

2019 Mississippi disAbility MegaConference Recap

Mississippi's Developmental Disabilities Network Partners were part of the planning committee for the Mississippi disAbility MegaConference. The conference was held on June 13-14, 2019 at the Hilton Jackson. The theme was AWARENESS... ADVOCACY... ACTION!!! A pre-conference event "Family Game Night" was held for the first time and was a great success. With over 350 attendees, the MegaConference is one of the state's largest events for people with disabilities, their families and professionals. Over 40 exhibitors shared the latest information and resources. Sixteen concurrent sessions were provided to attendees. The event was a great way for attendees to make new friends, hear about services that may benefit their lives, and find peer-to-peer support. Keynote speakers included Julie Hocker (Commissioner of the Administration on Disabilities), Rick Courtney (attorney and Mississippi ABLE Board Chair), and Russell Lehmann and Kebra Moore (motivational speakers and advocates).

For more information, visit www.msmegaconference.org or www.facebook.com/mississippi.megaconference.



Pictures from top left to right: DD Network Executive Directors with Julie Hocker, Rick Courtney, Kebra Moore, Russell Lehmann, and conference attendees



If you have information or news you would like to be included in the next issue, please email Jin Joo Crosby at jin.mcclendon@usm.edu.

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Mississippi ABLE Program Q&A

What is an ABLE account?

ABLE accounts are tax-advantaged savings accounts for people with disabilities. Income earned in the accounts is not taxed if spent on qualified disability-related expenses. Contributions can be made to an account by anyone and may qualify for a state tax deduction. The accounts can be used for daily transactions, as well as for long-term savings. Up to \$100,000 in an ABLE account is exempt from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) asset limit. The maximum yearly limit for contributions to an ABLE account is the annual gift tax exemption amount (\$15,000 in 2019).



How can funds be used?

Funds in the account can be used for qualified disability-related expenses. A qualified disability-related expense is any expense related to the designated beneficiary's disability that assists the individual in increasing and/or maintaining their health, independence and/or quality of life. These may include expenses related to education, housing, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology, personal support services, health care expenses, financial management and administrative services and other similar expenses.

Who is eligible?

Not all individuals with disabilities will be eligible to open an ABLE account. The ABLE Act limits eligibility to individuals with disabilities (as defined by SSA) with an age of onset of disability before turning 26 years of age. If an individual meets this age criteria and is also already receiving benefits under SSI and/or SSDI, they are automatically eligible to establish an ABLE account. If individuals are not recipients of SSI and/or SSDI, but still meet the age of onset disability requirement, they could still be eligible to open an ABLE account by following specific steps.

What is the Mississippi ABLE Program?

The Mississippi ABLE program began in June 2019. The fee to maintain a Mississippi ABLE account will be \$3.75 per month. Mississippi's ABLE program will offer diverse investment options, ranging from FDIC insured to higher risk stock and bonds. Participants may withdraw their money through real-time debit cards, electronic transfers and/or paper checks.

For more information about Mississippi ABLE, visit www.MississippiABLE.com.



Upcoming DD Network Event

Coordinating ADA Accommodations in Higher Education Training

The Mississippi Developmental Disabilities (DD) Network is pleased to announce the second annual “Coordinating ADA Accommodations in Higher Education Training.” This free training opportunity for professionals working in higher education will provide an opportunity to learn more about providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. The “Coordinating ADA Accommodations in Higher Education Training” will be offered in Cleveland on August 1, 2019 and in Gulfport on August 8, 2019.

If you are interested in attending, please use the following link to register by July 22, 2019.

https://usmep.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_81CCu7pMPNVC5fv



Coordinating Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodations in Higher Education

Draft Agenda

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|--------------------------------|---|
| 9:30 - 10:00 a.m. | Registration |
| 10:00 – 10:15 a.m. | Welcome and Introductions |
| 10:15 – 11:30 a.m. | Basics for the Campus ADA Coordinator
<i>Micah Dutro, Legal Director, Disability Rights Mississippi</i> |
| 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Lunch (provided) |
| 12:30 – 1:15 p.m. | What is Happening in Higher Education?
<i>Dr. Jerry Alliston, Associate Director, The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies</i> |
| 1:15 – 2:00 p.m. | Challenging Accommodation Requests
<i>Q&A with attorney Micah Dutro</i> |
| | Closing Remarks |

The DD Network will be hosting community conversations on August 8th (Gulfport), 20th (Southaven), and 27th (Vicksburg). These events are free and open to the public and provide opportunities for people with disabilities and their families to share information, gather resources, speak with advocates, and spend time with others from their area.



Community Conversations

Information for People with Disabilities and Their Families

FREE and Open to the Public

Refreshments will be provided.



People with disabilities and their families can gather resources, speak with advocates, and spend time with others in your area.

Information will be provided by Disability Rights Mississippi, Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities, Institute for Disability Studies, service agencies, and disability organizations.

August 8, 2019

GULFPORT

Knight Non-Profit Center, 11975 Seaway Road

August 20, 2019

SOUTHAVEN

Southaven Public Library, 8554 Northwest Drive

August 27, 2019

VICKSBURG

United Way West Central, 920 South Street

4:30 - 6:30 p.m. for all locations

For sign language requests or accessibility questions, call 800-772-4057 or email swalker@drms.ms.



DISABILITY RIGHTS MISSISSIPPI
Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Disabilities

