

JANUARY 2026

# Central Update

A Quarterly Publication of  
Central Mississippi Planning &  
Development District

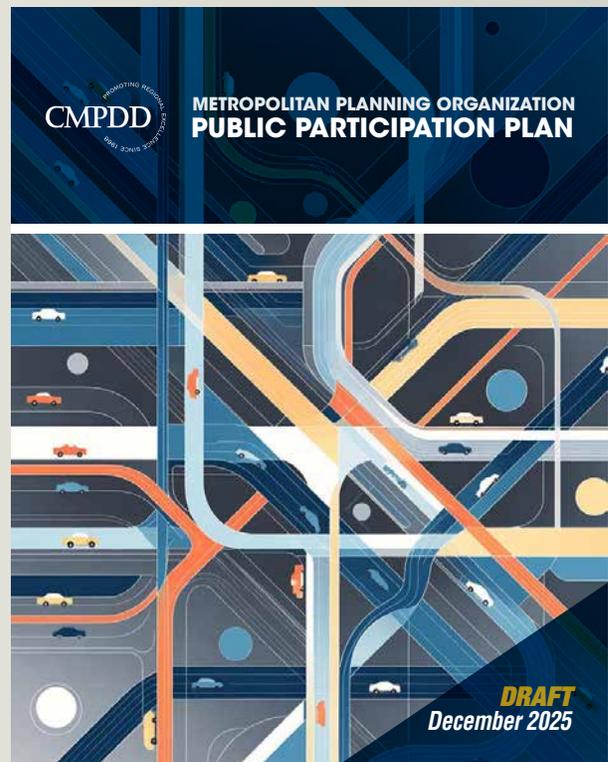
## CMPDD Seeks Public Comment on the MPO's Proposed Public Participation Plan

CMPDD is inviting transportation stakeholders and members of the public to review and provide comments on the Proposed Public Participation Plan for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

The public comment period opened December 17, 2025, and remains open through February 3, 2026. During this comment period, interested parties are encouraged to review the proposed plan and submit feedback to help guide future public engagement efforts related to transportation planning in the region.

CMPDD conducts a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning area, which includes portions of Hinds, Madison, and Rankin Counties. Public input is a critical component of this process, ensuring that transportation plans, programs, and projects reflect community needs and priorities. The Public Participation Plan outlines the strategies and procedures CMPDD uses to engage the public and other transportation stakeholders throughout the planning process. This includes methods for sharing information, gathering input, and providing multiple opportunities for meaningful participation in a manner that is accessible, transparent, and proactive. Effective public engagement helps ensure that residents, local governments, agencies, and interested organizations have a voice in shaping transportation decisions that impact the region.

The proposed plan is available for public review on CMPDD's website. Comments received during the comment period will be considered prior to adoption of the final Public



Participation Plan by the MPO. Additional information, including instructions for submitting comments, can be found by visiting [www.cmpdd.org/transportation/get-involved/](http://www.cmpdd.org/transportation/get-involved/).

Comments will be accepted through  
February 3, 2026

Visit [www.cmpdd.org/transportation/get-involved/](http://www.cmpdd.org/transportation/get-involved/)  
or scan this code



# Central Mississippi Positioned for Workforce Growth as Amazon Announces \$3 Billion Data Center Investment in Warren County



The Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD) welcomes the announcement that Amazon plans to invest at least \$3 billion to build a state of the art data center campus in Warren County, Mississippi, a project that marks one of the largest private investments in the county’s history and a strategic milestone for workforce and economic development.

This major investment by the global technology leader builds on Mississippi’s growing prominence as a hub for cloud computing and artificial intelligence infrastructure. It is expected to create hundreds of new jobs and support additional employment across the local economy. The rapidly expanding need for both construction talent and highly skilled technical workers presents an opportunity for Central Mississippi to lead in workforce preparation and training.

CMPDD’s Workforce Division is actively coordinating with local training providers and high schools to ensure that residents in Central Mississippi are prepared to compete for new opportunities arising from the Amazon investment and related infrastructure growth.

