



The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS)/Division of Economic Assistance (DEA) and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) partnered to implement the Mississippi Subsidized Transitional Employment Program and Services (STEPS) Program. MS STEPS provides a wage and benefit subsidy to employers who provide an hourly wage and a transferable work skill to eligible participants. MDHS is the agency of the State of Mississippi charged with the responsibility of operating and administering a state-federal assistance program in Mississippi in accordance with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193), the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-171), and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5). The mission of MDES is to shape the State's workforce and increase employment in Mississippi by connecting employers with qualified employees and employees with jobs to improve their quality of life. The MS STEPS Program allows MDHS and MDES to work together to help eligible Mississippians, including TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), SNAP Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), and UI (Unemployment Insurance) recipients, gain access to sustainable subsidized employment. TANF Emergency Funds are used to operate the MS STEPS Program. **MS STEPS began December 8, 2009 and will end September 30, 2010.**

### **MS STEPS provides:**

A monthly reimbursement to the employer at the following levels:

- 1st month - 100%
- 2nd month - 100%
- 3rd month - 75%
- 4th month - 50%
- 5th month - 50%
- 6th month - 25%

An individual may participate in a subsidized employment placement for up to six months (with a maximum of 1040 hours for the entire training period and no more than 175 hours per month). No more than 50% of the employer's full-time workforce can participate at any one time. Employers must commit to retain the participant after the six month subsidized employment period.

### **Employer Eligibility**

In order to participate in the MS STEPS Program, an employer must have a worksite located in the State of Mississippi. Any private for-profit employer, private non-profit employer, and public hospital can participate in the MS STEPS Program as long as they are in good standing and are in compliance with the laws of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and carry a current Workers Compensation policy or have proof of a Self-Insured Plan, if required by law.

No firm or industry in violation of local, state, or federal labor laws is eligible for reimbursement assistance nor will a proposal be approved if it is determined that abnormal conditions, such as a strike, a lockout or other similar conditions exist at the establishment or any of its affiliates within the state.

MS STEPS funds shall not be used to fund any private for-profit or non-profit employer suspended or barred from doing procurement business with the State of Mississippi.

Any employer who receives funds under a MS STEPS agreement must provide immediate written notice if, at any time, the employer or its subsidiaries learn that its MS STEPS certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

**An eligible participant must:**

- Be a U.S. citizen
- Be a resident of the Mississippi
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have one verified dependent child who meets the following:
  - US citizen
  - Within the specified degree of relationship
  - Under 18
  - Living in the home
- Have a total family income that does not exceed 250% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (This includes SNAP and TANF families)

The Federal Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia	
Persons in Family	250% Poverty Guideline
1	\$27,075
2	\$36,425
3	\$45,775
4	\$55,125
5	\$64,475
6	\$73,825
7	\$83,175
8	\$92,525
* For families with more than 8 persons, add \$3,740 for each additional person. Subject to increase	

**Participants are provided:**

Outreach, intake, and orientation to the information and other services available through the WIN Job Center.

Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, and abilities.

Job search and placement assistance.

Follow-up services, including counseling for not less than 12 months after the first day of employment.

Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs, which may include diagnostic testing and use of other assessment barriers and appropriate employment goals.

Development of an individual employment plan.

Case management.

Short-term prevocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct.

Any individual referred to the WIN Job Center by an employer (commonly referred to as a "reverse referral") must go through the system in the same manner as other job seekers participating in the MS STEPS Program. This process must be completed prior to the beginning date of employment. **For information on the MS STEPS Program, contact your local WIN Job Center representative or call 1-888-844-3577.** MDHS and MDES are equal opportunity employers.



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT of EMPLOYMENT SECURITY