) 467 - 3568

Address: 7180 Airport Road
- Kiln, MS 39556

Website: <https://www.hancockschools.net>

Services Provided: Prepares students for the workforce by offering programs such as: architecture and drafting, automotive service technician, computer science, construction and carpentry, culinary arts, early childhood education, welding, and more.



Name: Harrison County Career and Technical Education Center

Office Phone: (228) 832 - 6652

Address: 15600 School Road
- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: <https://harrisoncctc.ss11.sharpschool.com/>

Eligibility Requirements: Enrollment is open to students from Harrison Central, West Harrison, and D'Iberville High Schools.

Services Provided: Engages students in hands-on learning that blends classroom instruction with experience.



Name: Hope Adult Learning

Office Phone: (228) 256 - 3610

Website: www.hopeadultlearning.com

Services Provided: Tutors provide basic adult literacy; pre-GED reading skills development for all adults, including adults with dyslexia; and English Language Learning classes. Classes are free, with a small materials fee.



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

Services Provided: 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. 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>.



Name: Jackson County Literacy Council

Office Phone: (228) 762 - 2814

Address: 2804 Martin Street

- Pascagoula, MS 39567

Website: <https://jcliteracycouncil9.wixsite.com/jclc>

Services Provided: Offers a literacy program for adults, with volunteers tutoring basic literacy skills in reading, writing, spelling, math and ESL (English as a Second Language).



Name: Jackson County Technology Center

Office Phone: (228) 283 - 3950

Address: 12425 Highway 57
- Vancleave, MS 39565

Website: <https://www.jcsd.ms/site/Default.aspx?PageID=36>

Services Provided: Prepares students for the workforce by offering programs such as: automotive, construction, information technology, maritime, medical, teacher academy, welding, and more.



Name: KOPC Workforce Development

Office Phone: (228) 465 - 2327

Address: 800 Division Street
- Biloxi, MS 39530

Eligibility Requirements: Must be 18 - 50 years old, low to moderate income and reside on the Coast.

Services Provided: A 10-week, no cost program that provides training in basic general construction or basic electrical wiring. Also assists with resume writing and financial literacy training.



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.

Services Provided: Construction skills training program for local women.



Name: MS Gulf Coast Community College-Harrison County

Office Phone: (228) 896 - 2504

Address: 2226 Switzer Road
- Gulfport, MS 39507

Website: www.mgccc.edu

Services Provided: Ask how to qualify for low cost, continuing education, Veteran and senior programs. Provides GED and HiSet classes.



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

Services Provided: Ask how to qualify for low cost, continuing education, Veteran and senior programs. Provides GED and HiSet classes.

.....

Name: MS Gulf Coast Community College-Jackson County

Office Phone: (228) 497 - 7732

Address: 2300 Hwy. 90
- Gautier, MS 39533

Website: www.mgccc.edu

Services Provided: Ask how to qualify for low cost, continuing education, Veteran and senior programs. Provides GED and HiSet classes.

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Name: MS Library Commission

Office Phone: (800) 647 - 7542

Website: mlc.lib.ms.us

Services Provided: Offers quick links to regional area public libraries that offer free computer classes, resume and job workshops, building your own website training, and more.

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Name: Pascagoula Adult Learning Center

- **Pascagoula - Gautier School District**

Office Phone: (228) 938 - 6587

Address: 1713 Kenneth Avenue
- Pascagoula, MS 39568

Website: <https://pasalc.ms>

Services Provided: Offers free academic and HSE (High School Equivalency) prep classes, employability skills training, and free community education night classes.

.....

Name: Pearl River Community College

Office Phone: (601) 554 - 4646

Website: <https://prcc.edu/workforce-training/>

Services Provided: Offers career, technical, and certificate of completion programs. Campuses located in Poplarville, Waveland, and Hattiesburg.



Name: Stone County Career and Technical Department

Office Phone: (601) 928 - 7247

Address: 214 N Critz Street
- Wiggins, MS 39577

Website: <https://www.stoneschools.org/departments/career-and-technical>

Services Provided: Prepares students for the workforce by offering technical programs.



Name: University of Southern Mississippi

- **Gulf Park Campus**

Office Phone: (228) 865 - 4500

Address: 730 East Beach Blvd
- Long Beach, MS 39560

Website: <http://www.usm.edu/gulfcoast/>

Services Provided: Ask how to qualify for low cost, continuing education, Veteran and senior programs.



Name: William Carey University

Office Phone: (228) 702 - 1775

Address: 19640 Highway 67
- Biloxi, MS 39532

Website: <https://www.wmcarey.edu/campus/tradition>

Services Provided: Assistance is offered in testing accommodations, providing note takers (where applicable), and adjustments to the physical arrangement of classrooms and classroom accessibility. In addition, students with disabilities are offered extensive academic counseling and academic support.



Employment, Job Retention and Career Development

Name: **abilityJOBS**

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

Services Provided: Largest job site for people with disabilities. The only employment site where 100% of posted jobs are from employers specifically seeking to hire people with disabilities.

.....