Key to this effort is partnership with institutions such as Hinds Community College, which has developed specialized programs to build capacity in technology and infrastructure sectors. For example, Hinds Community College’s Jackson Campus hosts Amazon Web Services focused training that prepares participants for careers in data center operations, including building, powering, and maintaining critical infrastructure, offering pathways directly aligned with high demand jobs.

CMPDD will work with Hinds Community College and other career and technical education partners throughout

the region to expand training pipelines for both entry level and advanced technical roles. This includes aligning curriculum with employer needs, facilitating apprenticeships and credentialing programs, and ensuring equitable access to these opportunities for residents throughout Central Mississippi.

“Ensuring a trained workforce ready for these emerging opportunities is a core priority for CMPDD,” said Robin Parker, Workforce Director at CMPDD. “By partnering with institutions like Hinds Community College and others, we’re building a talent pipeline that not only supports Amazon’s data center workforce needs but also strengthens the long term economic resilience of our communities.”

The data center project in Warren County is expected to generate significant economic activity, including the creation of at least 200 new full time jobs on site and support for hundreds more across the broader region. These jobs will span a range of skill levels and include roles in engineering, operations, network infrastructure, and construction support services.

CMPDD’s workforce strategy is designed to complement this investment by aligning training opportunities with employer needs, reducing barriers to participation, and ensuring that local residents can benefit directly from the region’s growth.

By fostering strong collaborations among workforce development entities, educational institutions, economic development partners, and local employers, Central Mississippi is positioning itself to not only attract transformative investment, but also to grow a home grown workforce equipped for the high demand careers of the 21st century.

# Hazard Mitigation Planning

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires local jurisdictions to maintain an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan in order to maintain grant eligibility for certain pre- and post-disaster grant programs available through the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). All jurisdictions are reminded to review their adopted Hazard Mitigation Plans annually to ensure accuracy with current visions and needs and to account for any development or population changes that might have occurred that could increase or decrease a community's risk to a particular hazard.

Predicting where the next disaster will occur, and how severe its impact will be on a community is difficult. Given the right conditions, natural disasters, such as tornadoes and flash floods, can occur at anytime and anyplace. Their human and financial consequences can be significant. Mitigation Planning is intended to assist communities in determining their risks to natural disasters and developing an action plan to address the known risks by lessening the impact of natural disasters when they do take place. Currently, CMPDD Planners are assisting Richland, Brandon, Florence, Rankin County, and Copiah County with a 5-year update to their Hazard Mitigation Plan. The planners will be reaching out to governments that have a Hazard Mitigation Plan expiring soon. CMPDD Planners remain available to assist local governments with their annual reviews.

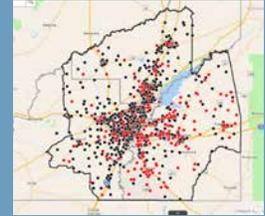


# City Clerks and CMMA Meetings

In December, both the City Clerks and the Central MS Mayors Association (CMMA) met at CMPDD. These groups meet quarterly to share best practices and discuss issues at the municipality level. Both groups discussed upcoming grant opportunities. The next City Clerk and CMMA meetings will be held in the spring.

# Traffic Count Data Collection Complete for 2025

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) works cooperatively with the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) to collect traffic count data for all state and non-state maintained roadways that are part of the functional class system in the Jackson Urbanized Area (JUA). The collected traffic count data is used by the MPO in the development of a number of transportation planning activities including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Congestion Management Process (CMP) and Pavement Management System.



CMPDD follows an annual schedule for collecting traffic count data in each of the three counties that comprise the MPO Planning area, which include portions of Hinds, Madison and Rankin Counties. Each year CMPDD staff collects traffic count data in one of the counties and repeats the process annually on a three-year cyclical basis until the data collection process has been completed for each county. Due to each county being counted every third-year, estimates are developed for the interim years in which traffic count data is not collected for the other counties. Based on the rotating annual schedule, traffic count data was collected in 2025 for Madison County and will be collected for Hinds County in 2026. In addition to the regularly scheduled traffic count data that was collected, staff received multiple special request counts during 2025 from local jurisdictions in the MPO Planning area.

