

# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

FFY 2020: 10/1/19 – 9/30/20

*In Partnership with*



**Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind**

2020 SRC ANNUAL REPORT

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***Welcome from the Executive Director,  
Chris Howard***

***Dear Governor Reeves, Members of the Mississippi Legislature and Fellow Mississippians:***

Thank you for the opportunity through this report to share a few of the many accomplishments of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services' Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVR/OVRB and the State Rehabilitation Council during Fiscal Federal Year 2020.

The partnership this agency has with each of you and the State Rehabilitation Council is vital to carrying out our mission of providing quality services to individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner. Thank you to each and every one of you for your service, guidance and valuable input to this agency's work to assist Mississippians with disabilities to become successfully employed.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2020, the MDRS Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind served **17,189** jobseekers with disabilities while at the same time achieving outstanding ratings in client satisfaction surveys. We successfully helped **2,851** individuals with disabilities enter the workforce and become successfully employed, leading them to greater economic self-sufficiency. Through the dedicated work of this agency, we have made many great accomplishments this past year; including but not limited to: Partnered with a large company in our state to develop a customized training program for individuals with disabilities that has resulted in over 100 career opportunities, The expansion of the Project SEARCH program across our state, Increased partnerships with school districts in an effort to reach young adults with disabilities and prepare them for careers after graduation and also, Held job fairs specifically designed for individuals with disabilities to provide an opportunity for individuals with disabilities to meet face to face with prospective employers.

The key to any success we experience as an agency is to be credited to our outstanding staff at MDRS who consult with the members of the State Rehabilitation Council and the consumers we serve.

We look forward to this continued partnership and another year of successful outcomes.

Sincerely,

Chris M. Howard  
Executive Director



# MISSISSIPPI

## STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL CHAIR LETTER

*Dear Governor Reeves and Members of the Mississippi Legislature:*

On behalf of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), I am happy to share the annual report of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services' Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVR/OVRB).

The State Rehabilitation Council is a body mandated by The Rehabilitation Act and its resulting regulations at CFR 361.16. Members, described in these regulations, represent a broad range of individuals with disabilities across the state.

Our mandated functions include:

- Reviewing, analyzing, and advising OVR/OVRB on the performance of their responsibilities related to eligibility and order of selection; the extent, scope, and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services; and functions that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes
- Partnering with OVR/OVRB in developing goals and priorities; and evaluating the effectiveness in obtaining these goals
- Advising OVR/OVRB in the vocational rehabilitation portion of the Unified State Plan
- Conducting a review and analysis of consumer satisfaction
- Submitting this report and making it available to the public
- Coordinating activities with other named Councils within the state, to include the Statewide Independent Living Council
- Performing other relevant functions the SRC determines appropriate consistent with the purpose of OVR/OVRB

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services' OVR/ OVRB have continued effective Vocational Rehabilitation Services even in the challenging Covid19 environment of this year. We are certain that the agency has provided every possible accommodation to safely continue Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Mississippi's citizens who experience disability through their quarterly reports to this Council. Their services are needed now and, in the future, more than ever before, as citizens with disabilities return to work during and after Covid19. We anticipate an increased demand for Vocational Rehabilitation Services due to the high unemployment rate and the increased number of individuals who will acquire a disability due to Covid19. We hope you will consider strong funding of this agency for the 20% required state match so that it will have the funding levels to remain an essential Mississippi resource to help restore both the State's economy as well as the strong spirit of Mississippi Citizens through their own self-supporting employment.

The State Rehabilitation Council is happy to continue to advise the agency in regards to the individual stakeholder groups we represent.

Sincerely,

Mary Lundy Meruvia, Chairperson  
State Rehabilitation Council

# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

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**July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021**  
**Mary Lundy Meruvia, Chairperson**  
**Chris Howard, Ex Officio**

- Brad Bounds (Philadelphia)
- Josh Bower (Clinton)
- Donald Brown (Vicksburg)
- Lee Cole (Jackson)
- Sharon Strong Coon (Jackson)
- Jin Joo Crosby (Jackson)
- Pam Dollar (Mize)
- Donna Foster (Brookhaven)
- Shannon Hillman (Brandon)
- John McGinn (Jackson)
- Presley Posey (Flora)
- Ed Roberson (Madison)
- Cassandra Singleton (Philadelphia)
- Augusta Smith (Jackson)
- Rebecca Treadway (Tupelo)
- Jean Walley (Laurel)



L to R: 1st row – Cassandra Singleton; Lee Cole; Rebecca Treadway; Jin Joo Crosby  
2nd row – Shannon Hillman; Donna Foster; Ed Roberson; Josh Bower; Jean Walley; Mary Lundy Meruvia  
3rd row – Donald Brown; Brad Bounds; Presley Posey  
Not Pictured: Sharon Strong Coon; Pam Dollar; Chris Howard; John McGinn; Augusta Smith

*The public is always invited to attend the quarterly State Rehabilitation Council Meetings. Meeting locations, dates and times and are posted at [www.mdrs.ms.gov](http://www.mdrs.ms.gov) and the NFB Newslines. If you would like to attend a meeting, contact Betsy Simoneaux at [bsimoneaux@mdrs.ms.gov](mailto:bsimoneaux@mdrs.ms.gov) or call at 601-853-5336 for further information.*

# 2020 MISSISSIPPI

## STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

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### FFY 2020 Mississippi State Rehabilitation Council Activity Report

The State Rehabilitation Council held four quarterly meetings to advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVRB). A portion of the meetings were held virtually due the Covid-19 pandemic. The first meeting of the federal fiscal year was held on December 6, 2019. This meeting and the March 6, 2020 quarterly meeting were held in person before the pandemic affected Mississippi. The June 26, 2020 meeting was held virtually using the Zoom application. The Microsoft TEAMS network was used to hold the September 2020 meeting that was postponed to October 2, 2020 to allow for improved access. Agenda topics centered around the SRC functions. The State Rehabilitation Council reviewed and provided input at each meeting on selected topics related to:

- ❖ Reviewing, analyzing, and advising OVR/OVRB on the performance of their responsibilities related to eligibility and order of selection; the extent, scope, and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services; and functions that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes
- ❖ Partnering with OVR/OVRB in developing goals and priorities and evaluating the effectiveness in obtaining these goals
- ❖ Advising OVR/OVRB in the vocational rehabilitation portion of the Unified State Plan
- ❖ Conducting a review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, including a quarterly report from the Client Assistance Program (CAP) as well as a report of Due Process Hearings
- ❖ Submitting the SRC Annual Report and making it available to the public
- ❖ Coordinating activities with other named Councils within the state, with a specific agenda item quarterly for a report from the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
- ❖ Performing other relevant functions the SRC determines appropriate consistent with the purpose of OVR/OVRB

### **DECEMBER 6, 2019 QUARTERLY MEETING:**

The 2019 State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report was discussed at this meeting. Because of the many changes in WIOA, Ms. LaVonda Hart, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation, reported to the WIOA updates to the agency that were necessary to be made to the report. Ms. Hart explained that *Standards and Indicators* were no longer used to rate the OVR/OVRB programs, but *Common Performance Measures*. *Common Performance Measures* provide a different aspect to reviewing the numbers from OVR/OVRB. After providing a draft copy of the Annual Report and reviewing it, other changes that have taken place in year-end reporting to RSA were explained.

The RSA 911 Report, which previously was a year-end report, is now a quarterly report. This report is submitted to RSA four times during the Program Year. The Program Year '19 begins July 1, 2019 and ends June 30, 2020. It was noted that the SRC still operates on the federal fiscal year.



A copy of the RSA-TAC 20-02 was issued to all VR State agencies, SRCs and Technical Assistance Centers. The subject of RSA-TAC-2-02 was the Negotiations and Sanctions Guidance for the WIOA Core Programs. This guidance explains the process for negotiating levels of performance as required by section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of the WIOA. Also, included in this TAC were the two instances that a state may be sanctioned. The first one being for performance failure and the second for failure to report (section 116 (F)) of WIOA. The implementation of regulations and guidance how the departments will determine when it is necessary to sanction a state.

❖ **Formal SRC Input: *Responses to SRC Questionnaire – December 6, 2019 Quarterly Meeting***

**1. Do you have any comments or recommendation for input into the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services' Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation or Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVR/OVRB) service delivery system?**

- *The staff in both departments continue to commit themselves to providing quality services for clients needing rehabilitation services. I think both areas are doing a wonderful job. There is an increase in the number of people served.*
- *I think both areas are doing a wonderful job. There is an increase in the number of people served. Individuals and families are benefitting from these programs.*
- *That all depends on who is doing the service delivery. There are wonderful staff on MDRS and some that need some improvement.*
- *I would like to see the policy manual on the website for public view.*
- *Good work.*
- *1. I wish there was a way to pay the counselors more for their work.*  
*2. The information presented by OVRB was new for me. I was glad to understand who is served and how they are served.*  
*3. I am excited about the possibility of having a counselor at each college/university. That would be fabulous.*
- *None—*
- *I am excited to hear about all the internship and work opportunities the MDRS team is partnering with other workforce agencies and most importantly the private sector to help clients received future career opportunities.*

**2. Having heard this quarters report on the results of consumer satisfaction surveys, do you have any comments or recommendation for input into the service delivery process?**

- *It is good to see the mid-services comments from the consumer clients on their services. The one question that would be interesting to know would be how their service plan changes midway thru their services and noticing the impact of the change an impact to the client.*
- *Keep doing what they are. It's working.*
- *I wasn't able to see them this quarter but again it goes back to the districts and how they are being severed. There are new counselors and with time will do a much better job.*

- *Consumer satisfaction remains high. I believe the interim and the final consumer satisfaction surveys should be identical versus two instruments for comparison purposes. The way the interim survey is done by district seems to be working for feedback to staff.*
  - *Working well. Great concern for clients.*
  - *Is any effort made to talk with the individuals who were unsatisfied with their services to better understand their concerns or dissatisfaction?*
  - *The comments seemed overall very positive. I am very impressed with the scores as this must be a challenge to achieve such positive comments.*
  - *Great Job*
  - *Well Done.*
- 3. Did you have comments or recommendations for input in terms of potential service providers or discussions on the performance of service providers currently being used by OVR/OVRB?**
- *Develop more services providers for Blind Clients so that they might increase their work experience.*
  - *MDRS needs more eligible providers throughout the state to serve the whole state better.*
  - *It seems the service providers are assisting the agencies to achieve the desired outcomes.*
  - *None*
  - *No comments.*
  - *I am glad that we have so many service providers working with the Pre-ETS program.*
  - *Survey of patients using service providers that are recommending Voc Rehab. This may currently be in place.*
  - *Good Update at the SRC Meeting.*
- 4. Do you have any comments or recommendations concerning the presentation on the State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report?**
- *The report seems to be in detail in the scope of services and information provided in 2019.*
  - *I think it is a very good document. It shows all the good work that is being done.*
  - *I liked how MDRS was able to receive more funds to support the client overall. It was also nice to see more employment moves to help in some parts of the state.*
  - *I am pleased with the SRC Annual Report.*
  - *None*
  - *Great report. Much hard work clearly was put into the document.*
  - *Very well put together and detailed*
  - *Nothing at this time.*
  - *The annual report looks great. Thank you to the MDRS team for all the hard work.*



**Additional State Rehabilitation Council Member Activities during FFY 2020  
(December 6, 2019 Quarterly Meeting)**

**Responding to RSA Survey via NCSRC Request:** Mississippi SRC Responses to the RSA Survey was reviewed as was discussed in the September 11, 2019 meeting.

**Chairperson Nominations Were Solicited:** SRC Bylaws, Article XI, Section A, Chairperson was discussed and a nomination process for Chairperson was discussed to be done through Survey Monkey. The nominations were unanimous for Ms. Meruvia.