Name: **Ability Works**

- **Division of MS Department of Rehabilitation**

Office Phone: (228) 897 - 7616

Address: 10280 Larkin Smith Dr.

- Gulfport, MS 39503

Website: <https://wmcarey.edu/Office/disability-services>

Services Provided: Provides employment assistance and workforce training for individuals with disabilities.

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Name: **AmeriCorps**

Website: <https://americorps.gov/>

Services Provided: Engages people in service through a variety of stipended volunteer work programs in many sectors. These programs are designed to help communities address poverty, the environment, education, and other unmet human needs and include: AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), AmeriCorps Seniors, and others.

**Name: Career Connections Center****- Goodwill of South MS****Office Phone:** (228) 273 - 4243**Address:** 2957 Bienville Blvd.**-** Ocean Springs, MS 39564**Website:** <https://www.goodwillms.org/careercenter>**Hours of Operation:** Monday - Friday 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM**Services Provided:** Provides career assessment, digital skills, interview coaching, job postings, resume design, and soft skills training.**Name: Career One Stop****- U.S. Department of Labor****Office Phone:** (877) 872 - 5627**TTY Phone:** (877) 889 - 5627**Website:** <https://www.careeronestop.org/resourcesfor/workerswithdisabilities/workers-with-disabilities.aspx>**Services Provided:** A page on the U.S. Department of Labor's Career One Stop website that contains guides on developing interview and job skills as a person with a disability.**Name: Disability Connection-Supported Employment****Office Phone:** (228) 604 - 4020**Address:** 700 Pass Road**-** Gulfport, MS 39501**Website:** www.disabilityconnection.org**Hours of Operation:** Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM**Eligibility Requirements:** Must have Medicaid Waiver for Supported Employment.**Services Provided:** Provides Job Coaches who assist individuals with intellectual & developmental disabilities in finding and keeping competitive employment.**Name: Employment & Training Administration (ETA)****- U.S. Department of Labor****Office Phone:** (866) 487 - 2365

Address: 200 Constitution Ave. NW
- Washington, DC 20210

Website: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta>

Services Provided: The Employment and Training Administration provides job training and help with finding jobs and careers.



Name: Innovation And Opportunity Network

Website: <https://ion.workforcegps.org/>

Services Provided: Designed to support state and local workforce development boards, system professionals, and employers. Helping you find the resources you need to successfully implement the vision of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Includes links to guidance documents, the latest technical assistance, and training tools.



Name: MS Department of Employment Security

Office Phone: (228) 388 - 7997

Alternate Phone: (601) 321 - 6000

TTY Phone: (800) 582 - 2233

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

Services Provided: MDES offers assistance with finding a job, provides an unemployment benefits program that provides payments to people who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and offers employers many helpful services--posting jobs, recruitment, help with unemployment taxes and more.



Name: Mississippi Works

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

Services Provided: Create a free profile online to search for job openings or post job openings in Mississippi.



Name: O*NET OnLine

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

Services Provided: An online tool for career exploration and job analysis, where you can find descriptions of the world-of-work for use by job seekers, workforce development, HR professionals, students, developers, researchers, and more.

**Name: SCORE of Mississippi****Office Phone:** (601) 589 - 0949**Website:** www.score.org**Services Provided:** Business professionals that mentor and provide free and confidential business advice for entrepreneurs and small businesses.**Name: Ticket to Work****Office Phone:** (866) 968 - 7842

- Jackson, MS

Website: <https://yourtickettowork.ssa.gov/>**Eligibility Requirements:** For ages 18 - 64 who receive SSDI/SSI.**Services Provided:** Assist people receiving Social Security disability benefits in reducing their reliance on disability benefits. The program also seeks to promote increased self-sufficiency and greater independence for people receiving Social Security disability benefits through work.**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.**Services Provided:** Assists people with disabilities to prepare for employment through counseling, assistive technology, job training, and job development.**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>

Services Provided: 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.



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: Tuesday & Thursday 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Eligibility Requirements: First come, first serve basis

Services Provided: Provides free physicals for employment for the uninsured.



Name: Bethesda Free Clinic

Office Phone: (228) 818 - 9191

Address: 6912 North Washington Avenue
- Ocean Springs, MS 39564

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

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

Eligibility Requirements: No eligibility requirements; however, doctors cannot be your primary physician.

Services Provided: Provides free medical, dental (simple extractions), and basic physicals for employment.



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.

Services Provided: Utility assistance, infant and maternity care, disaster relief, representative payee services, and financial education.



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/cfhc-bay-st-louis-clinic/>

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

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

Services Provided: Provides employment physicals and drug testing, family practice, pediatrics, behavioral health, lab, telepsychiatry, social services, and medication assistance.



Name: Coastal Family Health Center

- Biloxi

Office Phone: (228) 374 - 4991

Address: 715 A Division St.

- Biloxi, MS 39530

Website: <https://coastalfamilyhealth.org/locations/cfhc-biloxi-clinic/>

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.

Services Provided: Provides employment physicals and drug testing, 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.



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.

Services Provided: Provides employment physicals and drug testing, family practice, substance abuse services, behavioral health, lab, psychiatry, social services, and medication assistance.