At the end of each calendar year all traffic count data collected by CMPDD is forwarded to MDOT for analysis. The data is processed, and traffic adjustment factors are applied to the raw data to develop Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts. The traffic adjustment factors used to develop AADT counts takes into consideration high and low seasonal and daily traffic patterns to arrive at a more representative "annual" traffic count for each roadway segment. Once the data is processed, MDOT sends the updated AADT data to the MPO and the information is made publicly available through the MPO's traffic count viewer on the CMPDD website. In October, CMPDD staff updated the traffic count viewer to include all traffic count data for 2024.

The traffic count viewer can be accessed through CMPDD's website at [www.cmpdd.org/traffic/](http://www.cmpdd.org/traffic/). For additional information concerning traffic count data or to make a request for a traffic count study to be conducted please contact Scott Burge at (601) 321-2150 or by email at [sburge@cmpdd.org](mailto:sburge@cmpdd.org).

# The MPO at CMPDD Issues a Call for Surface Transportation Projects

In November the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) at CMPDD announced the availability of \$32.3 million in grant funds through the MPO's Call for Surface Transportation Projects. The MPO designated priority funding in the following categories:

- Pavement Management Projects: \$11,000,000
- Congestion Mitigation Projects: \$8,000,000
- Safety Improvement Projects: \$8,000,000
- Bridge Repair Projects: \$4,000,000
- Small Municipalities (population 5,000 or less): \$1,300,000
- Total Available Funding: \$32,300,000

Eligible jurisdictions within the MPO planning area, which includes portions of Hinds, Madison, and Rankin Counties,

must submit applications to CMPDD by January 30, 2026. Once submitted, CMPDD staff members will review and grade each application. Funding awards for the highest-ranked projects are anticipated to be announced in May 2026. Selected projects may receive up to 80% in federal funds for construction and construction engineering costs. Local jurisdictions must provide a minimum 20% local match.

For more information about the MPO's Surface Transportation Call for Projects, contact CMPDD staff at [mpo@cmpdd.org](mailto:mpo@cmpdd.org) or visit, [www.cmpdd.org/tip-call/](http://www.cmpdd.org/tip-call/).

## CMPDD's Medicaid Waiver Program Update

The Elderly & Disabled Medicaid Waiver (E&D Waiver) is a statewide program designed to provide in-home assistance to qualified Medicaid beneficiaries. Beneficiaries must be 21 years of age or older. They must qualify by either SSI Medicaid or 300% of SSI Medicaid. They must require assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) such as bathing, dressing, eating, ambulation and/or transferring, or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) such as laundry, light housekeeping, errands, and/or assistance on community outings. Registered Nurses (RN) and Licensed Social Workers (LSW) work together as a team to assess the referred client, submit for approval of services to the Division of Medicaid (DOM), and then manage and coordinate the approved services for all clients.

If a beneficiary does not qualify for SSI Medicaid and is enrolled in a Waiver program, the monthly income limit for 2026 is \$2,982 (before deductions). The income limit is evaluated and adjusted accordingly each year.

Services available under the E&D Waiver program are:

Case Management; Personal Care Attendant; In-Home Respite; Adult Day Care; Home Delivered Meals; Environmental Safety services;



Medication Management services; Extended Home Health services consisting of skilled nursing, physical therapy, or speech therapy; Community Transition services; and Institutional Respite services.

CMPDD currently employs 24 Case Management (CM) teams and reserves the capacity to serve 2,945 clients living in the seven (7) counties in the service area.

October 2025 and December 2025, we welcomed three (3) new employees to the Waiver division, Alexis Brookins began her role as the Medicaid Waiver Program Assistant. We also welcomed two (2) new Case Managers, Vernetta Ricks, RN and Charles Griffith, RN.