The **Website Committee was formed** to gather information in relation to the State Rehabilitation Council and its meetings and activities to be included on the MDRS website. **Members volunteering for this committee were Johnny McGinn, Pam Dollar and Mary Meruvia. Pam Dollar served as chairperson.** Council members were asked individually what contact information they wanted to be available on the website as SRC representatives for individuals with disabilities in the state. A photograph was taken of SRC members.

The **SRC Formal Survey Review Committee** was formed to review the survey instrument. The importance of each SRC member completing the survey after each quarterly meeting for formal input and advisement to MDRS for active memberships were discussed. **Volunteer committee members included Jin Joo Crosby, Mary Lundy Meruvia and Augusta Smith, with Ms. Crosby serving as committee chairperson.** The Survey Review Committee reviewed the possibility of revising and restructuring the questions on the Quarterly Survey that is provided to members at each meeting.

**MARCH 6, 2020 QUARTERLY MEETING:**

An explanation of the State Plan Hearing 2019 was held at the March quarterly meeting. The State Plan Hearing was held on February 5, 2020 and the SRC was invited to participate. The Hearing was held at the Madison Office Complex located at the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services agency. Copies of the state plan were provided to the nine remote sites throughout the state. Printed copies of the State Plan with a large print copy (for the Visually Impaired) were available at the Madison Office Complex. The State Plan was available on the MDRS website for the previous several weeks, with the option for the public to make comments or suggestions. 187 were in attendance which included attendees at the Madison Office and the remote sites (combined). Attendees included MDRS employees, clients, SRC Members, and the general public. The VR/VRB section of the Combined State Plan was submitted to the core partners prior to the March 2, 2020 deadline.

Following the explanation of the State Plan Hearing, MS. Hart discussed a summary of the Education and Training and the new *Measureable Skills Gains* (MSG) which are now used to evaluate VR/VRB organizations. This summary was also distributed to the Mississippi Legislature. The MSGs were not at the base line for PY 2020. The PY base line was at 13.1%. The results are based on cases, both open and closed. Previous reporting on *Standards and Indicators* used to be measured on closed cases only. Training on MSGs was presented to all VR/VRB Managers and

Counselors by Doug Keats, Mississippi's WINTAC representative. Prior to this training, Counselors did not understand the importance of physically inputting educational goals into AACE (data management system). This information had always been included in the case, not just input into AACE. Once all corrections were made, the MSGs should be higher.

The Blind Enterprise Program (BEP) presented to the Council on the successful operations of its program. Under the direction of the VRB Director, the BEP Director stated the mission is to provide quality products and customer services while maximizing employment and economic opportunities for legally Blind individuals in the vending/food services operations.

The first BEP program in Mississippi was established in Vicksburg in 1938 under the direction of the Randolph Sheppard Vending Stand Act of 1938. Today there are over 38 BEP Business persons in Mississippi.

❖ **Formal SRC Input: *Responses to SRC Questionnaire - March 6, 2020 Quarterly Meeting***

1. After attending the quarterly SRC meeting, what further input do you have for VR/VRB regarding the eligibility (including Order of Selection- OOS), the extent, scope and effectiveness of services provided; and functions performed by the Designated State Unit (DSU) that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes?
  - *I really like the idea of having the counselors have a more experienced counselor as their mentor.*
  - *Well done. I have no additional input.*
  - *Each VR Counselor should have an assistant for data management so that the VR Counselor can utilize time with their client for the best service towards achieving an employment outcome.*
  - *None.*
2. Having heard this quarters report on the results of the consumer satisfaction surveys, do you have any comments or recommendations for input into the service delivery process?
  - *I suggest changing the reporting language from "blind and non-blind" to VR or VRB participant. I suggest the rating scales for both measures (internal and external) of consumer satisfaction be changed to be the same. Questions of each measure should also be the same in my opinion. Consumer satisfaction survey summaries should be accessible to each employee of the VR and VRB.*
  - *The satisfaction surveys had some great feedback and are a great way to identify problem areas. Great work is being done and the surveys confirmed that!*
  - *None.*
  - *Well done. I have no additional input.*

3. After attending this Quarterly SRC meeting, what further input do you have for the State Plan goals and Priorities? What further comment(s) do you have in regards to evaluating the effectiveness of the VR/VRB Program in meeting the goals and priorities?
  - *Inform staff at all levels of the State Plan Goals and Priorities. Share ongoing "report cards" of meeting goals and priorities so that each employee understands the importance of their role in the agency.*
  - *None.*
  - *I have none at this time.*
  - *Well done, I have no further input.*
4. Do you have any comments or recommendations concerning the presentation on the Business Enterprise Program?
  - *I appreciated the opportunity to learn about the history of the Business Enterprise Program. The director and two young men currently part of the program did a nice job with their presentations. It sounds like the program really works well for entrepreneurial thinkers. It seems like more people would want to participate in Mississippi.*
  - *Great presentation of a great program.*
  - *This is a wonderful program.*
  - *The training that is provided to BEP participants sounds outstanding.*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Additional State Rehabilitation Council Member Activities during FFY 2020 (March 6, 2020 Quarterly Meeting)</b></p>
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**Website Committee Reported:** Changes made to the MDRS Website in relation to the SRC membership, meetings, and other activities were demonstrated. The section now includes a group picture with Council members' names, the Mississippi SRC Application, Council Members contact information, SRC Law, Federal Regulations link, and the MS SRC Purpose.

**Survey Review Committee Reported:** Jin Joo Crosby presented the committee's findings for the questionnaire and a draft of the new questionnaire questions. Several changes including simplifying questions and making the questions related to the SRC roles were presented to the Council. The changes were reviewed and approved by the Council. The questionnaire would be available to the Council by paper format and uploaded into Survey Monkey following each Council meeting.

**JUNE 26, 2020 QUARTERLY MEETING:**

The June 26, 2020 State Rehabilitation Council meeting was held virtually (due to Covid19 pandemic) which was a first for SRC-Mississippi. Using the Zoom program and conference calling, our SRC members were able to 'tune' in to the meeting. Although there were a few issues to resolve, the meeting ran smoothly. It was good to see the Council members, even if by computer screen.

The Mississippi Partners for Informed Choice (MPIC) was the program highlighted for the meeting. MPIC reported on the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program available to all SSI/SSDI recipients during the pandemic. As of May 2020, six CWICs (Certified Work Incentive Coordinators) had 745 referrals for information and provided 451 Mississippians with WIPA services. CWICs incorporated Zoom, SKYPE, FaceTime, mail, and telephones for reaching Mississippians throughout the COVID19 crisis. They also held seven Outreach Peer Support Group Meetings by phone and Zoom.

The Independent Living Services (ILB) program was presented. ILB includes the Older Blind Program and the Part B Program. The Older Blind Program serves consumers who are legally Blind and over 55 years of age and gainful employment is not feasible, but living independently is. Part B serves consumers who are legally Blind and have a significant secondary disability where gainful employment is not feasible but independent living is.

❖ **Formal SRC Input: *Responses to SRC Questionnaire – June 26, 2020 Quarterly Meeting***

1. After attending the quarterly SRC meeting, what further input do you have for VR/VRB regarding the eligibility (including Order of Selection- OOS), the extent, scope and effectiveness of services provided; and functions performed by the Designated State Unit (DSU) that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes?
  - *I feel that everything is being done to continue services as much as possible. Everyone has to be safe.*
  - *None at this time.*
  - *I was impressed with the timely response to COVID-19 and the dedication to keep staff and clients safe yet continue services.*
  - *None noted at this time.*
  - *N/A*
2. Having heard this quarters report on the results of the consumer satisfaction surveys, do you have any comments or recommendations for input into the service delivery process?
  - *I think great services are being provided. The negative comments are being addressed. Keep up the good work.*
  - *I think it is important to continually try to reach out to people who are unsatisfied and try to help them.*
  - *Overall, surveys indicated satisfaction. Staff review the comments both positive and negative for consideration for needed changes.*
  - *None at this time*
  - *NA*

3. After attending this Quarterly SRC meeting, what further input do you have for the State Plan goals and Priorities? What further comment(s) do you have in regards to evaluating the effectiveness of the VR/VRB Program in meeting the goals and priorities?
- *They are doing a good job maintaining during the COVID-19 crisis. Keep supporting and encouraging.*
  - *None at this time.*
  - *It would be good to hear from the placement staff next quarter to hear about their approach to a changing labor market after COVID-19.*
  - *None at this time*
  - *NA*
- 4A. Do you have any comments or recommendations concerning the presentation on the Mississippi Partners for Informed Choice?
- *Good Job!*
  - *None at this time*
  - *The MPIC service is a wise investment to help individuals make informed choices about their benefits and employment impact prior to VR funds being spent.*
  - *None at this time*
  - *NA*
- 4B. Do you have any comments or recommendations concerning the presentation on the Independent Living for the Blind Program?
- *Very good report*
  - *None at this time*
  - *This service is very valuable to allow individuals to remain independent in their homes and communities.*
  - *None at this time*
  - *NA*

<p><b><i>Additional State Rehabilitation Council Member Activities during FFY 2020 (June 26, 2020 Quarterly Meeting)</i></b></p>
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***SRC Membership Training was Recommended for Active Membership:*** The National Coalition for the State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) was promoted. The NCSRC is made up of SRCs around the country. This group advocates for and works in partnership with the national public vocational rehabilitations system's continual quest for excellence. NCSRC's desire is to be the premier national organization of the will and the consumer voice to enhance the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities through the public rehabilitation system. NCSRC hosts a bi-monthly teleconference to discuss a variety of topics including membership, and Council involvement. Council members were encouraged to join the teleconferences to learn about SRC. The NCSRC has published the 2019 Guidebook for SRC Chairpersons, Members and Administrators. This guidebook was provided to all Council Members.

**Covid-19 Response:** Mr. Chris Howard, MDRS Executive Director, informed the SRC members on the agency's decision to restrict public access to the MDRS offices across the state due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This is to protect MDRS Employees and Clients.

The SRC letter sent to Governor Tate Reeves, from the MS SRC to consider maintaining MDRS current funding and staffing levels during this unprecedented time was discussed.

**Nomination Committee Formed:** At the June 26, 2020 meeting, Chairperson Meruvia, discussed the need to form a Nomination Committee. The committee will meet to discuss the federal regulations regarding the required positions that are to be on the SRC Council and that all qualifications are met to keep the SRC in compliance with the law and regulations, as well as to have a continual pool of qualified nominees available to fill vacancies. **Don Brown, Lee Cole, and Shannon Hillman volunteered to be on this committee with Mr. Brown serving as chairman.**

The committee was emailed NCSRC call information regarding a presentation to be held in August 2020. Don Brown, Mary Meruvia and Jin Joo Crosby along with Betsy Simoneaux were able to attend the NCSRC Training.

#### **OCTOBER 2, 2020 QUARTERLY MEETING:**

The October meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams and conference call. It seemed somewhat easier as most council members have been meeting by some aspect of virtual program and most council members were able to attend.

The Office of Business Development (OBD) has been busy through the pandemic. Working with individuals with disabilities and assisting them in finding jobs require companies to be involved where they can learn and understand how VR/VRB can provide good employees for their businesses. Working with Mr. Howard and Mr. Bishop on developing a new plan of action has been the focus of OBD. Unemployment moved from single digits to double digits in a matter of weeks. Businesses have started to reopen and people need to return to work. Businesses are still having issues in finding good people to employ.

Mr. Woodard stated that with all the obstacles in place, OBD has had a steady increase in businesses hiring individuals with disabilities even with the Business Development Specialist (BDS) teleworking from home. The strong relationships they have developed with their businesses and using the phone, Zoom, and Teams, have had a positive effect on the numbers as they have steadily increased during the past five months.

Mississippi VR Virtual Workforce Tours will begin this month. The tours will visit businesses in the actual workplace, interview clients and counselors via Zoom or Teams. This will enable BDS to continue to determine the businesses' needs and how VR/VRB can help them in finding good, responsible employees. Some of the virtual tours to be held will be with FedEx, Sephora, Fastenal, MSU Access and Student Services. More will be held in the future and MDRS personnel, along with SRC members, are invited to attend these tours.