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.

Services Provided: Provides employment physicals and drug testing, family practice, adult internal medicine, pediatrics, OB/GYN, WIC, dentistry, optometry, behavioral health, telepsychiatry, lab, ultrasound, social services, and medication assistance.



Name: Coastal Family Health Center

- **Lucedale**

Office Phone: (601) 947 - 8268

Address: 11231 Old Hwy 63 Suite C-1

- Lucedale, MS 39452

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

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

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

Services Provided: Provides employment physicals and drug testing, family practice, lab, behavioral health, telepsychiatry, social services, and medication assistance.



Name: Coastal Family Health Center
- Moss Point

Office Phone: (228) 474 - 9511

Address: 4770 Amoco Drive
- Moss Point, MS 39563

Website: <https://coastalfamilyhealth.org/locations/moss-point/>

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

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

Services Provided: Provides employment physicals and drug testing, family practice, adult internal medicine, behavioral health, telepsychiatry, lab, social services, and medication assistance.



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.

Services Provided: Provides employment physicals and drug testing, family practice, lab, behavioral health, telepsychiatry, social services, and medication assistance.



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.

Services Provided: Provides employment physicals and drug testing, family practice, pediatrics, lab, behavioral health, telepsychiatry, WIC, social services, and medication assistance.

**Name: Coastal Family Health Center****- Vancleave****Office Phone:** (228) 826 - 4711**Address:** 10828 Highway 57**-** Vancleave, MS 39565**Website:** <https://coastalfamilyhealth.org/locations/vancleave/>**Hours of Operation:** Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM**Documents Required:** Income based sliding scale fee; some qualify for free services.**Services Provided:** Provides employment physicals and drug testing, family practice, pediatrics, lab, behavioral health, telepsychiatry, social services, and medication assistance.**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 the Medicaid office in your county.**Services Provided:** Provides Medical coverage for low income families, individuals with disabilities, and the elderly.

Senior Services

Name: AmeriCorps Seniors

Office Phone: (800) 942 - 2677

Website: <https://americorps.gov/serve/americorps-seniors>

Eligibility Requirements: Age 55+

Services Provided: AmeriCorps Seniors is a network of volunteer programs for Americans 55 years and older. Volunteers work in their community doing academic tutoring and mentoring, elderly care, disaster relief, and more.



Name: Hancock County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program
- **RSVP**

Office Phone: (228) 467 - 9073

Address: 301 Coleman Avenue
- Waveland, MS 39576

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/RSVPHancockCounty/>

Services Provided: Provides volunteer opportunities for persons 55+. Their purpose is to engage seniors in meaningful volunteer work that addresses community needs and to provide a high-quality experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers.



Name: Retired Senior Volunteer Program
- **RSVP**

Office Phone: (228) 896 - 0412

Alternate Phone: (228) 861 - 0007

Address: 842 Commerce St.
- Gulfport, MS 39507
Website: <http://co.harrison.ms.us/departments/rsvp/>
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Eligibility Requirements: Age 55+
Services Provided: Provides small handyman jobs for seniors or individuals with disabilities in Harrison County for free. Applicants must pay for all materials.



Name: Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

- **South MS Planning & Development District (SMPDD)**
Office Phone: (228) 868 - 2311
Alternate Phone: (800) 444 - 8014
Address: 10441 Corporate Drive Ste 1
- Gulfport, MS 39503
Website: www.smpdd.com
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Eligibility Requirements: 55+ years of age, low income
Services Provided: A financial assistance program for employable people who are actively looking for gainful employment but have been unsuccessful at finding a job. Offers temporary job training and paid wages.



Transportation

Name: Coast Transit Authority (CTA)

Office Phone: (228) 896 - 8080

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

Services Provided: ADA Paratransit service is a curb-to-curb service. You must wait at the curb at the scheduled time for the bus to arrive. If you need an attendant or a mobility aide, it's your responsibility to provide one for yourself.



Veteran / Military Services

Name: Biloxi Vet Center**Office Phone:** (228) 388 - 9938**Address:** 288 Veterans Ave
- Biloxi, MS 39531**Website:** <http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>**Hours of Operation:** Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM**Eligibility Requirements:** Veterans and their families.**Documents Required:** DD214**Services Provided:** Offers counseling services for veterans and their families focusing on PTSD, readjustment issues, and sexual trauma.**Name: Disabled American Veterans****Office Phone:** (228) 731 - 3874**Address:** 2600 23rd Ave
- Gulfport, MS 39501**Website:** www.dav.org**Services Provided:** Provides Veteran Counseling, volunteer opportunities, and activities for Veterans.**Name: Veterans Benefit Administration****Office Phone:** (800) 827 - 1000**Website:** <https://benefits.va.gov/benefits>**Services Provided:** Provides a wide range of benefits including: disability,

employment, home loan guaranty, dependent and survivor benefits, medical treatment, life insurance and burial benefits. Assists veterans with service-connected disabilities to become suitably employed and maintain employment.





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The Career Success Guide 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 Career Success 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, Employment Connection, Community Assist, and MS Coast Heritage Information Center.

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