



2022

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Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
REHABILITATION SERVICES

Project START Annual Report

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MISSION STATEMENT

It is the express mission of Project START to empower Mississippians with disabilities through education, awareness and access to Assistive Technology.

VISION STATEMENT

Mississippi's Project START (Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology) was established to provide information about assistive technology to consumers and other interested parties so they may make informed decisions about available assistive technology services.



Chris M. Howard
Executive Director

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

I am pleased to present the 2022 Annual Report for the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services' (MDRS) Project START, also known as Mississippi's Assistive Technology Act Program. START stands for Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology.

Project START is a program administered by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services which provides Mississippians with disabilities access to assistive technology. Assistive Technology includes mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, accessibility software, technology for low vision and blindness, and augmentative and alternative communications devices.

For many children and adults with disabilities, access to and acquisition of assistive technology can make a tremendous difference in their ability to fully participate in employment, school, and recreational activities. The right tools—very specialized devices—allow individuals with disabilities to live, learn, work, and play independently.

Please see what great things we have done together this past year, and know that your continued support of Project START is vital to our mission and to what we can accomplish in the next year.

Sincerely,

Chris M. Howard, Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

It is my pleasure to share with you our 2022 annual report highlighting the accomplishments of Mississippi's Assistive Technology Act Program, Project START. Working with and providing services for Mississippians with disabilities is a true blessing. Each day Project START strives to ensure every individual has the opportunity to live their life to the fullest through the assistance of assistive technology.

I would personally like to thank Mr. Chris Howard, Executive Director of Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, and his dedicated employees for their hard work and support of our program. Also, thank you to our Advisory Council for their guidance and support, and last but not least, our dedicated staff who work tirelessly every day to assist Mississippians with a disability.

As the director of Project START, I am excited about some additions to our program for the coming year and invite you to visit our website at msprojectstart.org for more information about our services and upcoming events. You can contact us at any time through our website or by calling our office at 601.853.5249 or 1.800.852.8328 or emailing me directly at jtucker@mdrs.ms.gov.

Jamie Tucker, Director
Project START



Jamie Tucker
Director

DEVICE REUTILIZATION

The Device Reutilization program focuses on the under-served populations in Mississippi with the mission to provide education, awareness and access of assistive technology to individuals with limited resources in their community. The program redistributes used equipment that has been sanitized, checked for safety and repaired for appropriate use.

DEVICE REASSIGNMENT/ REFURBISHMENT

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| ■ Mobility, Seating, and Positioning | 2 |
| ■ Daily Living | 5 |
| ■ Computer and Related | 81 |
| ■ Vision | 2 |

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Highly Satisfied | 90 |
| Satisfied | 0 |
| Somewhat Satisfied | 0 |
| Total Surveyed | <u>90</u> |

TESTIMONIAL

A man with a traumatic brain injury was waiting on home modification services and needed a ramp to safely enter and exit his residence. He wasn't able to leave his home and was in desperate need to get to medical appointments. Project START received a donation of a modular ramp that we were able to reuse and transfer from another home to his.

DEVICE LOAN PROGRAM

Project START provides a short term equipment loan program allowing an individual to try a device before they purchase it. This program also allows an individual to borrow a device to use while theirs is being repaired or while funding is being secured for the purchase of their device.

DEVICE LOANS BY TYPE OR BORROWER

| | |
|--|----|
| Individual with Disabilities | 76 |
| Family members, Guardians & Authorized Representatives | 12 |
| Representatives of Education | 6 |
| Representatives of Employment | 0 |
| Representative of Health, Allied Health & Rehabilitation | 0 |
| Representative of Community Living | 1 |
| Representative of Technology | 0 |

PURPOSE OF DEVICES LOANED

| | |
|--|----|
| Assist in Decision Making (device trial or evaluation) | 95 |
| Serve as Loaner During Device Repair or While Waiting for Funding | 3 |
| Provide an Accommodation on a Short-Term Basis | 7 |
| Conduct training, self education or other professional development activity..... | 12 |

TYPES OF DEVICES LOANED

| | |
|---|------------|
| Vision | 33 |
| Hearing | 2 |
| Speech Communication | 12 |
| Learning, Cognition, & Positioning | 16 |
| Mobility, Seating, & Positioning | 24 |
| Daily Living | 10 |
| Environmental Adaptations | 2 |
| Vehicle Modification & Transportation | 0 |
| Computers & Related | 3 |
| Recreation Sports & Leisure | 0 |
| Total | 102 |