CMPDD's Waiver and Workforce Investment divisions continue partnerships to employ Social Workers who have received their bachelor's degree in social work and are seeking to work as a licensed social worker case manager. The salary-based

12-week program provides dedicated study time, information, preparation for taking the licensure exam, and supervised observation of case management home visits. Trainees also receive the traditional benefits of insurance coverage, leave time accrual, and other employee benefits. At the end of the 12-week training period, and passing the licensure exam, the trainee will automatically transition to a permanent LSW Case Manager position.

\*Individuals who own an agency and are seeking to become a Medicaid Waiver service provider should contact the Division of Medicaid, Long-Term Care Bureau at 601-359-6141.

For more information on Elderly & Disabled Waiver services, please contact CMPDD's Mississippi Access to Care (MAC) Center at 1-844-822-4622 or contact Teresa Burrell-Shoto, RN, Case Management Director at 601-855-5914 or [tburrell@cmpdd.org](mailto:tburrell@cmpdd.org).



## CMPDD Launches Redesigned Website

In December, the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD) launched a completely redesigned website, [www.cmpdd.org](http://www.cmpdd.org), delivering a modern and engaging digital experience. The new website features streamlined navigation, improved accessibility, and easy access to CMPDD services, maps, and publications.

The redesigned site also incorporates dynamic drone video footage captured by CMPDD’s FAA-certified drone pilots, showcasing the region and highlighting CMPDD’s work in a visually compelling way. These enhancements reflect CMPDD’s commitment to clear communication, transparency, and effective public engagement.

Designed and developed entirely in-house, the website is the result of a collaborative effort between CMPDD’s graphic design and information technology staff. Readers are encouraged to visit the new website to explore its features and learn more about the programs, services, and resources available through CMPDD.

By utilizing in-house talent, CMPDD was able to build and launch the new website at a fraction of the cost of outsourcing. Jurisdictions seeking website design or technical assistance are encouraged to consider CMPDD as a cost-effective and experienced partner.

*Mark Your Calendar for the*

# 2026 ANNUAL MAPDD CONFERENCE

**April 21-24, 2026 • Beau Rivage, Biloxi**  
**For more information call 601-981-1511 • [www.mspdds.com](http://www.mspdds.com)**

# 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Adopted

On November 12, 2025, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) officially adopted the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan following a comprehensive public comment period and extensive community engagement process.

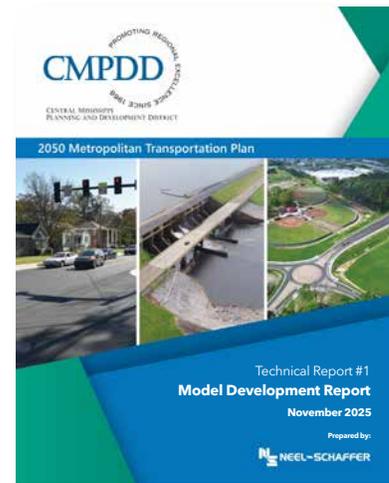
The Plan establishes a 25-year vision for the region’s transportation system in Hinds, Madison, and Rankin Counties and outlines strategies and projects to address the region’s long-term mobility, safety, and infrastructure needs. The Plan’s evaluation of existing conditions and projected future needs will guide the MPO in prioritizing and selecting projects for future MPO grant funding.

Development of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan officially began in October 2024, and the draft Plan was released for public review in September 2025. The yearlong planning process was guided by extensive public engagement, including surveys, meetings,

and community outreach events. Residents consistently identified safety, congestion management, and infrastructure maintenance as top priorities. The 2050 Plan is organized around five(5) overarching goals:

- Expanding transportation choices
- Improving safety and resiliency
- Maintaining system reliability
- Supporting economic vitality
- Balancing transportation investments with community and environmental considerations

The Plan identifies more than \$3 billion in anticipated funding for transportation improvements through 2050, for roadway maintenance and rehabilitation; congestion management through new and widened roadways; bridge and safety improvements; public transit enhancements; and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In addition, the Plan highlights a set of long-range “visionary” projects.



