



INSTITUTE FOR DISABILITY STUDIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Education and Capacity
Building
Volunteer Opportunities

Spring 2025

MISSION

*To positively affect the lives of Mississippians
with developmental and other disabilities and their families
across the life span and work toward increasing
their independence, productivity and integration
into their communities*

www.usm.edu/ids

Community Volunteer Club

of Opportunities: Unlimited – Depends on individual schedules

Site: The Institute for Disability Studies Hattiesburg Campus

Description: The Community Volunteer Club is an inclusive service program that focuses on providing volunteer and service opportunities one day per week throughout the year. Volunteers participate in an array of community and service activities and receive professional development training that covers resume building, interview skills, computer literacy skills and leadership skills. Activities are offered in-person and virtually as needed.

Dates/Times: A schedule of activities is disseminated on a monthly basis at the beginning of each month. The club operates on Tuesdays from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and additional events may be held outside of those days and times.

Contact/Team Leader: Scott Mullins, LMSW
(601) 266-6129
scott.mullins@usm.edu

Expectations: Volunteers must confirm commitment with Mr. Mullins. Transportation is available for some events. Volunteers will have one-on-one experiences with youth and young adults with various disabilities while participating in various community, education and service activities.

RISE To The Top! Social Student Partners

of Opportunities: Varies but general 5-10 each semester, preferably for two semesters and longer

Site: The Institute for Disability Studies Hattiesburg Campus

Description: Social student partners provide peer mentoring and social engagement activities to University students with disabilities who are participants in the RISE to the Top! program. RISE students meet with the student partners as needed, usually on a weekly basis including virtual options.

Dates/Times: Social student partner activities, at least initial communication, should begin the first day of each semester. Meeting should be individualized and coordinated based on both student schedules.

Contact/Team Leader: Aysha Robertson, MSW
(601) 266-4612
aysha.robertson@usm.edu

Expectations: Social student partners must confirm commitment with Ms. Robertson and must meet with their assigned University student on a consistent basis. If extra assistance is needed such as tutoring, specific training or any other identified services, the student partner should consult with Ms. Robertson to confirm potential University and/or community resource opportunities. Volunteers will have one-on-one experiences with RISE students.

Special Olympics (SO) College Southern Miss

of Opportunities: Minimum of 10 including coaching positions, leadership positions and players

Site: The Institute for Disability Studies Hattiesburg Campus

Description: SO College Southern Miss focuses on inclusive sports with individuals with and without disabilities and information sharing activities. Basketball and cheerleading are the confirmed sports for the spring semester.

Dates/Times: Practice and eventual game(s) are weekday afternoons with potential weekends as needed. Practice will be once a week and the final game(s) will be confirmed early in the semester so all participants may play accordingly.

Contact/Team Leader: Aysha Robertson
(601) 266-4612
aysha.robertson@usm.edu

Expectations: Volunteers must confirm commitment with Mr. Mullins. Volunteers also must fill out a SO College Southern Miss membership application and a Special Olympics Mississippi application in order to become a partner (college student that participates with Special Olympics athletes), coach, or manager. Those volunteers who participate on actual team sport are required to have a physical completed and turned in to the advisor. Volunteers will have one-on-one experiences with youth and young adults with various disabilities while participating in Special Olympics recreation and awareness activities.

STEP UP to Leadership Council

of Opportunities: Unlimited – Member Council

Site: The Institute for Disability Studies Hattiesburg and Long Beach Campus

Description: The STEP UP to Leadership Councils are councils composed of youth and young adults with and without disabilities. Members serve as leaders within their schools, colleges, universities, and communities while participating in meaningful leadership, recreation and service activities. Volunteers have the opportunity to join, participate with inclusive community recreational activities and inclusive service opportunities. One council is located at both the Hattiesburg and Long Beach campuses of the University, specifically at the IDS office locations. .

Dates/Times: A schedule for activities is disseminated at the beginning of each month via email. Volunteers are able to select the activity (ies) that are of interest to them and that complement their respective schedules.

Contact/Team Leader: Scott Mullins, LMSW
(601) 266-6129
scott.mullins@usm.edu
Hattiesburg Campus

Beth Robertson, MA
228.214.3422
beth.robertson@usm.edu
Long Beach Campus

Expectations: Volunteers must confirm commitment with Mr. Mullins or Ms. Robertson. Volunteers also must fill out a STEP UP to Leadership membership application in order to become an official member and be added to the listserv. Volunteers choose what event(s) they wish to attend with some events on campus and some in the greater community. Transportation is available for some events. Volunteers will have one-on-one experiences with youth and young adults with various disabilities while participating in leadership, recreation and service activities.

Transition to Adulthood Training Activities

of Opportunities: Varies depending on specific training activity

Site: The Institute for Disability Studies Hattiesburg and Long Beach Campus

Description: A variety of transition training activities are held each semester such as socialization groups, adulting groups, pre-employment training sessions on a variety of topics, Job Extravaganza Skills Training Events and internships.

Dates/Times: Events are scheduled each semester, with most scheduled early in the semester or at least by the first of each month.

Contact/Team Leader: Joseph King, LMSW
601.266.4021
joseph.a.king@usm.edu
Hattiesburg Campus

Beth Robertson, MS
228.214.3422
beth.robertson@usm.edu
Long Beach Campus

Expectations: Volunteers must confirm availability and attendance with Mr. King or Ms. Robertson. Volunteers may observe as well as actively participate in various training-focused groups and services that facilitate hands-on learning and the increase of employment, advocacy and leadership skills for youth and young adults with various disabilities.