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Highly Satisfied | 113 |
| Satisfied | 4 |
| Satisfied Somewhat | 0 |
| Not at all satisfied | 0 |
| Non respondent | 2 |
| Total Surveyed | 117 |

TESTIMONIAL

A community client visited the Technology Assistive Device Center seeking assistance with AT. He was diagnosed with cancer in June 2020 and in November 2020 had a total laryngectomy, leaving him unable to produce a voice. After going through extensive treatments, hospitalizations and therapy he visited the TAD Center at the suggestion of his speech-language pathologist. Since his laryngectomy his only method of communication had been writing, gestures, texting and lip movements. This could be extremely difficult due to his muscle weakness. It was also next to impossible to call someone from another room or communicate while riding in a car. During a demonstration at the TAD Center he found a specific communication device to be most helpful. He immediately said, "I love you" to his wife which he hadn't been able to do in 2 years. He was able to receive the device on loan until he was able to secure funding for his own.

DEVICE DEMONSTRATION

In addition to our offices at the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services in Madison, our partnerships provide Demonstration Centers throughout the state to educate individuals and their families or caregivers on assistive technology to aid in hearing, mobility, communication, vision and performing activities of daily living.

DEMONSTRATIONS BY DEVICE TYPE

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Vision | 2 |
| Hearing | 2 |
| Speech Communication | 55 |
| Learning, Cognition, & Developmental | 1 |
| Mobility, Seating, & Positioning | 0 |
| Daily Living | 1 |
| Environmental Adaptations | 0 |
| Vehicle Modification & Transportation | 0 |
| Computers & Related | 0 |
| Recreation Sports & Leisure | 1 |
| Total..... | 62 |

TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Individuals with Disabilities | 32 |
| Family Members, Guardians, & Authorized Representatives | 28 |
| Representative of Education | 2 |
| Representatives of Employment | 0 |
| Representative of Health, Allied Health & Rehabilitation | 0 |
| Representatives of Community Living | 0 |
| Representatives of Technology | 0 |
| Total | 62 |

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Highly Satisfied | 42 |
| Satisfied | 88 |
| Satisfied Somewhat | 12 |
| Not at all satisfied | 0 |
| Non respondent | 0 |
| Total Surveyed | 142 |

TESTIMONIAL

A mother and her nine year old daughter came to our lending library to demo different devices. The child has Dandy Walker syndrome as well as Dyslexia, sensory issues, dexterity and grip difficulties and trouble reading. We worked with the child on a C-pen reader which she was successful using during the demo process. She tried many different sensory toys and decided on a weighted lap pad to see if it helped her to sit still and focus on her task at hand. She enjoyed switch operated toys and gel pad games that allowed her to interact with her siblings. Her mother found our program online, and she wasn't previously familiar with assistive technology equipment available to her daughter. They thoroughly enjoyed their time with us allowing them the opportunity to familiarize themselves with available options for future use.

TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

Project START provides training, technical assistance and public awareness activities, providing information on availability, benefits and cost of AT devices and services.

TOTAL TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ■ Individual with Disabilities | 56 |
| ■ Family members, Guardians & Authorized Representatives | 4 |
| ■ Representatives of Education | 74 |
| ■ Representatives of Employment | 38 |
| ■ Representative of Health, Allied Health & Rehabilitation | 54 |
| ■ Representative of Community Living | 0 |
| ■ Representative of Technology | .0 |

Total 283

57 trainees on general AT, AAC, driving, adaptive computer access, vision and hearing, and AT for learning disabilities were not able to be categorized

Project START partnered with PRC-Salttillo on a alternative-augmentative communication device training. They provided LAMP Words for Life Accent: Vocabulary Review, Programming and Basic Implementation product training. Participants learned about LAMP Words for Life as well as programming, customizing and basic implementation of the vocabulary. Hands-on practice with the vocabulary was provided, and we have several models of the Accent device in our loan library. These are one of the most requested devices for loan.



Your perspective is extremely valuable,
and we greatly appreciate any and all feedback!

Please send any comments or questions to:

Jamie Tucker

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*Mississippi Project START is funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998,
as amended by the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services
Administration.*

*MDRS Project START, the statewide assistive technology program for Mississippians,
is coordinated by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services agency.*