The 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan includes the main report and seven (7) technical reports. For more details on the 2050 Plan, including technical reports and supporting documents, visit the CMPDD transportation plans and studies page at [www.cmpdd.org/mtp](http://www.cmpdd.org/mtp).

## CMPDD Completes Pavement Management Data Collection for Madison County

The Pavement Management System is an inventory of the pavement conditions for the functionally classified, non-state maintained, principal arterial, minor arterial and collector roadways in the Jackson Urbanized Area (JUA). Each year, on a three-year cyclical basis, CMPDD staff completes a reassessment of the roadway conditions for one of the three counties that makes up the JUA which includes portions of Hinds, Madison and Rankin Counties. For 2025, CMPDD completed the reassessment for Madison County.

Data is collected for the Pavement Management System by taking an inventory of the roadways through the use of windshield surveys. Windshield surveys are conducted by driving the entire length of a roadway and determining the level of deterioration that has occurred to the roadways surface. When collecting the survey data, staff identify the various forms of cracking that have occurred to the pavement which can include: alligator cracking, edge cracking, and longitudinal/transverse line cracking. Other surface impediments that our staff identify during the inventory process include patching, rutting, potholes, heaves and/or swells and poor storm water drainage issues, just to name a few.

Once the data collection process is complete an analysis of the data is conducted by CMPDD staff. This analysis provides a numeric value for the overall condition and roughness of each roadway segment being analyzed. CMPDD staff use these values and traffic volume data for each segment to arrive at an overall calculated priority ranking. The final priority rankings aid in determining which roadways in the JUA are in the greatest need for surface repair or total reconstruction.

With the data collection process completed for Madison County in 2025, a pavement condition reassessment will be conducted in 2026 for the functionally classified roadways in Hinds County. If you have questions concerning the Pavement Management System, please contact Scott Burge at (601) 321-2150 or by email at [sburge@cmpdd.org](mailto:sburge@cmpdd.org).

# CMDC BULLETIN

Commissioner De’Keither Stamps, President of the Central Mississippi Development Company, Inc. (CMDC), announced the approval of a new loan.

The approval was for JAR Ventures LLC, which will operate as The Toasted Yolk Café. The loan was for \$967,200 of a \$2,418,000 project under the United States Small Business Administration’s 504 Loan Program. The proceeds of this loan will finance the purchase of land, furniture and fixtures and the construction of the restaurant in Gulfport, Mississippi. This will serve as the borrowers’ second location along the Mississippi Gulf Coast and will create 45 new jobs in the private sector.



CMDC is a commercial lender certified by the U. S. Small Business Administration and works with local banks and other financial institutions in providing debt capital for small businesses. CMDC provides fixed rate low interest long term financing for small businesses and saves thousands of dollars in debt service on fixed assets. This type of financing removes the problem of variable rate financing on long-term assets. Many economic forecasters are certain that interest rates will rise. These predictable interest rate increases will not negatively impact the cash flow of those small businesses

that have fixed rate low interest loans through the U. S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) 504 Loan Program. The most recent fixed interest rates under this loan program were:

### SBA 504 Loan Program Interest Rates

<u>TERM (YEARS)</u>	<u>INTEREST RATE</u>
10 (December 2025)	5.83%
20 (December 2025)	6.03%
25 (December 2025)	5.96%

CMDC serves as the Loan Review Board for the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District’s (CMPDD’s) Minority Business Enterprise Loan Program (MBELP). MBELP receives its funding from the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA). The interest rate on loans made through this program to a minority owned business is currently 5.50% per annum. The term of a loan can be up to 15 years depending on the use of the loan proceeds (commercial buildings, equipment, inventory, working capital, etc.)

Commissioner De’Keither Stamps invites bankers, commercial loan officers, business owners, real estate developers, and general contractors to contact Dwayne Perkins at 601-981-1625, or visit our website at [www.cmpdd.org](http://www.cmpdd.org). See the tab labeled “Small Business Loans.”

