

Mississippi (MS) WIOA Matrix

Employment First StateMentoring Program (EFSLMP)

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

Customized Employment

MDRS continues to identify current information from research, rehabilitation trends and professional resources. This information is provided to agency staff through a variety of methods, including training at the state, regional, and district levels. Most recently this training has been focused on Autism and customized employment. Additionally, this information is posted and available to staff on MDRS Connect, the agency intranet. (Page 180) Title II

The SE Program will continue to emphasize individual employment placements. Other models will remain an option for clients and may be utilized when feasible. However, when given a choice, clients prefer individual placements by an overwhelming majority. Individual placement is the preferred option of MDRS as well as the clients because it achieves integration in the work environment, it is competitive integrated employment, and it provides more opportunities for career pathways and better quality jobs with more benefits.

Person Centered Planning and Customized Employment as integral parts of service provision continue to be high priorities. These service approaches have been embraced by mental health providers, the DD Council, and other service providers in the state as accepted best practices for model service delivery. (Page 205) Title II

SE staff also participate in both practices in coordinating services for SE clients in the education system throughout the state. These practices have proven to be successful for clients because of the enhanced teamwork with other agencies. Under WIOA customized employment is included in the definition of supported employment and VR is including it as a VR service that the SE client can choose to include in his/her IPE. Therefore, VR is expanding customized employment training to the majority of its direct service staff. These service approaches will continue to be made available to clients during the intake process and will be utilized when deemed appropriate and when chosen by the client. (Page 206) Title II

Plans for improving community rehabilitation programs (private and agency-supported) include training staff to provide Pre-ETS, customized employment services, and on-the-job tryout services which facilitate the agency's ability to achieve the changes in WIOA. (Page 211) Title II

Braiding/Blending Resources

8. Increase collaboration within the state's workforce system to improve services to unemployed workers with disabilities who are eligible for VR services by better leveraging services with

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other workforce development programs. (Page 209) Title II

21. Increase collaboration within the Workforce System to improve services to unemployed workers with disabilities who are eligible for VR services by better leveraging services with other workforce development programs.

22. Play stronger roles on state and local Workforce Boards to assure that VR consumers and other individuals with disabilities are better served by the One-Stop System. (Page 215) Title II

Leveraging Resources from Key Partners to Support SCSEP

Area Agencies on Aging work with community colleges to provide training to SCSEP participants at a reduced cost; many provide tuition waivers for SCSEP participants. Community colleges are an integral component of the WIOA programs offered through the WIN Job Centers. SCSEP participants are encouraged to dual enroll in WIOA with the WIN Job Centers for job search assistance and training classes. (Page 283) Title IV

DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

School to Work Transition

o MDHS - The Mississippi Department of Human Services administers the TANF program through several legacy applications, including MAVERICS and JAWS. MAVERICS supports case management data such as intake and eligibility information, and JAWS supports TANF Work Program data. These systems do not inherently support web services, but various enterprise solutions exist to allow a modern, intermediate application to interface with such systems. This intermediate application, developed in Java, would be able to implement and consume web services on behalf of the legacy application. In addition, MDHS is in the process of a multi-year system modernization effort that will reduce the agency's reliance on legacy applications for case management. (Page 96) Title I

In order to accomplish this, OVR relies on many cooperative agreements, memorandums of understanding and contracts with various agencies, organizations and groups.

The entities that OVR is actively involved with include, but is not limited to:

o Mississippi Department of Education for the coordination of transition services and local school districts to carry out transition and youth career services plus implement a Transition Specialist in participating local school districts; (Page 160) Title II

VRB works closely with the education system through the VR Transition and Youth Career Services Program. There are approximately 20 VRB Counselors throughout the state who work

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in preparing students with vision loss for entry into the world of work. They serve as informational resources for teachers and other educational staff as well as provide resources and information about blindness for parents and transitioning youth throughout development of the youth's individualized plan for employment (IPE).

