

MDHS Commits \$5 Million in TANF Funds

JACKSON, MISS — The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) today announced a \$5 million investment of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) direct funds to child care assistance for low-income working families in Federal Fiscal Year 2026.

The new funding will be administered through MDHS's Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD) and distributed through the established Child Care Payment Program (CCPP) voucher system. These TANF direct funds are in addition to existing child care support MDHS provides through various subgrantees offering afterschool programs and workforce supports for working families.

“Child care is not a luxury — it is the infrastructure that makes work possible for Mississippi families,” said Robert G. “Bob” Anderson, MDHS Executive Director. “This \$5 million investment is a targeted, responsible use of TANF funds to reach working parents who need help, and it reflects our commitment to deploying public resources where they make a real difference.”

This investment is separate from — and in addition to — MDHS's existing annual conversion of approximately \$25.7 million from TANF to the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), which reflects the maximum allowed under federal law. By investing these direct funds, MDHS is able to extend child care assistance to additional eligible families beyond those currently supported through the CCDF conversion, while preserving the agency's capacity to respond to other emerging program priorities.

Families seeking child care assistance do not need

to submit a new or separate application. Eligibility will be determined through the standard CCPP process, including income eligibility standards and work or education requirements.

Approved vouchers funded through the TANF direct stream will provide the same level of assistance as those funded through CCDF. DECCD will assign each approved certificate to a single funding stream, prioritizing CCDF dollars first, followed by any applicable state funds, and then TANF direct funds.

Child care providers will continue to receive payment through the established CCPP reimbursement process with no changes to their current billing or reporting requirements.

75.6% of Mississippi third graders pass state reading assessment on first attempt in 2026

JACKSON, Miss. — The Mississippi Department of Education announces that 75.6% or 24,118 of third graders passed the initial administration of the third-grade reading assessment given this spring for the 2025-26 school year. A total of 31,887 students took the test.

In 2024-25, 77.3% of third graders passed the initial administration of the assessment, with 84.6% of students passing after final retests. In 2023-24, 75.7% of students passed the initial administration, with 84% passing after final retests.

In accordance with the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), third graders who do not pass the initial administration of the read-

ings test are given up to two attempts to retest. Students who did not pass the initial reading assessment took retests from May 11-15. The second retest window is June 22-26.

The LBPA became law in 2013 to improve reading skills of kindergarten through third-grade students in public schools, so every student completing the third grade is able to read at or above grade level. The LBPA requires Mississippi third graders to pass a reading assessment to qualify for promotion to fourth grade. Some students may qualify for good cause exemptions to be promoted to fourth grade.

An amendment to the law

in 2016 raised reading-level expectations starting in the 2018-19 school year, requiring third graders to score at level three or higher on the reading portion of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.

To see the district- and school-level initial pass rate report for 2025-26, go to mdek12.org/publicreporting/2025-26/. Final district-level pass rates will be published this fall in the Literacy-Based Promotion Act Annual Report of Performance and Student Retention for the 2025-26 school year. Find all MDE news releases at mdek12.org/news.

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New endowed scholarship supports Holmes nursing students

Holmes Community College students pursuing nursing now have access to a new endowed scholarship designed to support advanced training and strengthen the healthcare workforce.

The LCT Nursing Advancement Scholarship will assist students enrolled in the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) accelerated/bridge program for licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and paramedics, or the practical nursing hybrid option. The scholarship is awarded annually to eligible students who demonstrate academic commitment and progress in their nursing education.

The scholarship was established through the

Holmes Development Foundation, Inc., as part of a donor agreement creating an endowed fund. The agreement states that the gift will be used to support Holmes Community College students and may continue to grow through additional contributions from individuals, organizations and other donors.

Under the terms of the agreement, recipients must be enrolled in the ADN accelerated/bridge program for LPNs or paramedics or the practical nursing hybrid option. Scholarships will be awarded annually as long as students remain enrolled full time in the program and maintain a GPA higher than 2.0.

Selection of scholarship recipients will be coordinated through the Holmes Development Foundation and the college's scholarship committee, which will administer the endowment according to the donor's criteria. A report on student

progress will be submitted to the donor annually.

The scholarship was made possible through donor Christiana Palmer, nursing home administrator of Grenada Living Center, with the goal of reducing financial barriers for students pursuing nursing careers and addressing the growing demand for healthcare professionals.

“This scholarship provides an important opportunity for our students to continue advancing in the nursing field without as many financial barriers,” said Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Lindy McCain. “Hopefully the scholarship will encourage more students to pursue advanced nursing credentials and remain in the healthcare field after graduation.”

The scholarship will be available beginning this academic year, with applications open to qualifying students in eligible nursing programs.

Fall Semester Honor Roll at Jones College Announced


ELLISVILLE - Jones College has announced the 2026 Spring Semester honor roll scholars. Full-time students with 15 hours or more and who maintain the following grade-point aver-

ages will make the honor roll: President's List--4.0; Dean's List--3.99-3.5; Faculty List--3.49-3.0. Faculty List Honor Roll Lexington: Brittany Nicole Thompson.

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I should have put this item in last weeks news. For Mother's Day, we had a small gala. A few of us at the Lexington Nutrition Site said poems, read or said readings about Mother's Day. Some of us told about our own mother. But to top things off, Mrs. Mary Calhoun had made enough pil-

lows and a few other items to give every lady at our feeding site. Over 20 people got a gift. We appreciate Mrs. Calhoun very much.

Everybody that can pray: pray for Elder Charles Jefferson. He was in a serious accident Thursday. He is a man that everybody loves, so I believe many prayers will be prayed.

Lou Thurmond's mother passed. Keep the family uplifted in prayer.

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HOLMES COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR/COLLECTOR JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

DEPUTY COLLECTOR

The Holmes County Tax Assessor/Collector **Linda Rollins** is taking applications for a qualified, detail-oriented individual for the position of Deputy Collector. Responsibilities include good customer service, filing, and various office duties.

Qualifications: High School Diploma and knowledge of computers.

Please bring a resume to Linda Rollins, 22323 Depot Street, Lexington, MS 39095. Deadline for accepting applications will taken until Monday, June 15, 2026.

Holmes County Tax Assessor/Collector is an Equal Opportunity Employer.