## Grants Update

### CDBG

CMPDD staff worked with local municipalities and counties recently to conduct five (5) site visits for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Public Facilities projects with the Mississippi Development Authority. The chosen site visits were conducted on behalf of municipalities in Copiah, Hinds, Rankin, and Simpson counties totaling more than \$3 million dollars in potential grant funds. CMPDD staff continue to administer previously awarded projects with Cities of Byram, Flora, Raymond, Hazlehurst, and Brandon. Staff also continue to administer projects in the Counties of Warren and Madison and the Towns of Utica and Georgetown. CMPDD will also soon begin working with municipalities to start new 2026 CDBG applications.

### DRA

In the last quarter of FY2025, two (2) Delta Regional Authority (DRA) applications were selected for awards. In Jackson, the Metro Booming Training Academy, Inc. was awarded approximately \$492,000 for a workforce initiative through the States’ Economic Development Assistant Program (SEDAP). Other awards are soon-to-be announced through DRA. In 2025, DRA accepted Community Infrastructure Funds (CIF) applications until late August. This program allows applicants to apply for up to \$2,000,000 for necessary infrastructure, workforce, or business growth programs to increase economic development along the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions. DRA is anticipating re-opening funding for FY2026 grants soon.

### EDA

CMPDD staff is assisting eligible communities with submission of FY2025 Disaster Supplemental Grant Program applications. This opportunity makes approximately \$1.45 billion available to support economic recovery activities in areas that received major disaster declarations, because of hurricanes, wildfires, severe storms, and flooding, tornadoes, and other natural disasters occurring in calendar years 2023 and 2024. EDA’s FY2025 Disaster Supplemental Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) aims to support communities recovering from major disasters and set them on a path to exceed pre-disaster conditions and transform their local economies in new and vibrant ways. For more information, please visit [cmpdd.org/development](http://cmpdd.org/development).



## Yazoo County Launches the first Digital Access WIN Job Center in Yazoo City to Expand Workforce Services

Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD), in partnership with the Yazoo County Board of Supervisors, The B. S. Ricks Memorial Library in Yazoo City, and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), announced the launch of the first Workforce Digital Access WIN Job Center in Yazoo City. The center introduces the MDES Navigator, a technology enabled service designed to expand access to employment assistance for residents, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

The Workforce Digital Access WIN Job Center provides access stations that allow job seekers to connect directly with live Employment Specialists through secure video technology. This innovative approach bridges gaps caused by distance, limited transportation, and broadband access, ensuring residents can receive personalized workforce services close to home. Services include résumé development, interview preparation, career guidance, and assistance connecting to job opportunities.

A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held at the B. S. Ricks Memorial Library in Yazoo City on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, celebrating the collaborative effort that made this center possible.

“This initiative reflects our commitment to finding innovative, cost effective ways to ensure workforce services remain accessible to our communities,” said Robin Parker, Workforce Director for CMPDD and SCMW. “When federal funding reductions forced difficult decisions regarding WIN Job Center operations, the Yazoo County Board of Supervisors stepped forward with vision and leadership. Their willingness

to collaborate allowed us to preserve essential services while reducing overhead and improving access for residents.”

David Peyton, Yazoo County District 4 Supervisor, emphasized the local impact of the project. “This Workforce Digital Access Center brings opportunity directly to our residents,” Peyton said. “By housing this service at the Ricks Memorial Library, we are connecting people to live workforce professionals and real time job assistance right here in Yazoo County.”

In addition to virtual services, CMPDD and MDES will provide an on site Career Coach at the Digital Access Center one day each week. The Career Coach will work directly with job seekers to establish career goals, connect them to training opportunities, and prepare them for employment. The coach will also engage local employers to better align workforce preparation with regional hiring needs.

“Access to technology alone is not enough,” Parker added. “This model combines digital tools with human support, ensuring residents receive guidance, encouragement, and real pathways to employment. It is a forward thinking solution that can be replicated across Mississippi.”