VRB Counselors work closely with parents, education staff, and community service providers to promote development of skills needed for students to become as independent as possible and competitive in terms of employment. In addition to training parents and students about the special education rights and responsibilities, VRB provides educational support by working with the VR Transition Team, school officials, and families to develop and implement the IPE. Goals developed in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) are included in the IPE to facilitate successful completion of those goals. (Page 163) Title II

Restructuring of the VR Transition and Youth Career Services Program has resulted in additional VR Counselors carrying transition and youth cases, which provides for more individualized services to both eligible and potentially eligible students in school. VR Counselors work with the students, parents, and school personnel as well as attend (IEP) meetings to help identify students that may be able to benefit from transition and youth career services.

Prior to making services available, the VR Counselor uses school documentation, health records, and other pertinent information as deemed appropriate for determining a student with a disability potentially eligible for pre-employment transition services and/or for determination of eligibility for the VR Transition program. (Page 164) Title II

Transition planning between MDRS and MDE ultimately helps with the successful development and implementation of both the IEP and the IPE.

MDRS through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind have recently sent Request for Proposals for third party providers to provide Pre-ETS activities in accordance with the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act. At this time, two proposals have been awarded contracts and additional Request for Proposals are being sought. (Page 164) Title II

It is also the intent of this agreement to serve as a mechanism for OVR/OVRB and MDE OSE to clearly specify the plans, policies and procedures for coordinating services to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities, including:

1. Consultation and technical assistance in the planning for the transition of students with disabilities;
2. Transition planning by OVR/OVRB and educational personnel that facilitates the development and implementation of a student's individualized education plan (IEP);
3. Roles and responsibilities, including financial and programmatic responsibilities of each agency;

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4. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities;

5. Assessment of students' potential need for transition services and pre-employment transition services;

6. Coordination necessary and documentation requirements set forth in section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, as added by WIOA, with regard to students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment. (Page 166) Title II

The point of contact to businesses for any assistance and support needed to hire and maintain employment.

Business Development Representatives are able to work with businesses to determine if any of the job seekers on VR caseloads that will be deemed Job Ready match the skills that are needed by businesses, allowing VR counselors to spend more time with clients who require intensive IPE development and career counseling.

The main services provided by the Business Rep. include the following:

- o Train employers regarding employment of individuals with disabilities, disability awareness, requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act, work incentives, and laws related to employment opportunities;

- o Provide consultation, technical assistance, and support to employers on workplace accommodations and assistive technology;

- o Provide resources and support through collaboration with community partners and employers; and,

- o Provide employer recruitment services, job matching, hiring, and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities. (Page 170) Title II

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

MDRS pursues efforts to coordinate cross training with MDE that will address education and rehabilitation under the provision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Training conferences on transition services have been held and co-sponsored by MDRS and MDE. Specifically, regional training conferences bring together all VR counselors with transition caseloads, other agency personnel involved with transition services, and transition specialists, teachers, and special education coordinators from MDE. VR strives to help MDE to meet the mandate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. (Page 181) Title II

VR assures that the individualized plan for employment (IPE) is also coordinated with the employment goal in the school's individualized educational plan (IEP) and, where appropriate,

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the (ISP) individualized service plans of the long term care providers.

The VR Counselor servicing local school districts as well as the VR Supported Employment Counselors work together with schools district to ensure that students with disabilities that previously entered subminimum wage employment are provided information and services to assist in diverting these individuals into competitive integrated employment.

VR facilitates the opening of cases for beginning at age 14 if required. Pre-ETS services are provided to students with disabilities as early as age 14. If these individuals require VR Transition services as early as age 14, VR facilitates this need by opening a VR case. This service provision will help strengthen VRs efforts to reach more students and strengthens the opportunity for successful employment outcomes. (Page 195) Title II

While local school districts are responsible for providing education and transition services to students with disabilities who are still in the secondary school system, under WIOA, VR is the state unit that is mandated to make available Pre-ETS begin at age fourteen (14) for all eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities with parental consent.