❖ **Formal SRC Input: *Responses to SRC Questionnaire – October 2, 2020 Quarterly Meeting***

1. After attending the quarterly SRC meeting, what further input do you have for VR/VRB regarding the eligibility (including Order of Selection- OOS), the extent, scope and effectiveness of services provided; and functions performed by the Designated State Unit (DSU) that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes?
  - *Based on the reports it seems that VR and VRB are responding to the pandemic appropriately and have put in place needed changes to continue providing services in the safest and most effective way possible at this time.*
  - *No Comment.*
  - *None at this time.*
  - *The staff is doing an excellent job even through this crisis.*
  - *Very good information.*
  - *No.*
  - *No, none noted at this time.*
  - *N/A*
2. Having heard this quarters report on the results of the consumer satisfaction surveys, do you have any comments or recommendations for input into the service delivery process?
  - *This report is helpful in knowing which area are doing best and where changes and/or additional staff training may be needed.*
  - *I have no additional comments or recommendations.*
  - *Continue Process as is.*
  - *I am extremely pleased with the responses in the consumer satisfaction surveys. Excellent support has continued to be provided under difficult circumstances.*
  - *None at this time.*
  - *No Comments*
  - *Everything seems to be going well.*
  - *NA*
3. After attending this Quarterly SRC meeting, what further input do you have for the State Plan goals and Priorities? What further comment(s) do you have in regards to evaluating the effectiveness of the VR/VRB Program in meeting the goals and priorities?
  - *Would love to see the Project SEARCH model expanded to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have already exited school.*
  - *Great Job.*
  - *No comment*
  - *None at this time.*
  - *None at this time.*
  - *No comments.*
  - *I don't have anything to add at this time.*

- NA

**4. Do you have any comments or recommendations concerning the presentation on the Office of Business Development.**

- *This program seems to be making great progress. Keep up the good work.*
- *It sounds like Josh Woodard's team is working hard on building partnerships and thinking about creative solutions to help establish employment opportunities.*
- *No Comment.*
- *None at this time.*
- *None at this time*
- *A wonderful presentation. I'm proud of the work being done.*
- *Have adapted to the changes and developed innovative ways to help Mississippians gain employment opportunities.*

**Additional State Rehabilitation Council Member Activities during FFY 2020  
(October 2, 2020 Quarterly Meeting)**

**Covid Effects Acknowledgment:** SRC Members took a brief pause to remember all those in our state and country that have suffered during this pandemic. Many citizens have been affected in some way due to the virus, whether financially, physically or otherwise. The Council expressed thankfulness for MDRS and all they do to assist individuals with disabilities in our state.

**Budget Committee Formed:** The RSA-17 VR Financial Report will begin requesting the Innovation and Expansion expenditures that were spent on the SRC resource plan during the previous year. Therefore, a Budget Committee was needed to understand past expenses, develop a future resource plan, and to monitor the plan quarterly. **Council Members volunteering for this committee were Rebecca Treadway, Jin Joo Crosby and Pam Dollar. Rebecca Treadway will serve as chairperson.** As of the end of September, this committee had not yet met.

**Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVRB):**

OVR and OVRB are advocates of the State Rehabilitation Council's mission and assist the SRC with its responsibilities. The offices of OVR and OVRB provide liaison support as well as administrative, technical assistance, and coordination in support of the SRC's responsibilities. OVR and OVRB provide a VR Program Specialist as a liaison to coordinate activities between MDRS and the SRC. The VR Program Specialist and Program Officers provide administrative support, when necessary, to facilitate the work of the SRC. A Program Specialist is assigned, as requested, to assist the SRC members with specific mandated duties.

**Administrative, technical, and liaison support offer the following:**

- ❖ In-person meetings – coordinate dates, times, location, distribute meeting communications and handouts to SRC Council members and attendees

- ❖ Virtual Meetings – provide virtual meeting communications and reference handouts to SRC Council Members and attendees
- ❖ Meals/Refreshments – coordination of meal selection, deliveries, and location
- ❖ Communications/Bulletins – communications are distributed to members regarding quarterly meetings, special meetings, agendas, and follow up agenda items
- ❖ Minutes – meeting recordings, preparation of the official legal record of the council meetings, and coordinate amendments to previous minutes
- ❖ Technical Support – technical assistance is provided during meetings for presentations, etc. and coordination of technical equipment availability
- ❖ Website – preparation and coordination through MDRS personnel for SRC communication uploads to the MDRS website
- ❖ SRC Annual Report – Prepare the SRC Annual Report and coordinate upload to the MDRS website

# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

## *Annual 2019 – 2020 Results for the Closed Ended Questions*

The ratings for the various services consumers received are presented below using the average (mean) score given to each item by all respondents interviewed. If an item did not apply to a particular respondent or if the consumer did not know or refused to rate an item the consumer's response is not included in calculating the average score for that item. The seven items rated are in Table 1 (for verbiage, reference questionnaire.) Chart 1 is included for an easy visual comparison. The respondents were asked to rate the items (Questions Q1 to Q4 and questions Q7 to Q9) on a scale of 1 to 5, with '1' being *very poor* and '5' being *very good*. Thus, a high score indicates that the service was *very good* and a low score indicates a rating of *very poor*.

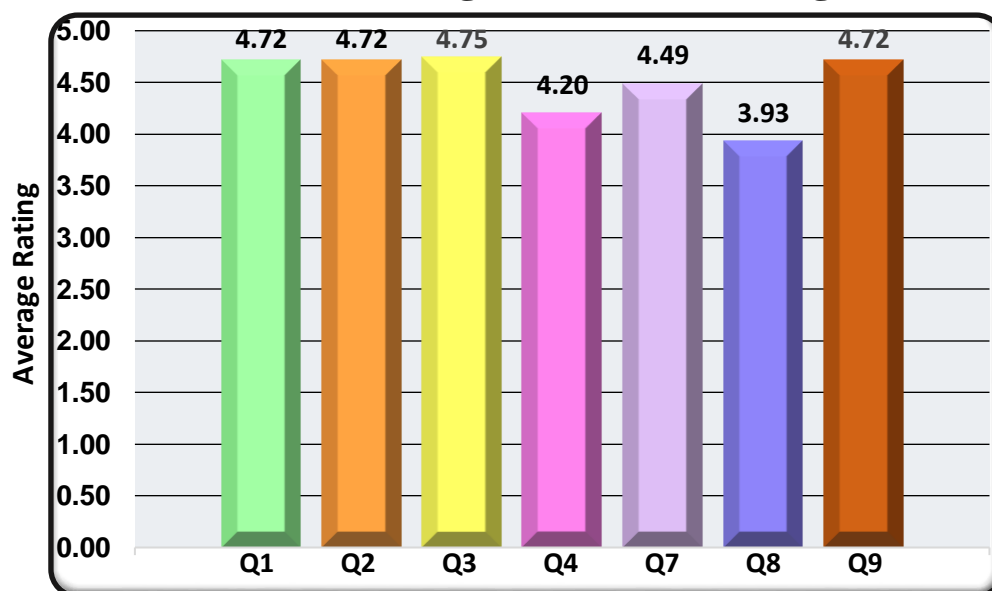
**Table 1 - Service Ratings by Consumer**

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

	# of Consumers	Average Rating Mean
Q1 The help the OVR staff provided at the time you applied for VR services	1,013	4.72
Q2 The help from the OVR staff during the planning of your services	1,009	4.72
Q3 The help from the OVR staff when you were receiving your VR Services	1,007	4.75
Q4 The help you received from other agencies or service providers	169	4.20
Q7 Your employment outcome	852	4.49
Q8 Employment benefits provided by your new employer	520	3.93
Q9 Overall, how do you rate the services you received?	1,008	4.72

*Note: The items in Table 1 and Chart 1 are labeled Q1 to Q4 and Q7 to Q9. These are the names of the questions in the above questionnaire.*

**Chart 1 - Average Consumer Ratings**





The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) managed over 15,000 consumer cases during the Federal Fiscal Year 2020. OVR's overall mission is to provide successful competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Competitive integrated employment emphasizes employment within work settings, competitive wages and benefits, and advancement opportunities equivalent to jobs held by individuals without disabilities. Employment in the community and economic self-sufficiency can be achieved with appropriate vocational rehabilitation services and supports.

OVR continued to implement and offer extensive training to staff to provide, collect and document regulations as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). OVR training is a continuous process and we will continue to ensure that the OVR staff, specifically VR Counselors who provide direct services, possess a 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge of the labor market. With the utilization of performance development strategies, VR can effectively measure the services provided to individuals with disabilities. VR's approach is to engage with the consumer to assist them with skill development and to obtain credentials to compete for employment opportunities in today's competitive labor market.

In-depth focus of public awareness through outreach activities presents positive opportunities of VR service offerings to individuals with disabilities. Connecting with this population will develop the VR program to effectively serve these individuals with career path options thereby increasing their ability to achieve self-sufficiency.

OVR's concentration on serving students with disabilities has developed into progressive relationships with schools and providers throughout Mississippi. These partnerships have aligned our services with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements. These working relationships have helped the educational community gain an understanding of the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Program. The Pre-ETS Program is designed to assist Mississippi students with disabilities to understand their career paths, make career decisions, and explore opportunities. After the provisions of these services, students are then ready to make an informed decision regarding post-secondary training and employment opportunities.

We are pleased to have the Mississippi State Rehabilitation Council as an important partner in the success of the OVR program and the consumers we serve. We appreciate the continued support of our MDRS Executive Director as we continue our mission to provide exceptional vocational rehabilitation services. We look forward to the continued partnership and support as we provide Mississippi job seekers with disabilities with the highest quality employment and training services.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'LaVonda Hart', written in a cursive style.

LaVonda C. Hart, MS, CRC  
Director, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

## 2020 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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The OVR Program was able to provide services to over **15,400** Mississippians with disabilities to receive training and skills for meaningful employment during the past year. **2,506** Mississippians with disabilities became employed after receiving OVR services.

OVR services are provided through the federal grant (78.7 percent) through Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), our federal partner, which is state matched with appropriation (21.3 percent) from the Mississippi Legislature. Without these funds, over **15,400** Mississippians with disabilities in need of services would not have had access to VR services. Under Section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA, there are six Primary Indicators of Performance.

OVR will continue to submit quarterly 911 data in order to establish baseline information for our common performance measures. OVR received data on the WIOA new performance indicators from the quarterly data dashboard report from the RSA Dashboard. The RSA Dashboard, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter data for FY 2020 (July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020) indicated the following:

- **Employment Rate - 2nd Quarter After Exit: 55.2%** - The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program (for Title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit);
- **Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit: 74.0%** - The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program (for Title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit);
- **Credential Attainment: 22.8%** - The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program;
- **Measurable Skill Gains: 59.8%** - The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment.
- **Effectiveness in Serving Employers:** WIOA Sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) requires the Departments to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers. The departments are piloting three approaches designed to gauge three critical workforce needs of the business community. *(Data is not available yet)*



# Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation

## ADDITIONAL VR PROGRAM SERVICES AND HIGHLIGHTS

- **2,899** individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind or Late Deafened received services resulting in **1,149** being successfully employed.
- **500** plus hours of interpreting service were provided by the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- AbilityWorks served **1,177** clients and AbilityWorks provided Assessment/Work Adjustment services to **1,377** individuals
- **15** Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) known as AbilityWorks are operated by MDRS.
- **955** Mississippians received Section 511- Career Counseling Information and Referral (CCIR)

## OVR: SERVING MISSISSIPPI STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

### Pre-Employment Transition Services:

Students with disabilities, ages 14-21, receive the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) listed below as needed to help prepare for post-secondary education such as college, vocational schools, etc.