Through this collaborative effort, job seekers can now access comprehensive workforce resources without traveling long distances to traditional job centers. The pilot program’s outcomes will help guide future workforce service delivery models across the state.

# Area Agency on Aging Launches Digital Literacy Project

The Central Mississippi Planning and Development District/Area Agency on Aging (CMPDD/AAA) recently hosted its first Digital Literacy Workshop, marking an exciting milestone in its new Digital Literacy Project. Participants enjoyed a welcoming and engaging learning experience focused on building essential technology skills and increasing confidence in today's increasing digital world.

The Digital Literacy Project is important because technology is now a key part of everyday life, from accessing health information and scheduling medical appointments to communicating with family, managing finances, and locating community resources. For many older adults, limited access to technology or a lack of confidence using digital tools can create barriers to staying connected and independent. This project helps close that gap by providing hands-on instruction that empowers participants to use technology safely and effectively.

The first workshop was held at the Fannie Jackson Nutrition Site in Terry, Mississippi, where attendees received practical training ranging from navigating devices to understanding online tools and building confidence in digital spaces. The workshop emphasized supportive instruction, real-world applications, and helping participants feel more comfortable using technology to stay informed and connected.

The Area Agency on Aging is proud to share that it was awarded the Digital Literacy Grant through the National Council on Aging (NCOA) in partnership with AT&T. Through this grant, CMPDD has been able to enter a Memorandum of Agreement with a technology consultant to lead and facilitate these workshops, ensuring participants receive quality instruction, individualized support, and resources that strengthen digital skills over time.

In addition to group training sessions, seniors are also able to schedule weekly one-on-one technical assistance appointments to receive personalized support and guidance.

Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to attend and shared positive feedback about the workshop. Many attendees noted that they felt more confident using their devices and were grateful for the patient, step-by-step instructions provided. The encouraging responses and enthusiasm from participants reflect the strong need for digital learning opportunities and the impact this project will continue to have throughout the community.

The Area Agency on Aging looks forward to continuing the Digital Literacy Project and expanding

opportunities across the seven-county area, helping more community members gain the skills needed to navigate technology with confidence and remain connected in today's digital world. For more information, contact the Area Agency on Aging at 601-981-1516.



**CMPDD** CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

**ncoa** national council on aging

**AT&T**

## Digital Literacy Program Virtual Office Hours

**Office Hours**

Our program offers a supportive environment where you can enhance your digital skills in a friendly and engaging way. Join us to explore technology and improve your confidence in the digital world.

**1 Hour per Week**  
Weekly Program Commitment

Digital Literacy Virtual Office Hours  
Time: Fridays 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

To Register for Assistance, Contact (601) 281-8101

Zoom Meeting Details  
Meeting ID: 944 8995 9582  
Passcode: 042203

Take the first step towards mastering your digital skills with us!

## CMPDD Announces Funding for Six Metro-Area Transportation Alternative Projects

On November 12th, the Metropolitan Planning Policy Committee for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) at the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD) approved nearly \$7 million in funding for six (6) Transportation Alternatives (TA) projects. This funding is made available to implement projects which aid in promoting accessibility and mobility for non-drivers through the development of on- and off-road bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

In total, the CMPDD received 13 applications requesting \$14.5 million in federal funding for TA projects. Due to the limited amount of funding available, the MPO was able to fully fund the six (6) highest rated projects. Combined, jurisdictions receiving the nearly \$7 million in federal transportation funding have committed to provide over \$2.1 million in local matching funds.