District Managers and counselors are responsible for developing cooperative working relationships with the local education agency staff in the districts, and other agencies working with youth. Letters were sent by the State Transition Program Coordinator to all the Special Education Directors and 504 Coordinators for each school district to discuss VR services for students with IEPs and 504 plans. The counselor is to follow-up with their Special Education Directors and 504 Coordinators at least annually to discuss the provision of outreach services for students with disabilities and to determine the need for potential referrals. (Page 195) Title II

MDRS and the local school district may enter into a Cooperative Agreement to jointly fund a Transition Assistant position to ensure a smoother transition of services between the school and OVR/OVRB. The Transition Assistant will provide services to selected secondary students with disabilities who are: (a) between the ages of fourteen (14) and twenty-one (21), (b) in transition from school to work and community, and (c) eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. The addition of school-based transition services are intended to add a component to the overall school and rehabilitation service continuum, not supplant existing employment-related or other services which are potentially appropriate for a particular student (any service the school is already responsible for providing). The Transition Assistant will not serve students who, with or without modifications, can benefit from existing school programs (career/technical and educational training programs etc.). (Page 196) Title II

The OOS does not discriminate against any eligible individual on the basis of gender, age, race, creed, color, religion, national origin, citizenship, type of disability, duration of residence in Mississippi, public assistance status, source of referral, expected employment outcome, need for specific services, anticipate cost of services required, or income level of an individual or his/her family.

MDRS in consultation with the SRC will close the Priority Categories designated to be closed. Any individual currently under an approved IPE at the time his/her priority category is closed

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will continue to receive with his/her IPE, including the provision of Pre-employment transition services and Post-Employment Services. (Page 201) Title II

MDRS has determined that sufficient resources are currently available to provide VR services to all individuals with disabilities that apply, those determined eligible in all priority categories and those under an IPE. Due to the increase in service needs and the staff resources in 2017 and 2018 to provide the services, if the projected resources for funds and personnel change before the next state plan modification, MDRS will make a determination whether it may need to close one or more of its priority categories.

During FF2018, MDRS will be able to serve all eligible individuals in all three priority categories. The total projected available resources including the federal allotment, non-federal contributions, carryover, and program income for FY 2018 is \$67,705,332. MDRS will conduct reviews periodically during the year to help validate the order and assess the impact of unforeseen circumstances. (Page 203) Title II

SE staff also participate in both practices in coordinating services for SE clients in the education system throughout the state. These practices have proven to be successful for clients because of the enhanced teamwork with other agencies. Under WIOA customized employment is included in the definition of supported employment and VR is including it as a VR service that the SE client can choose to include in his/her IPE. Therefore, VR is expanding customized employment training to the majority of its direct service staff. These service approaches will continue to be made available to clients during the intake process and will be utilized when deemed appropriate and when chosen by the client. (Page 206) Title II

Goal III: Implement a statewide model for more effectively serving high school youth and students with disabilities including individuals with visual and/or hearing impairments.

o A statewide training was conducted in 2016 that included all VR/VRB counselors and staff, and Special Education coordinators from schools throughout the state. This training assist VR in explaining the role of VR in serving students that have an IEP and 504 plan as well as serving students that are not receiving special education services. We are in hopes that we will continually see an increase in referrals for these students.

o In 2017, the updated formal Interagency Cooperative Agreement was developed with the Mississippi Department of Education. MDRS also updated our local school agreements.

o In 2016, the OVR Transition Manual designed to assist staff in the delivery of transition services. This manual is used as technical assistance for transition planning purposes. Training was held in each district statewide with counselors that are assigned to local schools/school districts.

o Annually, the OVR Transition Coordinator updates and maintains a list of all 504 coordinators and special education staff for each school district. The list is a document that can be accessed by all staff on the MDRS intranet - MDRS Connect. (Page 218) Title II

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Continue the referral process between the VR Transition Counselor and the VR (SE) Supported Employment Counselor for students with disabilities ages 14-21 who have been determined to need long term ongoing support services. The VR Transition Counselor will take the referral from the MDE, determine eligibility, complete the assessment and discovery process and work with the SE Counselor to develop the IPE with the student, parents/guardians, and school. Once the IPE has been signed by all the required parties, then the student's case will be transferred to the SE Counselor's caseload. (Page 220) Title II

