FIRST EXTRAORDINARY SESSION 2025

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

By: Representatives Deweese, To: Appropriations A Bennett, Creekmore IV, Currie, McGee, Mickens, Read, Scott, Turner

HOUSE BILL NO. 29

1 2 3	AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEFRAYING THE EXPENSES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026.
4	BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:
5	SECTION 1. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
6	necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the State General
7	Fund not otherwise appropriated, for the purposes of defraying the
8	expenses of the Department of Rehabilitation Services for the
9	fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026
10	\$ 33,684,645.00.
11	SECTION 2. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
12	necessary, is appropriated out of any money in any special fund in
13	the State Treasury to the credit of the Department of
14	Rehabilitation Services which is comprised of special source funds
15	collected by or otherwise available to the department for the
16	support of the various offices of the department, for the purpose
17	
1 /	of defraying the expenses of the department for the fiscal year
18	of defraying the expenses of the department for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026

19	\$ 227,773,395.00.
20	SECTION 3. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of
21	Section 2, Three Million Six Hundred Eighty-one Thousand Eight
22	Hundred Two Dollars (\$3,681,802.00) shall be derived from the
23	Health Care Expendable Fund created in Section 43-13-407,
24	Mississippi Code of 1972. The above funds shall be allocated as
25	follows:
26	Fully match all available federal
27	funds\$ 2,826,899.00.
28	Independent Living Program which
29	includes the State Attendant
30	Care Program\$ 854,903.00.
31	SECTION 4. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of
32	this act, not more than the following amount of funds, with the
33	exception of the provisions in this section, shall be expended
34	only for "Personal Services," which includes "Vacancy Funding,"
35	for the following authorized number of employment headcount:
36	FUNDING:
37	General Funds: \$ 11,415,018.00
38	Special Funds: \$ 54,705,672.00
39	Total Funds: \$ 66,120,690.00
40	PERSONAL SERVICES:
41	Employee Salaries, Wages, and
42	Fringe Benefits: \$ 63,314,655.00
43	Progressions: \$ 0.00

44	Vacancy Funding: \$ 2,806,035.00
45	Total Personal Services: \$ 66,120,690.00
46	AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:
47	Permanent: 875
48	Time-Limited: 201
49	As used in this section, the term "Personal Services" shall
50	mean funds provided under the major object of expenditure category
51	Personal Services for Salaries, Wages, and Fringe Benefits. Funds
52	in this category shall not be transferred to any other category.
53	It is the intention of the Legislature to ensure compliance
54	with the Variable Compensation Plan, as outlined in Section
55	25-9-147, Mississippi Code of 1972. Payment from these funds shall
56	be in accordance with the Variable Compensation Plan promulgated
57	by the Mississippi State Personnel Board. It is the Legislature's
58	intention that no employee's salary falls below the minimum salary
59	established by the Mississippi State Personnel Board.
60	The State Personnel Board shall determine and publish the
61	projected annual cost of "Personal Services" based on monthly and
62	year-to-date payroll expenditures in compliance with the
63	provisions of this act.
64	With the funds herein appropriated, it shall be the agency's
65	responsibility to ensure that no single personnel action or
66	combination of personnel actions, when annualized, exceeds the
67	Fiscal Year 2026 appropriation for "Personal Services" with the
68	exception of escalated funds. Further, it shall be the agency's

- 69 responsibility to ensure that funds required to be appropriated
- 70 for "Personal Services" for Fiscal Year 2027 do not exceed Fiscal
- 71 Year 2026 funds appropriated for that purpose unless programs or
- 72 positions are added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2026 budget by the
- 73 Mississippi Legislature.
- 74 If, at the time the agency takes any action to change
- 75 "Personal Services," the State Personnel Board determines that the
- 76 agency has taken or will take an action that would cause the
- 77 agency to exceed the funds appropriated in this act when
- 78 annualized for Fiscal Year 2026 or increase the need for "Personal
- 79 Services" for Fiscal Year 2027, when annualized, the State
- 80 Personnel Board shall process no salary actions until such time as
- 81 the requirements of the provisions of this section are met with
- 82 the exception of new hires determined to be essential for the
- 83 agency.
- When used in this section, "Vacancy Funding" shall mean funds
- 85 included in the Total Personal Services amount listed above and
- 86 designated for approved vacancies in Fiscal Year 2026. These funds
- 87 are to be utilized to increase the number of filled headcounts
- 88 that were authorized but unfilled as of the last day of Fiscal
- 89 Year 2025. If the agency fills additional headcounts after May 1,
- 90 2025, until the end of Fiscal Year 2025, the amount of available
- 91 Vacancy Funding may be proportionally reduced to reflect the
- 92 updated number of filled headcounts. The agency shall be
- 93 responsible for ensuring that "Vacancy Funding" is used to

94	increase	headcounts	and	not	for	promotions	. title	changes.
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- 95 in-range salary adjustments, or any other mechanism for increasing
- 96 salaries for current employees.
- 97 Any transfers or escalations shall be made in accordance with
- 98 the terms, conditions, and procedures established by law or
- 99 allowable under the terms set forth within this act. The State
- 100 Personnel Board shall not escalate positions without written
- 101 approval from the Department of Finance and Administration. The
- 102 Department of Finance and Administration shall not provide written
- 103 approval to escalate any funds for salaries and/or headcounts
- 104 without proof of availability of new or additional funds above the
- 105 appropriated level. Unless specifically noted, all Fiscal Year
- 106 2025 escalated headcounts have been accounted for and shall be
- 107 converted to authorized time-limited headcounts.
- No general funds authorized to be expended herein shall be
- 109 used to replace federal funds and/or other special funds used for
- 110 salaries authorized under the provisions of this act and which are
- 111 withdrawn and no longer available.
- None of the funds herein appropriated shall be used in
- 113 violation of the Internal Revenue Service's Publication 15-A
- 114 relating to the reporting of income paid to contract employees, as
- interpreted by the Office of the State Auditor.
- If the agency's total authorized headcount decreases from
- 117 Fiscal Year 2025 to Fiscal Year 2026, it will be the agency's
- 118 discretion as to what headcounts are removed.