- ❖ Counseling on opportunities for post-secondary education such as college, vocational schools, etc.;
- ❖ Training in self-advocacy, social skills, and work-based learning experiences including internships, on-the-job training and apprenticeships;
- ❖ Peer Mentoring Program at MSU, USM and NEMCC; and/or
- ❖ Job Exploration Counseling

### Supported Employment:

Many clients require more extensive support services in order to adjust to or remain on the job. Supported employment can provide a vocational training instructor or job coach to provide training on the job at the jobsite.

- ❖ **88** Mississippians were served by Supported Employment Program
- ❖ **57** obtained and retained employment
- ❖ **52** Closed in Supported Employment
- ❖ **51** New Support Contracts Signed
- ❖ Success of Referrals received for Clients: **IDD-35; 1915i-49; SMI-112**

## **Project Search:**

Project SEARCH provides internships and education leading to Competitive Integrated Employment. Project SEARCH Mississippi is administered by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services and is a joint partnership between MDRS, a business and a school district.

Project SEARCH success continued when a site was launched with The University of MS Medical Center (UMMC), and RCSD (Rankin County School District). Seven out of nine interns are now employed.

## **Project Search Mississippi - Successes:**

- ❖ Over **50** individuals with disabilities have graduated from Project SEARCH Mississippi since Project SEARCH UMMC launched in August 2018.
- ❖ **22** of those individuals have gained employment.
- ❖ **14** individuals are currently participating in a 320-hours paid internship which will result in gainful employment.
- ❖ **50** interns are currently participating in Project SEARCH in seven locations across the state.



### **Current Sites/Participating Schools**

University Medical Center-Jackson/  
Rankin County Schools

Baptist Hospital-Jackson/  
New Summit (Adding Clinton Public Schools (in 2020)

Forrest General-Hattiesburg/  
(Hattiesburg, Petal and Lamar County Schools)

North Mississippi Medical Center-  
Tupelo/ Tupelo Schools

South Central Regional Medical Center-  
Laurel/ Jones County Schools

Merit Health River  
Region-Vicksburg/Vicksburg-Warren Schools

Baptist Medical Center  
Attala-Kosciusko/Kosciusko-Attala Schools

## **OVR/OVRB Provided:**

- ❖ **3,100** potentially eligible students (VR) with disabilities ages 14-21 were provided Pre-Employment Transition services (Pre-ETS).
- ❖ **4,060** students/youth with disabilities were provided career and training services.
- ❖ **76** students with disabilities obtained competitive integrated employment upon transitioning from high school.
- ❖ **3,522** individuals with disabilities received training services that will lead to Competitive Integrated Employment

# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

## DISTRICTS SERVED

### District I

**Kenisha Black, District Manager**

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

51 County Road 166

Oxford, MS 38655

(662) 234-3171

### District II

**Keely Green, District Manager**

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

2620 Traceland Drive

Tupelo, MS 38801

(662) 842-1010

### District III

**Kristin Brock, District Manager**

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

104 Professional Plaza

Greenwood, MS 38930

(662) 453-6172

### District IV

**Shondra Gathings, District Manager**

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

207 Industrial Park Road

Starkville, MS 39759

(662) 323-9594

### District V

**Janet Darden, District Manager**

*(Hinds, Warren)*

3895 Beasley Road

Jackson, MS 39213

(601) 898-7004

### District VI

**Mary Habig, District Manager**

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

1032 Center Pointe Blvd.

Pearl, MS 39208

(601) 706-5600

### District VII

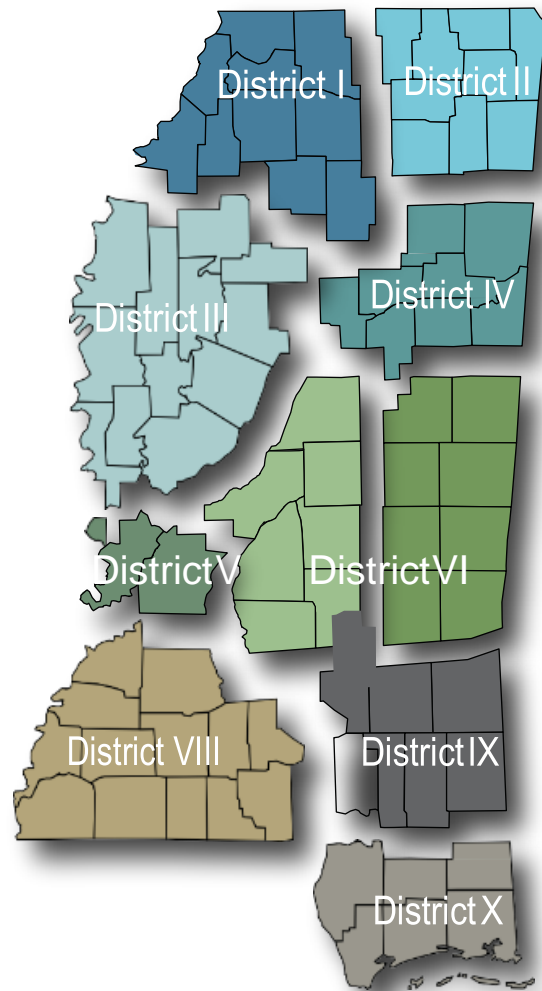
**Sandra Sanders, District Manager**

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

1003 College Drive

Meridian, MS 39304

(601) 483-3881



### District VIII

**Jeanette Yates, District Manager**

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

1221 Parklane Road, NE

McComb, MS 39648

(601) 249-2498

### District IX

**Jean Walley, District Manager**

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

17 J.M. Tatum Industrial Drive, Suite 130

Hattiesburg, MS 39401

(601) 545-5619

### District X

**Kathy Woodard, District Manager**

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

13486 Fastway Lane

Gulfport, MS 39503

(228) 575-3789

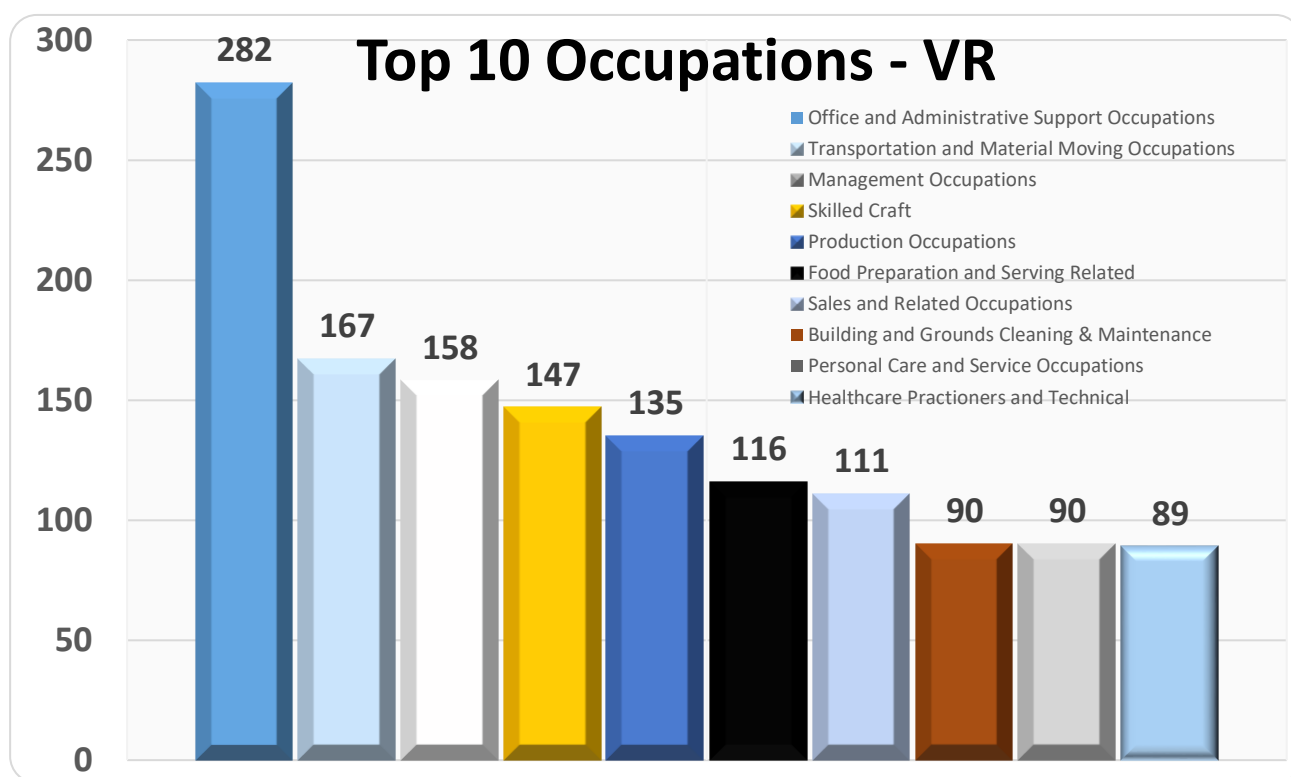
# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

## EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES – VR CONSUMERS

### TOP 10 OCCUPATIONS – INTEGRATED SETTING

Below is a chart showing the Top 10 Occupations of VR Consumers and the number of clients that were employed in these occupations.

OCCUPATION	NUMBER OF CLIENTS
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	282
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	167
Management Occupations	158
Skilled Craft	147
Production Occupations	135
Food Preparation and Serving Related	116
Sales and Related Occupations	111
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	90
Personal Care and Service Occupations	90
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	89



# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

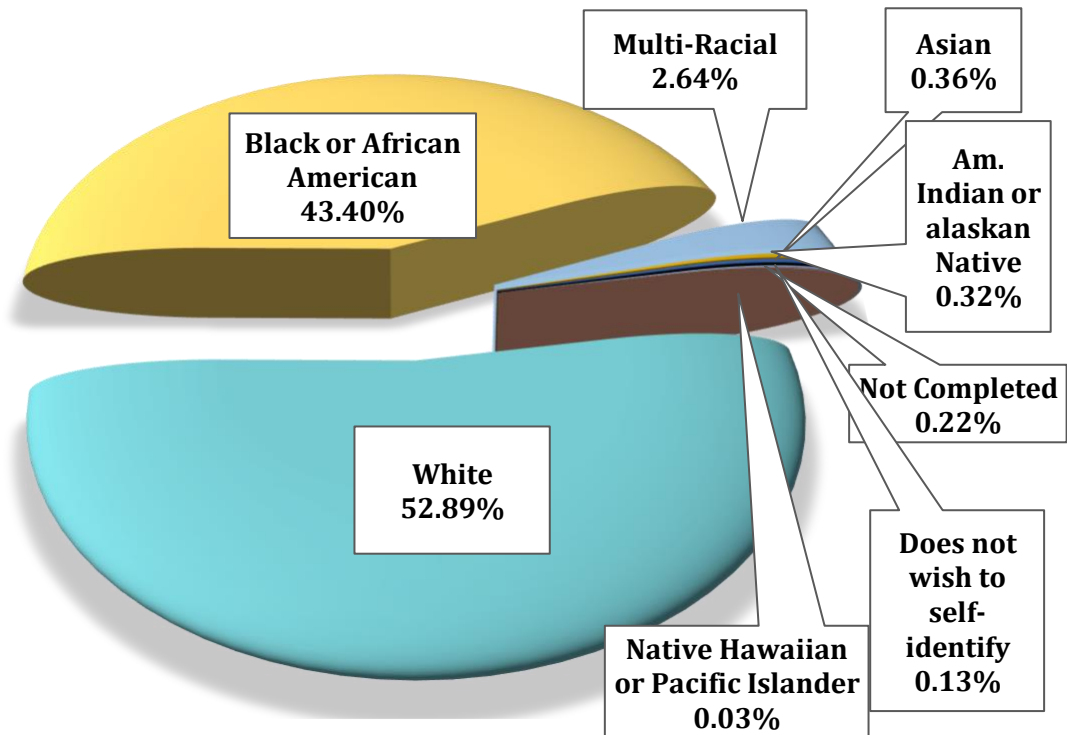
## DEMOGRAPHICS OF CLIENTS SERVED 2020

### ETHNICITY / RACE - VR

Ethnicity / Race	Clients	%
White	8159	52.89%
Black or African American	6695	43.40%
Multi-Racial	407	2.64%
Asian	56	0.36%
Am. Indian or Alaskan Native	49	0.32%
Not Completed	34	0.22%
Does not wish to self-identify	20	0.13%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5	0.03%