Career Pathways

In accordance with section 101(d) of WIOA, the Mississippi State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) will establish and operate through a SWIB WIOA Board Committee, whose membership will meet WIOA state board composition requirements, to perform the following services for the Governor:

1. Development, implementation, and modification of the state plan.
 2. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers to review statewide policies, statewide programs, and recommendations on actions that should be taken by the state to align workforce development programs in a manner that supports a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system, including the review and provision of comments on state plans.
 3. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers in the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system in the state, including:
 - a. Identification of barriers and means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among the programs and activities carried out through the system.
 - b. Development of strategies to support the use of career pathways for the purpose of providing individuals, including low-skill adults, youth, and individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities), with workforce investment activities, education, and supportive services to enter or retain employment.
 - c. Development of strategies for providing effective outreach to and improved access for individuals and employers who could benefit from services provided through the workforce development system. (Page 64) Title I
- (2) The SE Program will continue to emphasize individual employment placements. Other models will remain an option for clients and may be utilized when feasible. However, when given a choice, clients prefer individual placements by an overwhelming majority. Individual placement is the preferred option of MDRS as well as the clients because it achieves integration in the work environment, it is competitive integrated employment, and it provides more opportunities for career pathways and better quality jobs with more benefits. (Page 205) Title II

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Apprenticeship

No disability specific information found regarding this element

Work Incentives and Benefits

Local workforce development boards have the option to include additional Affiliate One-Stop Centers with any subset of Combined Plan Partners as long as they include at least two partners. Local workforce development boards also have the flexibility to include additional partners in Affiliate One-Stop Centers. While local workforce development boards ultimately decide the logistics of affiliate centers, the WIOA law specifically identifies the following approved federally funded partners: employment and training programs administered by the Social Security Administration, including Ticket to Work and the Self Sufficiency Program; employment and training programs carried out by the Small Business Administration; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) programs; Client Assistance Program; and programs authorized under the National and Community Service Act of 1990.

Local workforce development boards are also responsible for ensuring that local activities and local sector targets are in line with state-level sector analysis. The Mississippi LifeTracks system will constantly update web-accessible reports that feature dashboard numbers, pathway analysis, and supply and demand analysis to ensure that economic developers in Mississippi have a near real-time picture of the labor market. Sector analysis revealed laborshed zones that transcend local workforce development area boundaries and allow local workforce development boards to serve as intermediaries to connect local employers and training providers to meet labor market demands. Employers will communicate labor demand in real time by posting job orders in Mississippi Works Labor Exchange. (Page 88) Title I

Business Development Representatives are able to work with businesses to determine if any of the job seekers on VR caseloads that will be deemed Job Ready match the skills that are needed by businesses, allowing VR counselors to spend more time with clients who require intensive IPE development and career counseling.

The main services provided by the Business Rep. include the following:

- o Train employers regarding employment of individuals with disabilities, disability awareness, requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act, work incentives, and laws related to employment opportunities;
- o Provide consultation, technical assistance, and support to employers on workplace accommodations and assistive technology;
- o Provide resources and support through collaboration with community partners and employers; and,
- o Provide employer recruitment services, job matching, hiring, and retention of qualified

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individuals with disabilities.

MDRS also works with employers to help youth with disabilities and students with disabilities have more opportunities, explore career interests, acquire workplace skills, and enter into competitive integrated employment. (Page 170) Title II

457. Business Relations Specialist will providing information to VR staff the areas as follows:

- *the services BRS provide to employers,
- *training and information regarding work incentives,
- *job analysis and job matching,
- *career opportunities in the local area; and

458. Develop and implement on campus work experience training in order to provide students who cannot get into or opportunities for vocational training are not readily available in a community based setting.

459. Refer those consumers receiving SSI/SSDI cash benefits who are interested in earnings that will eliminate their reliance on SSA cash benefits for work incentives benefits analysis and counseling.

