

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



EXECUTIVE ORDER 1335

WHEREAS, Mississippians with disabilities, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental illnesses, experience disproportionately high levels of unemployment, underemployment, and dependence upon publicly funded programs; and

WHEREAS, Mississippians with disabilities are a largely untapped resource for employers, and in many cases the hiring of Mississippians with disabilities represents a viable business option that both meets the needs of an employer and provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities to use their strengths and skills; and

WHEREAS, my administration is committed to supporting policies under which agencies that provide services to persons with disabilities and/or provide employment, economic development, or other related services explore employment in an integrated setting as the first priority option for persons with disabilities who are of working age.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Phil Bryant, Governor of the State of Mississippi, pursuant to the Constitution and laws of the State of Mississippi, do hereby order as follows:

1. State agencies that provide services and support to persons with disabilities, and state agencies which provide employment, economic development, or other related services, shall coordinate efforts and collaborate to ensure that state programs, policies, and procedures support employment in integrated settings as the first priority option, to the extent feasible, for persons with disabilities who are of working age.
2. The same state agencies shall, whenever feasible, share data and information across systems and adopt measurable goals and objectives to track progress toward the achievement of the goals of this Executive Order.
3. The Mississippi Disability Resource Commission, Miss. Code Ann. § 43-30-1, is authorized to monitor implementation of this Executive Order by:
 - a. identifying state agency policies and procedures that create barriers or disincentives to the employment of people with disabilities, and developing recommendations to reduce or eliminate those barriers or disincentives;
 - b. identifying best practices, effective partnerships, potential funding sources, and opportunities for shared services among state agencies to increase integrated and competitive employment opportunities for Mississippians with disabilities;
 - c. reviewing and commenting on proposed legislation that may affect the employment of Mississippians with disabilities, and considering recommendations of organizations involved in promoting the employment of individuals with disabilities;
 - d. requesting the timely submission by state agencies of measurable goals and objectives and tracking progress toward the achievement of those goals and objectives; and
 - e. preparing an annual report to the Governor and members of the Legislature that both details progress toward achievement of the goals and objectives of this Executive Order and also identifies any barriers thereto.

4. Nothing in this Executive Order shall be interpreted:
- a. to limit or disallow any disability benefits to which a person with a disability who is unable to be employed would otherwise be entitled;
 - b. to require any state agency or other employer to give preference to hiring persons with disabilities;
 - c. to prohibit any employment relationship or employment program that is otherwise permitted under applicable state and federal law;
 - d. to require the expenditure of funds on any particular program or at any particular level;
 - e. to grant any individual or organization a judicially enforceable right or cause of action; or
 - f. to prohibit the appropriate use of programs known as center-based employment, employment centers, skill development centers, vocational rehabilitation centers, and/or other employment options.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol, in the City of Jackson, this the 14th day of January in the year of our Lord two thousand and fourteen, and of the two hundred and thirty-eighth year of the United States of America.

**PHIL BRYANT
GOVERNOR**

BY THE GOVERNOR

**C. DELBERT HOSEMANN, JR.
SECRETARY OF STATE**