*VR-Ethnicity/Race Statistics includes Potentially Eligible*

### VR – Ethnicity/Race Demographics 10/1/19 - 9/30/20





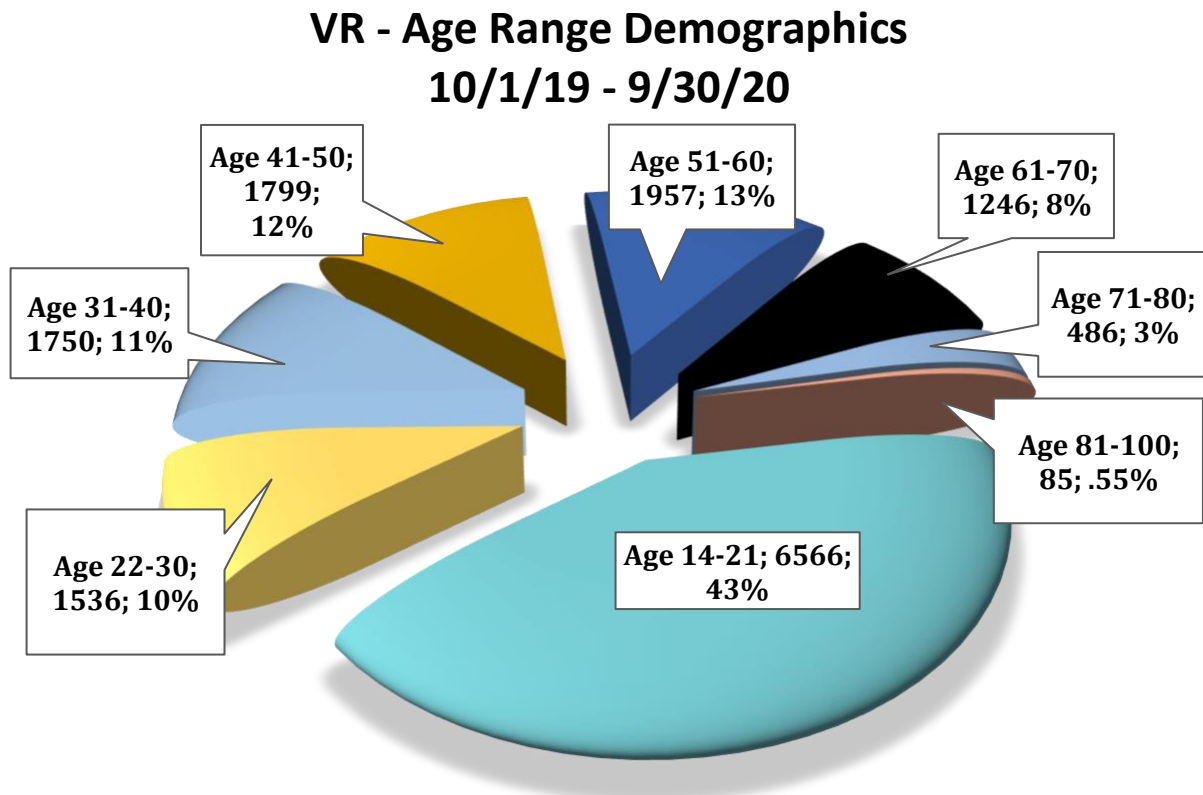
# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF CLIENTS SERVED 2020

### AGE RANGE – VR

Age Range	Clients	%
21 and under	6566	42.57%
22-30	1536	9.96%
31-40	1750	11.35%
41-50	1799	11.66%
51-60	1957	12.69%
61-70	1246	8.08%
71-80	486	3.15%
81-100	85	0.55%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,425</b>	

*VR-Age Range Statistics includes Potentially Eligible.*



# OVR SUCCESS STORIES – *Client Spotlight*

## ***Standing Tall***

**Client - Bryce Alexander**

"It's phenomenal! If you told me five years ago I'd be standing up today, I wouldn't believe you. I didn't think the technology was there. I didn't think the opportunity was there five-years ago - 10-years ago - 19 years ago, but I had no idea that it was there. Again, you just got to keep your eyes open to what's around you and look for the possibility. It's there - you just got to look for it. I did and I got it and now I'm sitting in a chair that stands me up. I'm 6'3" again when I want to be and that's a pretty awesome feeling! I'm no longer the short guy in the room."  
- Bryce Alexander

Bryce has been a paraplegic for 19 years but he chooses to live life to the fullest. When he was 22 years-old, living in Ohio, Bryce was in a truck accident that left him with a broken back and he never walked again. As he started the journey of rehabilitation, Bryce battled thoughts of depression and despair. He says his motivation to live came from his little boy. Bryce shared, "Here's this one year old little boy that crawled up in my lap and, I looked down at him, and the first thought that I got was - if I give up now it's the only thing I'm gonna ever teach this kid. That kind of changed things for me because I did want to give up. As I left the hospital I had no intentions of doing anything. I just I really wanted to give up. It sucked! I lost everything, at least I felt that way, so that changed things. My kid kind of saved my life!"

Bryce moved to Gautier, Mississippi a couple of years ago to avoid the Ohio winters when he decided to return to school. The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services worked with Bryce to provide the equipment he needed for his dream job as a precision machinist. Bryce researched and decided he wanted to attend the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College located in Jackson County.

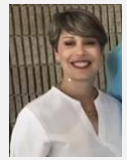
MDRS ordered the chair for Bryce. One day, while the VR Counselor, Diane Burnett, was out of the office doing PR, Bryce arrived at the office showing off his chair to the assistant. The assistant videoed Bryce and sent it to the Counselor via text. Diane smiled from ear-to-ear. The request for a stand-up wheelchair was a 'first' for Diane. Bryce requested a manual wheelchair versus a mechanical chair because, as Bryce said, "...if it breaks I can fix it." Bryce is self-sufficient and is thankful for the opportunity to have independence provided by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services.



Bryce shared with MDRS, "Thank you!! Seriously, from the bottom of my heart. Thank you so much! It's not hard to shed a couple tears of joy for it, seriously! They day I got the chair, I mean.... It's a whole different level of things that I get to do now that I couldn't do before. Standing tall again."

## **PAYING IT FORWARD**

***Rachel Payne – Client Spotlight***



Rachel Payne faced death at an early age when she was diagnosed with an incurable autoimmune disorder. Her kidneys shut down ---she was not a candidate for transplant. Rachel was told there was no hope and she would not survive.

Rachel said, "He looked at me straight in my face and said 'Well it's time for you to make your final arrangements. You will not be considered for a transplant because frankly it's going to be a waste of a good kidney.' And I was like, I was newly single, my son was three and I said, with all due respect, doctor, I can't tell my son to prepare to live without his mom and he said, 'You can do whatever you want but a Transplant Coordinator is not going to talk to you.' And I said, you don't know me and I walked out of his office."

Rachel was angry but that anger fueled her inspiration to not give up. She finally found a Kidney Transplant Coordinator who was willing to defy the odds, take her case, and give her hope. She was added to the transplant list and started dialysis treatments. However, the treatment of dialysis caused severe seizures and she spent months in the CICU. Rachel said, "But I had a bull to fight and I told people, 'don't worry, I'm just off fighting a bull.' And I would literally picture myself grabbing this bull by the horns. I would dig my heels in grit my teeth and I fought." One night she got the call she had been waiting for - Rachel was one of three patients who could be a possible match for a kidney. "And the doctor comes in he says, 'Well Rachel this gentleman was an adamant organ donor. He was a lawyer from Texas and a retired bull rider.' And I looked at my mom and I looked at him and I said doc, that kidney is mine."

Rachel was a perfect match and her life began again. She was determined to become a nurse and help others like those who helped save her life. She did it through the 'Ticket to Work Program' through MDRS. Her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Diane Burnette, walked her through the process of choosing a nursing program and a school and helped Rachel complete the paperwork to meet the requirements for getting the cost covered by MDRS.

Rachel was impressed with the services the VR Counselor provided. The VR Counselor visited the president of the nursing school to discuss the demands and challenges of the nursing program and how it may impact Rachel's health. Rachel shared, "That was really kind of cool because they were looking at every single aspect because they wanted to set me up for success. They wanted me to be able to follow my passion but in a realistic manner." Diane Burnette is confident that Rachel will meet her goal. Nineteen years to the month that Rachel was told to make her final arrangements, she became an RN.

Rachel is now a nurse at Providence Hospital in Mobile, Alabama. She is determined to not only provide medical care but to also provide hope, love, and compassion to her patients. That is what we hope for and wish for when we are placing nurses in positions. Patients need to feel loved and cared for when they are at their most vulnerable.

Rachel has two messages in telling her story, one for other MDRS clients and one for organ donors. It's important to let people on disability know that that is not the extent of who you are. You can have a fulfilling career. You can make a contribution and that is very important for people to know.

*"I'm paying it forward; I'm trying to live a life worthy of that gift because that IS a GIFT." – Rachel Payne*



## Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." - Helen Keller*

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am proud to present the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVRB) Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2020 (FFY). In the pages that follow, you will learn more about our efforts over the last 12 months in assisting Mississippians living with blindness and/or visual impairment (s) receive quality employment and measurable skill gains.

The Year 2020, will be the year that will go down in history. COVID – 19 controlled almost every aspect of our life; however, our OVRB remained steadfast and vigilant. During the pandemic, OVRB Staff operated as essential workers by continuing to provide over the phone training, delivering of aids/appliances on the porch of clients, reading CARES Act information to our blind vendors and making sure they understood the law as it applies to Social Security Benefits.

Our division provides vocational rehabilitation and independent living services to persons who are blind or visually impaired. Vocational Rehabilitation services enable persons who are blind or visually impaired to be competitively employed. Independent living services enable blind or visually impaired persons to live independently in their own homes and communities. The majority of independent living services are provided to seniors who have lost vision due to age related blindness. The services are provided by rehabilitation teachers and vocational rehabilitation counselors.

In Fiscal Year 2020, OVRB served over 1,700 Mississippians with visual disabilities, and more than 320 of those individuals closed successfully in Competitive Integrated Employment. OVRB has and will continue to implement strategies focused on improving opportunities that lead to skills and credential attainment for our fellow Mississippians who are blind and visually impaired.

OVRB is committed to providing quality services to assist Mississippi's citizens who are blind, deafblind, or visual impaired in achieving their maximum level of employment, education, and personal independence through our 93 employees who are employed throughout our state. This report will highlight improvements and change for every Mississippian who received services from the employees in OVRB. Your report will have an update from the following areas:

- Northern/ Southern Region
- Business Enterprise Program (BEP)
- Addie McBryde Center for the Blind
- Mississippi Partners for Informed Choice (M-PIC)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dorothy L. Young".

Dorothy L. Young, M.S., C.V.S.