460. Coordinate and conduct the Annual Governor's Job Fair for individuals with disabilities.

461. Summer Internship Program for high school students with blindness and visual impairments; and deafness and hard of hearing. (Page 213) Title II

GOAL II: Improve the VR Service Delivery System to Individuals with disabilities

Strategies (Plan of Action):

462. Designate staff in each MDRS districts to be responsible for conducting outreach and orientation sessions on a regular basis.

463. Provide input to assure appropriate inclusion of vocational rehabilitation activities in, public service announcements, and agency website and publications.

464. Update and distribute vocational rehabilitation brochures to appropriate referral sources.

465. Designate and train specific staff members in each district to handle referrals and provide information to the public.

466. Assure that all geographic areas of the state are covered with appropriate service delivery staff. (Page 213) Title II

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Employer/Business

The point of contact to businesses for any assistance and support needed to hire and maintain employment.

Business Development Representatives are able to work with businesses to determine if any of the job seekers on VR caseloads that will be deemed Job Ready match the skills that are needed by businesses, allowing VR counselors to spend more time with clients who require intensive IPE development and career counseling.

The main services provided by the Business Rep. include the following:

- o Train employers regarding employment of individuals with disabilities, disability awareness, requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act, work incentives, and laws related to employment opportunities;
- o Provide consultation, technical assistance, and support to employers on workplace accommodations and assistive technology;
- o Provide resources and support through collaboration with community partners and employers; and,
- o Provide employer recruitment services, job matching, hiring, and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities. (Page 170) Title II

Data Collection

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

511

The scope of services between MDRS and MDE are described in (d)2. The scope of services between MDRS and the local school districts are intended to serve as a mechanism for OVR/OVRB and the local school districts to clearly specify the plans, policies and procedures for coordinating services to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities, including:

0. Responsibilities of MDRS/OVR
1. Responsibilities of School District
2. Referral Process
3. Joint Development of IEPs and IPEs; and
4. Coordination necessary and documentation requirements set forth in section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, as added by WIOA, with regard to students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment

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This Memorandum of Agreement for Transition Planning for Secondary Students with Disabilities between is made and entered into by and between the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, hereafter referred to as “MDRS,” for and on behalf of its Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind, hereafter referred to as “OVR/OVRB,” and the Mississippi Department of Education, for and on behalf of its Office of Special Education, hereafter referred to as “MDE OSE.”

A formal interagency agreement is mandated under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 34 CFR 300.154, and section 101(a) (11) (D) of the Rehabilitation Act and its implementing regulations at 34 CFR 361.22 (b). Additional references used in this document include Sections 113 and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Final Regulations: State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program; State Supported Employment Services Program; Limitations on Use of Subminimum Wage. This agreement is designed to improve the cooperative and collaborative efforts between the OVR/OVRB, and MDE OSE to coordinate the receipt of pre-employment transition services, transition services and other vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to students with disabilities who are eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), students who have a 504 plan, and other students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for services through OVR/OVRB, in order to facilitate their smooth transition from school to post-school employment-related activities and competitive, integrated employment. (Page 165-166) Title I

It is also the intent of this agreement to serve as a mechanism for OVR/OVRB and MDE OSE to clearly specify the plans, policies and procedures for coordinating services to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities, including:

1. Consultation and technical assistance in the planning for the transition of students with disabilities;
2. Transition planning by OVR/OVRB and educational personnel that facilitates the development and implementation of a student’s individualized education plan (IEP);
3. Roles and responsibilities, including financial and programmatic responsibilities of each agency;
4. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities;
5. Assessment of students’ potential need for transition services and pre-employment transition services;
6. Coordination necessary and documentation requirements set forth in section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, as added by WIOA, with regard to students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.; and an
7. Assurance that the MDE OSE will not enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work at a subminimum

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wage.