119	SECTION 5. It is the intention of the Legislature that the
120	Department of Rehabilitation Services shall maintain complete
121	accounting and personnel records related to the expenditure of all
122	funds appropriated under this act and that such records shall be
123	in the same format and level of detail as maintained for Fiscal
124	Year 2025. It is further the intention of the Legislature that
125	the agency's budget request for Fiscal Year 2027 shall be
126	submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in a format
127	and level of detail comparable to the format and level of detail
128	provided during the Fiscal Year 2026 budget request process.

- SECTION 6. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the
 Blind shall remain accredited by using not more than Five Hundred
 Dollars (\$500.00) of the funds appropriated along with matching
 funds for payment of fees to an accreditation agency recommended
 by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
- SECTION 7. Of the funds appropriated herein, the Mississippi
 Department of Rehabilitation Services through the Office of
 Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind is authorized to expend an
 amount not to exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00)
 for the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) News line service
 to allow blind and visually impaired persons to access newspapers
 through toll-free telephone calls.
- SECTION 8. It is the intention of the Legislature that
 whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the
 purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things

144	stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price,
145	quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind
146	shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to
147	the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are
148	made without competitive bids.
149	SECTION 9. In compliance with the "Mississippi Performance
150	Budget and Strategic Planning Act of 1994," it is the intent of
151	the Legislature that the funds provided herein shall be utilized
152	in the most efficient and effective manner possible to achieve the
153	intended mission of this agency. Based on the funding authorized,
154	this agency shall make every effort to attain the targeted
155	performance measures provided below:
156	FY2026
157	Performance Measures <u>Target</u>
158	Disability Determination Services
159	Number of Dispositions 65,000
160	Processing Time (Days) 130
161	Voc Rehabilitation For The Blind
162	Number of Blind & Visually Impaired
163	Persons Served 2,075
164	Number of Persons Rehabilitated 305
165	Number of Independent Living Persons Served 630
166	Percent Change in Persons Employed
167	Compared to Persons Served 13.00
168	Vocational Rehabilitation

169	Number of Clients Served	15 , 075
170	Number of Clients Rehabilitated	2,555
171	Percent Change of Persons Employed	
172	Compared to Persons Served	16.00
173	Persons Employed with Pay Rate Greater	
174	than Federal or State Minimum Wage	2,555
175	Persons with Significant Disabilities	
176	Leaving VR With Competitive, Self, or	
177	BEP Employment, Wage = or > Than Minimum	1,594
178	Spinal Cord & Head Injury Program	
179	Number of Clients Served	1,050
180	Percent Change in Number of Spinal Cord	
181	& Brain injuries per Year	3.00
182	Special Disability Programs	
183	Number of Clients Served	3,100
184	Percent Change in Persons Receiving HCBW	
185	Services Compared to Waiting List	25.00
186	Ratio of Cost to HCBW Services per	
187	Person Compared to an Institutional	
188	Setting	38.00
189	Support Services	
190	Percent of Total Budget	2.00
191	A reporting of the degree to which the performance t	argets
192	set above have been or are being achieved shall be provide	led in the

- 193 agency's budget request submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget
- 194 Committee for Fiscal Year 2027.
- 195 **SECTION 10.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions
- 196 of this act, Four Million Eight Hundred Fifty-six Thousand Nine
- 197 Hundred Thirty-two Dollars (\$4,856,932.00) is provided for
- 198 increases in the hourly wage for Personal Care Assistants.
- 199 **SECTION 11.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1, it is
- 200 the intention of the Legislature that One Million Five Hundred
- 201 Sixty-three Thousand Thirty-nine Dollars (\$1,563,039.00) shall be
- 202 allocated to the Spinal Cord & Head Injury Trust supported from
- 203 General Fund court assessments.
- 204 **SECTION 12.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1 and
- 205 Section 2 of this act, it is the intention of the Legislature that
- 206 continued funding at or above the Fiscal Year 2025 appropriated
- 207 amount shall be provided for up to Four Thousand One Hundred
- 208 (4,100) slots in the Home and Community Based Waiver programs for
- 209 Independent Living and Spinal Cord/Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver
- 210 programs.
- 211 **SECTION 13.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
- 212 funds herein appropriated shall be expended in compliance with
- 213 Section 27-104-25, Mississippi Code of 1972, that no state agency
- 214 shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their
- 215 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally
- 216 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for
- 217 actions contrary to this provision.

SECTION 14. The money herein appropriated shall be paid by
the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the
credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon
warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal
Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the
proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.
SECTION 15. This act shall take effect and be in force from
and after July 1, 2025.