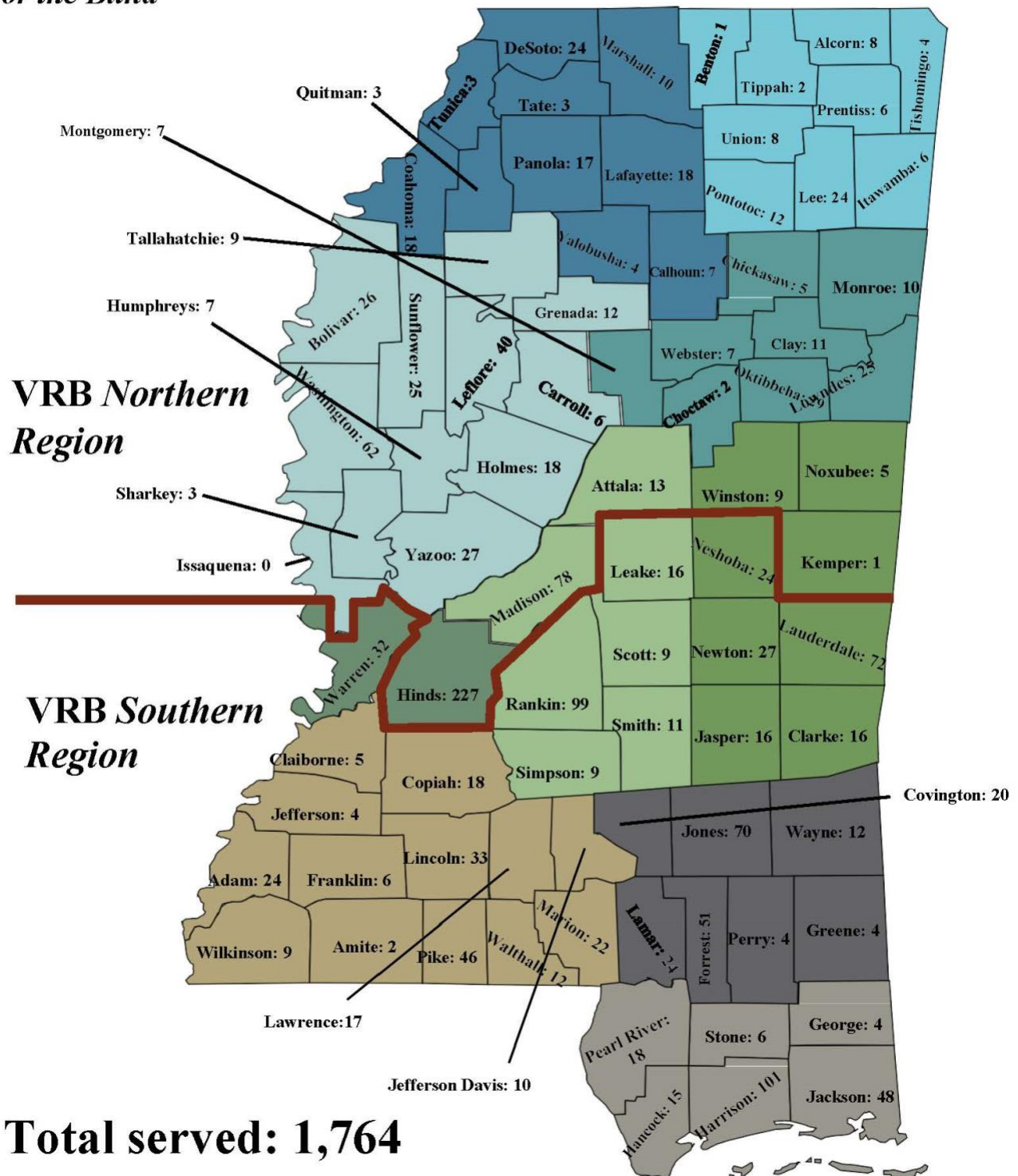
Director, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind  
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

## REGIONAL MAP

### OVRB Total Served per County

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation  
for the Blind



# **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind**

## **OVERVIEW**

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The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind is divided into two regions located in the North and South. Each region is staffed with qualified professionals who provide vocational rehabilitation counseling, education, independent living skills, orientation and mobility training, low vision rehabilitation technology and Deafblind services for eligible Mississippians. Each client works with their OVRB Counselor to develop their Individualized Plan of Services (IPE) to mirror their strengths, abilities, and capabilities for successful employment outcomes.

In preparation for the 2019 SRC Annual Report, the Regional Office Managers summarized key programs activities and accomplishments in addressing employment and independence.

The Northern and Southern Region key program highlights are presented in the following sections for period beginning October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020.

# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

## OVRB REGIONS – SERVED: HIGHLIGHTS

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### OVRB SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE

#### OVRB SOUTHERN – VOCATIONAL PROGRAM SUMMARY:

- ❖ 304 New Applications
- ❖ 236 New employment plans developed
- ❖ 199 Closed successfully in Competitive Integrated Employment
- ❖ 957 Total Served in the Southern Region

#### OVRB SOUTHERN - HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ 15 students were provided with Pre-ETS.
- ❖ 10 graduated high school and entered college or a training program.
- ❖ 32 clients received Post-Secondary Training services (youth and adult).
- ❖ 10 students participated in the NFB Peer Mentoring Program.
- ❖ 54 Outreach activities were completed by VRB South to various community partners.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS YEAR:

Due to the Covid19 restrictions and CDC Guidelines, the OVRB Southern Region has persevered to adhere to safely social distancing and to keep others safe. The staff has learned to Telework efficiently while continuing to serve individuals with blindness and visual impairments despite the many challenges. The Southern Region staff is committed and dedicated to put the client 'first'.

#### INNOVATIVE PRACTICES WITH POSITIVE IMPACTS ON STAFF OR CLIENTS:

To efficiently provide services in a timely manner, the Southern Region staff submits Activity Due Reports monthly to effectively manage the caseloads. Staff remains informed on the latest information through scheduled conference calls which has provided them with the data to better serve the clients.



## OVRB Southern – Client Spotlight

The consumer, a 51 year old single female, requested services from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVRB). For over a year, the consumer had been unemployed due to diminished vision and other health issues. The client requested assistance with physical restoration and assistance with becoming self-sufficient by gaining employment. At that time, she relied on her parents for financial support (rent/food) and never expected to be in this predicament. She reported having self-esteem and confidence issues due to her vision difficulties and the need to rely on others for financial support. The consumer reported anxiety and depression due to the current situation.

Medical documentation received by the counselor established the presence of a disability due to vision loss and other health issues. Based on medical information review, it was clear that the consumer was capable of benefiting from physical restoration services and assistance with job placement services from Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind. The consumer required vocational rehabilitation services in order to engage in her chosen field of employment. Prior to losing her job, the consumer was working as a Health Documentation Specialist. Due to her diminished vision and other health issues, the consumer could no longer perform the essential functions of her job. Consumer was determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and the case was moved into 'Eligibility' status.

Planned services provided to the consumer was surgery of both eyes, prescription medication, and Counseling and Guidance services. Services provided encouraged the consumer with social, emotional and personal development, and Job Search/Job Preparation Services. The Job Search/Prep services provided the consumer with the resume and cover letter assistance, job networking skills and job interview preparation. The consumer also received Job Placement Services and participated in a Training Internship Program which resulted in Competitive Integrated Employment.

Prior to coming to Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind, the consumer could not work due to diminished vision, other health issues, self-esteem and confidence issues. In addition, she did not have any comparable benefits to assist her with physical restoration services needed in order to return to work and obtain or maintain employment.

After the consumer was provided with the requested services, including an internship in her desired field, the consumer is now successfully employed in the field of her passion – as a Mental Health Technician.

The consumer expressed her gratitude for all the services provided by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind and is excited to be working in the area of interest as a Mental Health Technician.

## OVRB NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE

### OVRB NORTHERN – VOCATIONAL PROGRAM SUMMARY:

- ❖ 302 **New** applications
- ❖ 236 **New** employment plans developed
- ❖ 124 **Closed successfully** in Competitive Integrated Employment
- ❖ 805 **Total** served in the Northern Region

### OVRB NORTHERN - HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ 14 students were provided with **Pre-ETS**.
- ❖ 9 graduated high school and both entered college or a training program.
- ❖ 3 students participated in an **MDRS Internship Program**.
- ❖ 9 of these students participated in the **NFB Peer Mentoring Program**.
- ❖ 28 clients received **Post-Secondary Training** services (adult and youth).
- ❖ 34 outreach activities were completed by VRB North to various community partners.

### INNOVATIVE PRACTICES WITH POSITIVE IMPACTS ON STAFF OR CLIENTS:

Due to Covid19 restrictions and guidelines, the reporting period was impacted which required the staff to find innovative ways of providing services to clients. Staff adapted to a distance model of service delivery and, despite several weeks under a 'stay-at-home' order, client services have returned to pre-pandemic levels based on numbers of new cases and new programs.

Not only did OVRB North learn to navigate through the pandemic of 2020 but also managed several vacancies. During this time period, two employees retired; two were promoted within VRB; one transferred within VRB; and one employee resigned. Due to these vacancies and positions unfilled prior to the reporting period, OVRB North gained eight new staff members and have continued to provide training for these new hires.

## OVRB Northern – Client Spotlight

**Client: Austin Laney / Counselor: Christian Williams**

Austin Laney was a senior at a local high school in our area and presented himself as a well-mannered and well-groomed young man. His mother accompanied him to his appointment. Austin has a progressive eye disease called optic atrophy and his mother was very emotional at the time of diagnosis because it is a genetic disease that she and Austin's sister share and had hoped that the gene had skipped Austin. Austin was composed but had concerns about the future and his participation in baseball. He loved baseball and had a couple of colleges scouting him to play for their team. Baseball was, at first, a big consideration for Austin in choosing colleges, but he realized that he had to let the dream die because of his vision - which was a tough decision. He chose to attend Mississippi State University.

Austin shared that he was an avid fisherman and that he loved the outdoors. He also discussed his interests of business or accounting as his college majors. During the summer before entering college, MDRS provided Austin with an internship where he was able to work for The Natchez Trace State Park in Tupelo. I will never forget the day he called to say that he had been trapping "feral cats" and shared that one of the camp sites had an infestation and he was charged with trapping and caging the cats. Even though the outside work was demanding, he learned a great deal about identifying plants and trees and what was indigenous to the Natchez Trace Parkway. At the end of the internship he said, "Well Mrs. Christian, I don't want to work outside for a living." I considered that internship a 'win' because he learned very much, but more importantly, Austin knew the environment in which he did not want to work. Austin still maintained his interests in majoring in business or accounting. He started in business but ended up in accounting. Austin is intelligent and has a record of excellent grades. During the next few meetings, we discussed self-advocacy and provided advice on how Austin could advocate for himself and how to talk to his teachers.

He eventually received accommodations for the ACT and earned a score of 30. One of Austin's positive traits is his competitiveness. When he consulted with Addie McBryde on his vocational and psychological evaluations, he was nervous because his goal was to achieve a high IQ score. As a rule, we do not give the entire IQ test to Visually Impaired students and he was not happy about this even though he tested above average. Austin wanted to take the entire assessment because he believed it would raise his score. He was persistent with pushing himself academically and had no trouble being admitted to MSU and obtaining scholarships for his hard work. Because Austin had taken several dual credit classes, he entered MSU as a sophomore. Over the next few years Austin did well and maintained a GPA above 3.6.

Austin faced some issues with teachers not understanding his disability, since it was invisible, but became better at self-advocacy. When he graduated from the undergraduate program, we sponsored Austin through the completion of his Master's degree. In order to take the CPA exam, he needed a Master's degree, we justified an extension of the sponsorship to make him more competitive in finding employment.

At present, Austin has graduated from MSU with a Master's degree and has passed one section of the CPA exam. He has contracted with a local accounting firm and will begin employment in October. He has purposely delayed starting his career in order to study and pass the remaining three sections of the CPA examination. Austin is a great success because he has overcome the challenges of the genetic, progressive eye condition derived from a shared genetic disability that adversely affected him in the classroom and on the job everyday. Through Austin's case with MDRS, he has developed his ability to push through barriers. Austin's success is due to his drive, intellect and persistence. When Austin had to give up baseball, he concentrated on fishing and joined the MSU fishing Team. Austin's outstanding case is an example of resilience and he inspires us all!

# **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind**

## ***SERVING MISSISSIPPI***

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### **OVRB by Numbers**

#### ***Serving Mississippi Blind and Visually Impaired Job Seekers***

- ❖ 1,764 Mississippians who are Blind and Visually Impaired were served.
- ❖ 613 New applications submitted.
- ❖ 512 Individuals who are Blind and Visually Impaired started a new Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) designed to reach a competitive employment outcome for the first time.
- ❖ 345 Individuals who are Blind, Visually Impaired, and Deafblind reached their career goal and entered the Mississippi Workforce.