Additional considerations include grievance procedure to resolve disputes between OVR/OVRB and the MDE OSE, as appropriate, as well as procedures to resolve disputes between an individual with a disability and the entities specified above, and information about the Client Assistance Program. (Pages 166- 167) Title II

Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination: Section 188

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

Vets

The WIOA services that MDES administers will address the workforce and training needs of every eligible individual. Through Wagner-Peyser services, MDES provides job search, referral, and placement services to all eligible Mississippi workers. MDES funds adult training programs administered by local workforce development boards based on the needs of each local workforce development area. To serve dislocated workers, MDES coordinates Rapid Response services that assist employers and employees affected by layoffs or plant closures. MDES serves youth through specially trained Youth Providers who connect youth to targeted youth programs, other eligible core programs, and education and training opportunities based on the specific needs of the individual. In addition, there are two employment outreach groups: Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialists (DVOP). To fill job openings, LVER staff work directly with businesses, and DVOP staff work directly with unemployed or underemployed veterans. (Page 75) Title I

- o Referral of qualified veterans to new job openings, especially Federal Contractor job orders, prior to all non-veteran job referral activity.

- o Veteran placement at the top of WIOA waiting lists (ITAs and OJT) for limited training funds.

MDES management will monitor priority of service by reviewing quarterly performance reports, manager reports, and MS Works reports. MDES management will monitor priority of service in covered programs at two levels. Workforce Investment Network (WIN) Job Centers will continue to use established protocol of identifying targeted groups. At the state level, management will continue to analyze performance reports, manager reports, and MS Works reports. WIN Job Center services are made available and provided to eligible veterans, transitioning service members, VA VR & E Chapter 31 veterans, Native American Veterans, other groups targeted for special consideration, and veterans with significant barriers to employment through outreach activities performed by Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialists (DVOPs). MDES will continue to encourage non-DOL program partners to focus on providing priority of service to targeted groups for special consideration. (Page 106) Title II

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. §

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4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

A. HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG

MDES plans to assign and utilize DVOP Specialists and other agency employees trained in case management to metropolitan WIN Job Centers throughout the state where the need of intensive services is greatest. DVOP Specialists will provide intensive services, through the case management framework, and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing services to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor. The DVOP Specialist, Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC), will continue to work with the Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR & E) program. DVOP specialists will provide intensive services through the case management approach, including completion of an assessment and a written employability development plan. LVER staff trained in networking will be assigned and utilized within workforce areas. LVER staff will conduct outreach to employers within the workforce area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans served by the WIN Job Centers. MDES plans to fill grant-funded vacancies expeditiously despite State budget problems, hiring freezes and furloughs. MDES plans to identify projected losses and retirements early when possible. Applicants will be given the following order of priority: qualified service-connected disabled veterans; qualified eligible veterans; and qualified eligible persons. Also, veteran (non-JVSG) staff in the agency may be considered for assignment to the program. (Page 259) Title II

LVER Staff In accordance with Veterans' Program Letter 07-10, 03-14 or most recent guidance, MDES Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) will conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups, and facilitating employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans within WIN Job Centers.

The LVERs will work with the local area management team to coordinate and conduct employer outreach activities.

LVERs will advocate for all veterans served by the WIN Job Centers with business, industry, and other community-based organizations by participating in appropriate activities such as:

- o Planning and participating in job and career fairs;
- o Conducting employer outreach;
- o Educating all WIN Job Center staff and partners with current employment initiatives and

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programs for veterans;

- o Conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups, in conjunction with employers;
- o Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans;
- o Informing Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans;
- o Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; and
- o Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts. (Page 260) Title IV

DVOP specialists and LVERs are an essential part of and fully integrated into the WIN Job Center network. They are included among the WIN Job Center partner staff, which consists of all staff employed by programs or activities operated by job center partners that provide job-driven online and/or in-person workforce development or related support services as part of the workforce development system. Other WIN Job Center partner staff members include staff of WIOA, WP, and other network partner programs.