### **Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center for the Blind**

#### **Serving Mississippians with Limitation with Orientation / Mobility and Everyday Living**

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Mrs. Adeline Wiseman McBryde was born in October 1883 in Cotton Plant, Mississippi. She received her education in the Tippah public school system. In 1938, when the Division of the Blind was created to the Department of Public Welfare, Mrs. McBryde was selected as the Director. After her death in October 1958, Senate Bill Number 1644, 'The Adjustment Center for the Blind Act of 1968', was approved and passed in the Mississippi State Senate. This paved the way for the Addie McBryde Memorial Rehabilitation Center for the Blind.

Established in May 1972, the **Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center for the Blind** is located in Jackson, Mississippi on the campus of the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC). The Addie McBryde Center provides traditional intensive evaluation, training, and adjustment services on the campus. In 2020, the Addie McBryde Center provided training to **67 consumers**.

The facility has a dormitory capacity for 28 clients, a gymnasium, a client library and classrooms equipped with specialized technology for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Certified Instructors provide individualized training to meet the clients' needs during the class day from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. 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.

## SNAPSHOT OF SERVICES:

❖ O&M	39
❖ Braille	12
❖ Blindness Adjustment	55
❖ Vocational Evaluation	21
❖ Mobile Technology Class	8
❖ Low Vision Assessment	11
❖ Job Readiness Class	4

*Offered March 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>*

### Classes offered include:

- ❖ **Orientation and Mobility** - training in use of the long white mobility cane, residential and business travel, use of public transportation, sighted guide and protective techniques
- ❖ **Communication/Advanced Communication** - training in braille, adaptive equipment, handwriting, keyboarding, use of the personal computer utilizing both magnification and screen readers
- ❖ **Personal Management** - meal planning and preparation, nutrition, shopping, storing and labeling, including organization and safety in the kitchen
- ❖ **Techniques of Daily Living** – laundry, housekeeping, grooming, and hand sewing
- ❖ **Recreation and Leisure Education** - physical conditioning, arts and crafts, community activities

## INDEPENDENCE: MY CHANGE AGENT



*"I'm learning so much about computers that will help me to meet my goals at Addie," says Kasey Jefferson, a 27-year old client at the Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center. Kasey was born in Chicago Illinois - the younger of two children. She graduated from T.F. South High School then attended Tricoci University of Beauty Culture where she received her Cosmetology License in 2014.*

*Kasey worked in Haircare in Illinois and with JCPenney's located in Flowood, Mississippi for over three years until vision changes led her to a new path. "The only **impossible** journey is the one you **never begin**." - Anthony Robbins*

In 2019, Kasey learned of MDRS Vocational Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and opened a case with the Counselor, Kenneth Hudson. She began training at Addie McBryde in December.

Kasey aspires to return to college in the Spring, majoring in Social Work with a Master's in School Counseling. *"I want to start a nonprofit to encourage extra-curricular activities for children and teens and own a Hair Extension Company."* said Kasey.

In her spare time, Kasey enjoys making and styling wigs, music, and spending time with family and friends. Kasey says, *"Always stay positive and follow your dreams; no matter the circumstances!"*

# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

## THE BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM (BEP)

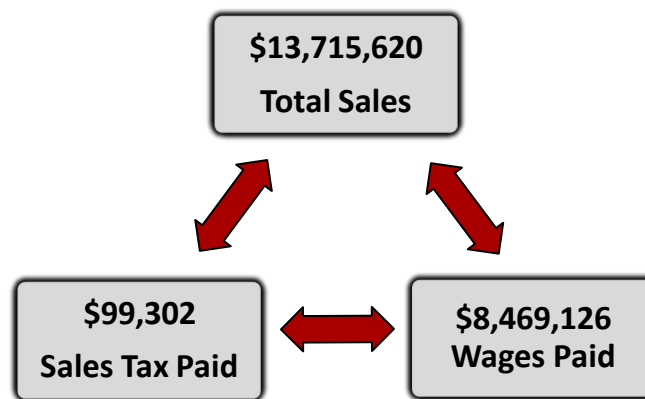
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The **Business Enterprise Program (BEP)** provides support for self-employment opportunities in the food service industry for Mississippians who are legally Blind. These BEP entrepreneurs operate a variety of businesses including vending machine routes, snack bars, and military base cafeterias.

In 2020, **37** Blind Entrepreneurs operated successful businesses as BEP vendors:

- **311** individuals employed supported by BEP operators
- **133** sites in 33 cities across the state
- **3** BEP Trainees currently in the program awaiting completion to become a licensed BEP operator.

### ***Contributing to Mississippi Economy***



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### ***BEP Vendor Spotlight***

Ray Renderman, BEP Vendor/Manager of C&R Vending, was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa at an early age. Ray's attitude was that he would not allow himself to be thrown into the stigma of "*that poor little blind man*". Ray is neither poor nor little. He is a successful businessman who operates 90 % of his business himself and with the assistance of his wife, Christina.

Ray currently manages a vending route with about 60 vending machines at the Stennis Space Center and in his hometown area. With the help of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind, Ray is able to continue to be a vital Mississippi business owner and taxpayer.



# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

## Independent Living Services for the Blind (ILB)

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The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind - Independent Living for the Blind Program (ILB) provides services to assist legally Blind individuals adjust to their blindness. The eligibility requirements for the **Older Blind Program** are age 55+ and legal blindness. The Part B eligibility requirements are legal blindness and a significant secondary disability. For both programs, gainful employment may not be feasible but independent living goals are feasible.

The **Itinerant Teacher Program** began in 1994 to provide services to consumers served by VRB who could not attend the Community Rehabilitation Program (Addie McBryde Center) or who did attend and needed follow-up services in the home or on the job site. Itinerant Teachers provide services in the consumer's home, community or work environment. Teachers work closely with the VRB Counselors to coordinate services, evaluate client needs, develop living-needs plans, and provide instructional materials and onsite training.

Some services include:

- Low vision assessment: evaluations for magnifiers, portable CCTV's, and other optical devices;
- Marking office equipment or home appliances;
- Non-optical adaptive devices: check and signature guides, talking clocks, money identifiers, cooking items, large button phones, etc.;
- Orientation and mobility services or travel training: sighted guide and protective techniques and training in the use of a cane; and/or
- Follow-up training after services have been provided.

**Independent Living Services for the Blind (ILB)** enables eligible consumers to receive peer group counseling, assistive technology evaluation, adjustment services, orientation and mobility training, personal adjustment instruction and training in techniques for daily living. In 2020, ILB served over **550** seniors through indirect services such as health fairs, vision screening, peer groups, and outreach. Furthermore, ILB provided direct services to **796** consumers who are legally Blind and either over the age of 55 or have a significant secondary disability by providing a variety of independent living services.

- ❖ 186 New Applications submitted
- ❖ 186 Seniors started services for the first time
- ❖ 404 Carry over from previous year(s)

### Providing Services that Promote Independent Living

- Private Residence      571
- Senior Community      3
- Assisted Living      8
- Nursing Home      8



**Progress Made by the Clients who Received ILB Services**

<b>Services</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>No Progress</b>
Daily Living Skills	253	98	155
Orientation & Mobility	24	9	15
Assistive Technology	526	526	0

<b>Assistive Technology for Older Persons</b>		
Assistive Technology: Devices	\$12,385.12	21 consumers served
Assistive Technology: Hardware/Software	\$77.38	1 consumers served
Home Appliances	\$269.81	1 consumers served
Low Vision Aids	\$67,218.90	313 consumers served
Other Goods & Services	\$231.55	1 consumers served
Phy/Men Restoration	\$204.60	2 consumers served
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$80,387.36</b>	<b>339 Consumers served</b>

# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

## Mississippi Partners for Informed Choice

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The Mississippi Partners for Informed Choice (M-PIC) Program provides *Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)* services funded by the Social Security Administration (SSA) under the *Ticket-to-Work* and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999.

### Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)

The purpose of *M-PIC/WIPA* is to enable and serve all SSA beneficiaries with disabilities (including Transition-to-Work aged youth) to make informed choices about work and provide *Benefits Planning* and assistance services on request or as resources permit. There are more than 100 WIPA grantees in the United States. The programs employ certified *Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICs)* and each serve a specific region of the state.

### Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWIC)

If you receive Social Security benefits and you have a job or are looking for a job, there are specially trained professionals known as *Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWIC)* to help explain the complex employment and benefit-related issues. CWICs provide confidential services to people with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI.) CWICs educate beneficiaries on how employment will affect their public benefits such as SSI, SSDI, Medicare, Medicaid, subsidized housing and food stamps. CWICs provide individual counseling to beneficiaries seeking employment and intensive follow-up services to ensure that they are using the work incentives appropriately.

For FFY 2020, **774** individuals with disabilities received *Benefits Counseling* which promotes employment and financial stability of Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities. This serves as an additional Pre-Employment Transition Service (Pre-ETS).

### SNAPSHOT OF SERVICES:

- Goal	500 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)
- Information/Referral Services:	774 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)
- WIPA Services	490 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)
- Referrals	127 (July 1, 2019 – November 30, 2020)

### ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **420** Consumers with an employment goal received individualized WIPA services
- CWICs provided WIPA presentations and outreach information at **6** schools providing **161** transition age youth information.

# OVRB SUCCESS STORIES – ILB AND WIPA

## ILB Success

*Date: November 4, 2020*

*Subject by: Marquita L. Buchanan*

*Title: 70B Report*

*Case narrative: LaTonya Carter*

I have had the pleasure to work with LaTonya Carter, a 39 year old female, that is legally Blind due to diabetes. LaTonya lives with her sister and needs help with maintaining her independence in her home and community. LaTonya is independent and prefers to remain independent. She is active in her community and has not given up *Hope*. She needs assistance with reading her mail and taking her medication and stated that since her vision has declined it has been difficult for her - but she will never stop doing the things she loves to do. LaTonya said that she has developed new techniques that has helped her with daily life. She stated that she does not need to attend the Addie McBryde Center because she knows her way around her home and other surroundings and said that someone always accompanies her.

LaTonya has been provided with a smart lux, handheld magnifier, talking watch, talking clock, cd/radio cassette, and a talking blood pressure monitor. All of these low vision aids have helped LaTonya remain independent in her home and active in the community.

LaTonya stated that Independent Living for the Blind has changed her life forever and she cannot ever thank the program enough for what has been done for her and the program is a truly blessing.

## WIPA Success – WIPA Consumer: Ms. Dooley

Ms. Dooley was referred in August 2020 by the Supported Employment Counselor through the MS Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. She was referred by her Counselor because Ms. Dooley attends Mississippi State University's Access Program and was currently working through an internship program. The Fall Internship Program would be approximately 12 weeks and she would be paid \$7.25 per hour. Ms. Dooley and her mother was concerned about how the paid fall internship would affect the SSI and Medicaid benefits because she depends on these monthly benefits to help take care of monthly needs such as shelter, food, personal needs, healthcare needs, etc. After verifying Ms. Dooley's Social Security benefits, a detailed Benefits Analysis Report explaining how the SSI benefits would be affected. I concluded that her earnings level would affect her SSI benefits but because she was a student under the age of 25, she was eligible for the *Student Earned Income Exclusion*, which would not affect the SSI benefits. A letter was typed to explain that Ms. Dooley was currently working a paid internship and would like to utilize the *SEIE*. Ms. Dooley's mother attached this letter with Ms. Dooley's first set of pay stubs and was submitted. Now Ms. Dooley's local S.S. office has this information in her file when new paystubs are submitted throughout her internship program.

Ms. Dooley and her mother both thanked me for thoroughly explaining to them how her internship would affect her SSI and Medicaid (because Ms. Dooley wanted to be able to complete the paid Internship Program), for informing them of all of the various work incentives available to SSI recipients, and how to report Ms. Dooley's earnings from her internship to her local Social Security Office. Ms. Dooley was informed to notify the counselor once she obtains another job offer or internship so this information can be updated in her report and advise her based on that specific employment goal.