LVER staff will continue to be viable and effective in the WIN Job Center delivery system, e.g., facilitating and participating in employer marketing services, employer job fairs, etc. LVER staff will continue to be considered key players and team participants in business development activities and employer marketing efforts, developing jobs for WIN Job Centers, marketing veteran services to employers, assisting employers at job fairs and facilitating employer recruitments. Veterans with significant barriers to employment are referred to or assigned to the DVOP after initial core services. All of these activities translate into a fully integrated system with positive benefits and productivity for the WIN Job Centers and also subsequently result in the development of seamless employment opportunities for veterans. (Page 261) Title II

Mental Health

The entities that OVR is actively involved with include, but is not limited to:

- o Mississippi Department of Education for the coordination of transition services and local school districts to carry out transition and youth career services plus implement a Transition Specialist in participating local school districts;
- o Hinds Community College for the Deaf Services Program;
- o Division of Medicaid to provide seamless, non-duplicated services to individuals who are eligible for both Medicaid and VR services and for maximum utilization of resources between the two agencies;
- o Department of Mental Health (DMH) Planning and Advisory Council as federally mandated for advice and support. DMH to cover the costs for therapeutic medical services offered at

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secondary alcohol and drug treatment centers that have been approved by DMH;

o Department of Mental Health -Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to continue enhancing, expanding, and developing methods to support eligible persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities who express a desire for competitive integrated employment; establish a state-level work group to address system, policy and funding issues that impede the continuous provision of employment services by MDRS and DMH; engage MDRS staff and DMH providers and stakeholders at the local level in collaboration and cooperation in the accomplishment of the vision and desired outcomes; identify and disseminate best practices including training and funding strategies; and, provide individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities with quality employment services that lead to competitive integrated employment in a non-duplicated and seamless manner; (Page 160-161) Title II

MDRS administers the Supported Employment (SE) Program as specified in Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act and amended in WIOA. VR works extensively with other state agencies, private non-profit entities, employers, family members, and consumer groups to ensure quality SE services are provided to all eligible individuals throughout all phases of the SE service delivery system.

MDRS- VR has entered into formal cooperative agreements with the Mississippi Division of Medicaid (Medicaid) and Department of Mental Health, Bureau for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, with respect to delivery of VR services, including extended services, for individuals with the most significant disabilities eligible for home and community-based services.

In addition to these formal agreements, MDRS collaborates on a more informal basis with public and private entities to ensure a comprehensive program of services is provided to SE eligible individuals.

Collaborative partners include local mental health facilities, Medicaid's Bridge to Independence Program to help people move from qualified institutions to homes in the community, local school districts, businesses and industries, local projects funded by the DD Council, workforce development one-stop career centers, advocacy groups, and other relevant third parties as well as parents of SE eligible individuals. (Page 168) Title II

Collaborative partners include local mental health facilities, Medicaid's Bridge to Independence Program to help people move from qualified institutions to homes in the community, local school districts, businesses and industries, local projects funded by the Mississippi Council on Development Disabilities (DD Council), workforce development one-stop career centers, advocacy groups, and other relevant third parties as well as parents of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

MDRS also has in place with the Mississippi Partnership for Employment a Memorandum of Understanding that includes the following partners:

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- 1) DD Council;
- 2) The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies;
- 3) Disability Rights of Mississippi;
- 4) Mississippi Department of Education;
- 5) DMH;
- 6) Mississippi Department of Employment Security (the administering authority for the state's workforce development system); and
- 7) Two self-advocates

The partnership's intent is to build capacity across existing state systems to improve outcomes for youth and young adults with developmental disabilities including intellectual disabilities seeking competitive employment in integrated settings. (Page 172) Title II

SE staff members continue to make every effort to identify and facilitate natural supports that occur in the workplace in order to maximize utilization of funds. These natural supports do not replace the one-on-one intensive support provided to clients by the SE Counselors. However, when properly identified and utilized, these natural supports do result in decreased direct service costs and increased quality of support.

(2) The SE Program will continue to emphasize individual employment placements. Other models will remain an option for clients and may be utilized when feasible. However, when given a choice, clients prefer individual placements by an overwhelming majority. Individual placement is the preferred option of MDRS as well as the clients because it achieves integration in the work environment, it is competitive integrated employment, and it provides more opportunities for career pathways and better quality jobs with more benefits.

Person Centered Planning and Customized Employment as integral parts of service provision continue to be high priorities. These service approaches have been embraced by mental health providers, the DD Council, and other service providers in the state as accepted best practices for model service delivery. (Page 205) Title II

Cooperative arrangements will continue to be developed with other provider agencies and organizations, both public and private, to expand the SE Program to unserved and underserved populations. The focus of these arrangements is on promoting and enabling SE Counselors and service provider personnel from other agencies to work as teams to share expertise, provide technical support in specific disability areas, and conduct joint training.

With the interagency agreement and referral process that has been developed with the Department of Mental Health and the Division of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, we will continue to work with this agency in serving individuals who are eligible for the waiver

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as extended service providers. (Page 206) Title II

MDRS maintains formal agreements with the MDE and DMH as well as other public and private entities, which identify areas of collaboration to ensure a comprehensive program of services to SE eligible individuals. Staff members collaborate intensively with local mental health centers, school districts, SE businesses and industries, the DD Council, parents, advocacy groups and other relevant third parties.

The service approach for SE eligible clients emulates the nationally accepted "best practices" models of SE service delivery which include individual job placement, mobile crews, and temporary employment placement (TEP) for individuals with chronic mental illness. Central to each of these approaches is an emphasis on person centered planning and facilitation of natural supports. Individualized job development is conducted by SE staff based on job matching assessment information and client's informed choice. SE clients are assisted with employment planning and placement by VTIs and job skills training is provided at the job site either by job coaches or through natural supports.

To fulfill the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, regarding transitional employment for individuals with chronic mental illness, MDRS utilizes the TEP model. This model involves placement in a series of temporary jobs that lead to permanent employment as an outcome. This service approach is implemented through coordination with local mental health centers. (Page 224) Title IV

Mississippi will coordinate services, where available, with public and private entities (i.e., Mississippi Departments of Rehabilitation Services, Employment Security and Mental Health, and the Mississippi Community College Board, etc.) to allow TANF families with barriers (i.e., little or no work experience, domestic violence, limited English proficiency, learning disabilities, mental, physical disabilities and/or substance abuse) an opportunity to gain access to services and resources needed to obtain the highest level of self-sufficiency within the constraints of the TANF time-limits. Special screening and referral procedures will be used to identify and refer the individual for the appropriate service. Mississippi will deny benefits to individuals who fail to comply with the activities provided by these entities. (Page 237) Title IV

Job Search and Job Readiness - Job search and job readiness assistance is defined as the act of seeking or obtaining employment, preparation to seek or obtain employment, including life skills training, and substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, or rehabilitation activities for those who are otherwise employable.

Such treatment or therapy must be determined to be necessary and certified by a qualified medical, substance abuse or mental health professional. A qualified professional is defined as any individual who is licensed or certified. Job search and job readiness assistance activities are supervised daily by the case manager and/or job readiness trainer. (Page 239) Title IV

The MDHS will create a referral process to the Department of Child Protection Services (DCPS) to contact state and local law enforcement, the education system, and counseling services for recipients requiring assistance with statutory rape, domestic violence issues, mental health

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concerns, and drug/alcohol treatment. The counselors and educators can focus on problems that may be an underlying problem other than statutory rape. Individuals referred will complete an assessment, discuss educational barriers, and receive life skill strategies. MDHS established the Healthy Marriage Initiative, using Federal TANF funds, to promote the well-being of children in Mississippi by encouraging the involvement of mothers and fathers in their lives. The initiative will:

- o Encourage stable family formation and healthy marriages,
- o Promote responsible fathering,
- o Increase paternity and child support objectives,
- o Encourage community support for marriage, and
- o Prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies. (Page 250) Title IV

RTW/SAW

1. Partner with Third Party Administrators (TPAs) — Statistical data from this cross match pilot project is currently being analyzed to determine if continuing the cross match would be beneficial.

2. Employers SIDES messaging — Explain to employer the importance and benefits of responding timely through E-Response. A mailing campaign is in progress to target a designated group of employers.

3. Claimant messaging — Generate a detail mailer/message alert to claimant after first payment advising them of the requirement and method to properly report earnings and return to work. Include the penalty for failing to do so but emphasize the potential overpayment issue and progression. (Page 273) Title IV

*All enclosed information is cited directly from final state plan as of June 30, 2019

Find your local state plans here:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html>