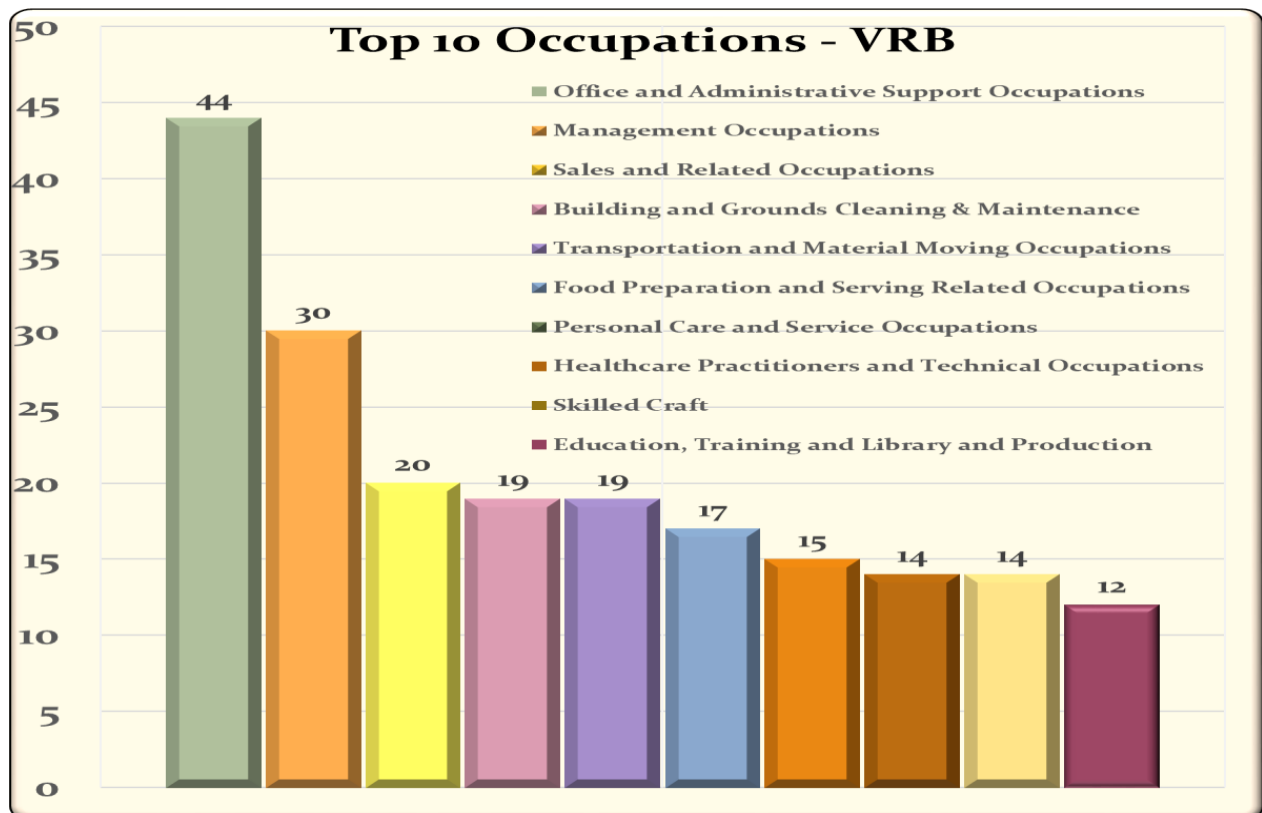
# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

## EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES – VRB CONSUMERS

### TOP 10 OCCUPATIONS – INTEGRATED SETTING (2020)

The Job Table below shows the ‘Top 10 Occupations’ obtained by the OVRB Consumers who successfully achieved their employment goal in Federal Fiscal Year 2020.

OCCUPATION	NUMBER OF CLIENTS
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	44
Management Occupations	30
Sales and Related Occupations	20
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	19
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	19
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	17
Personal Care and Service Occupations	15
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	14
Skilled Craft	14
Education, Training and Library and Production Occupations	12



# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

## EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES – VRB CONSUMERS - 2020

The success of an OVRB Program is the job seekers with disabilities who leave the program having achieved their employment goal. The employment categories below use the term found in the federal reporting on outcomes.

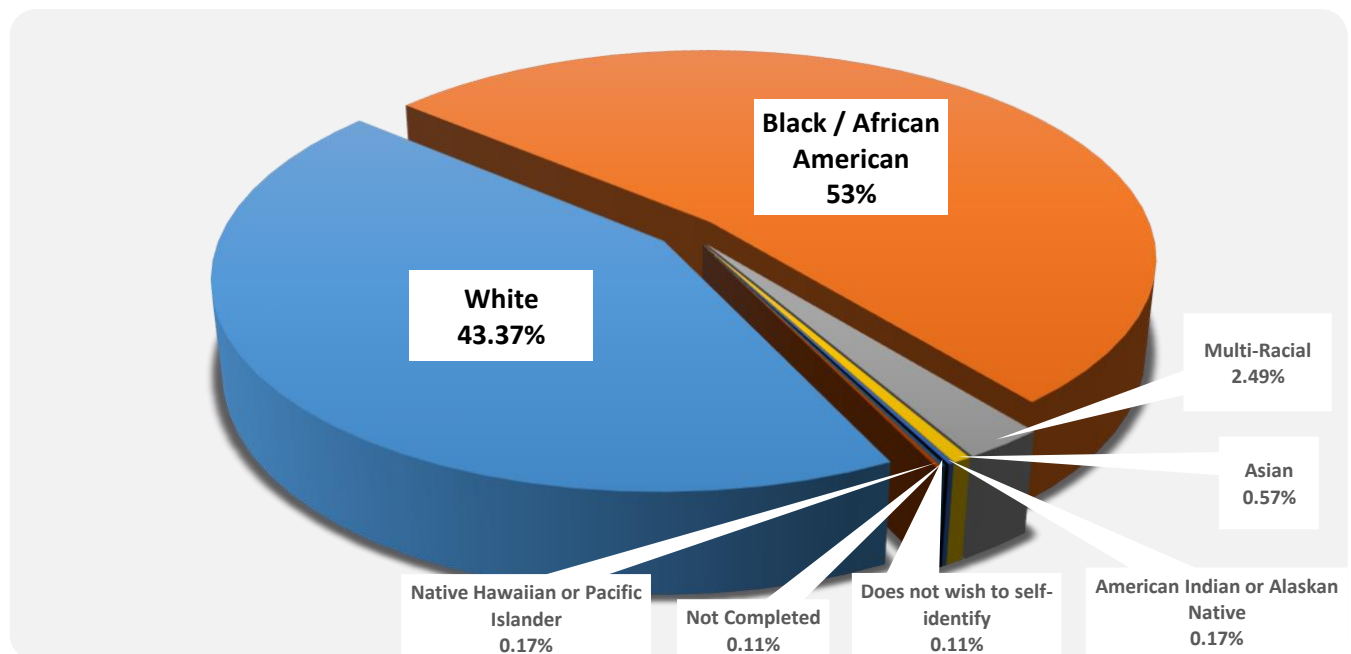
Self – Employment (includes BEP – Randolph Sheppard)	5
Employment with support in Competitive Integrated Employment	313
Self – Employment (except BEP)	27

## Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

### DEMOGRAPHICS OF CLIENTS SERVED 2020

#### ETHNICITY / RACE - VRB

Ethnicity / Race	Clients	%
White	765	43.37%
Black / African American	935	53%
Multi-Racial	44	2.49%
Asian	10	.57%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3	.17%
Does not wish to self – identify	2	.11%
Not completed	2	.11%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3	.17%

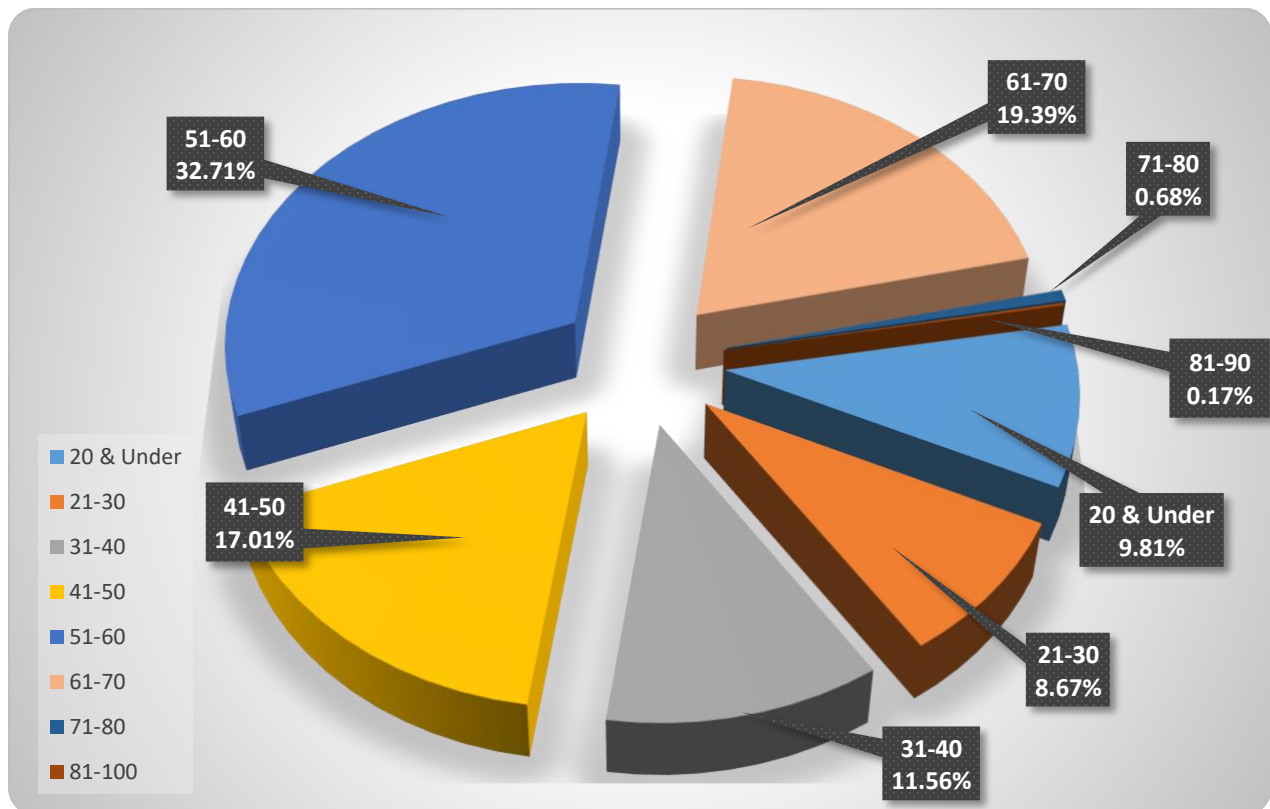


# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF CLIENTS SERVED 2020

### AGE RANGE – VRB

Age Range	Clients	%
20 & Under	173	9.81%
21 – 30	153	8.67%
31 – 40	204	11.56%
41 – 50	300	17.01%
51 – 60	577	32.71%
61 – 70	342	19.39%
71 – 80	12	.68%
81 – 90	3	0.17%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,764</b>	



*Your perspective is extremely valuable,  
and we greatly appreciate any and all feedback!  
(A digital copy of this report can be found at [www.mdrs.ms.gov](http://www.mdrs.ms.gov))*

*Please send direct comments or questions to:*  
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services  
Attn: Betsy Simoneaux, VR Program Specialist-SRC Liaison  
Post Office Box 1698  
Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1698  
1.800.443.1000  
[www.mdrs.ms.gov](http://www.mdrs.ms.gov)