Local Jurisdiction	Project	Federal Funding	Local Matching Funds
Brandon	Grants Ferry Pkwy. Share Use Path	\$966,000	\$414,000
Brandon	City Park to City Hall Shared Use Path	\$1,350,468	\$337,617
Brandon	Shiloh Park - Along Shiloh Road to Kennedy Farms Parkway Shared Use Path	\$1,388,625	\$462,875
Ridgeland	E. Lake Harbour Drive Shared Use Path	\$1,973,552	\$493,388
Flowood	Liberty Road to Manship Road Shared Use Path Overlay	\$1,007,400	\$251,850
Pearl	Riverwind Drive Sidewalk Phase 2	\$165,000	\$165,000

## CMPDD Hosts Planning 101 Training for Local Government Leaders

In October, the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD) hosted a Planning 101 Training designed to strengthen foundational planning knowledge among local government officials across the region. The training was led by CMPDD’s professional planning staff and drew approximately 50 elected officials, board members, and staff from municipalities and counties throughout Central Mississippi.

The session provided a practical overview of core planning tools, beginning with a clear explanation of the differences between a comprehensive plan and a zoning ordinance. Participants explored the purpose of each document, how they work together, and why regular maintenance and periodic updates are essential to ensuring they remain effective, legally sound, and reflective of community goals.

A significant portion of the training focused on how local officials can actively use these documents in day-to-



day decision-making. CMPDD planners walked attendees through key elements of zoning ordinances, including definitions, terms, district standards, and procedural requirements. Emphasis was placed on enforcement considerations and the importance of clarity and consistency to reduce ambiguity and support defensible decisions.

The training also benefited from a legal perspective provided by Craig Slay, Rankin County Board Attorney. Mr. Slay offered valuable insight into how planning and zoning documents are interpreted and applied, common legal pitfalls, and best practices to help

local governments navigate land use decisions with confidence.

CMPDD’s Planning 101 Training underscored CMPDD’s ongoing commitment to supporting local governments through education, technical assistance, and capacity building. By equipping community leaders with a stronger understanding of planning fundamentals, CMPDD continues to help jurisdictions make informed decisions that promote orderly growth and protect community character across the region.

# Workforce Wins: SCMW Honors 2025 Workforce Award Recipients

South Central Mississippi Works (SCMW) proudly celebrated excellence in workforce development with the 2025 SCMW Workforce Awards, honoring individuals, employers, and community partners whose work is strengthening the regional talent pipeline and expanding economic opportunity across central Mississippi.

The awards were given at the December 11, 2026, Workforce Board Meeting. Recipients were recognized for driving opportunity, removing barriers, and preparing Mississippians of high wage, high demand careers in key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, construction, information technology, logistics, and healthcare.

“These honorees represent the best of what our workforce system can be, collaborative, people centered, and always focused on impact,” said SCMW Workforce Director Robin Parker.

## Workforce Impact Award: Krystal Culver

Krystal Culver was honored with the Workforce Impact Award for her vital leadership in building cross sector partnerships and strengthening regional workforce ecosystems. As one of Mississippi’s first Ecosystem Coordinators under Accelerate Mississippi, she helped align workforce boards, employers, educators, and economic development organizations around shared goals. Her work continues as a Program Manager at Accelerate Mississippi, where she supports grant development, program launches, and ongoing collaboration with SCMW.

## Workforce Ally Award: McNeely Plastics

The Workforce Ally Award recognized McNeely Plastics as an employer that champions workforce development. Through proactive collaboration with Hinds Community College and SCMW, the company created robust internship training that blends classroom knowledge with real world manufacturing experience, preparing participants for meaningful careers while also strengthening the local talent pipeline.

## Trailblazer Award: Yazoo County Board of Supervisors, B. S. Ricks Memorial Library & MDES

This multi partner team received the Trailblazer Award for an innovative approach to workforce access. In response to federal funding reductions that threatened local career services, the partners launched Mississippi’s first Workforce Digital Access Center inside the B. S. Ricks Memorial Library. The center connects jobseekers to employment services, virtual specialists, training resources, and résumé support even without personal internet access, a transformative model for rural workforce delivery.

## Catalyst Awards: Eddie Antoine & Jana Carter

Catalyst Awards honor exceptional Career Coaches who bring the promise of success to students every day:

- Eddie Antoine (Amite County High School) Antonie is known for relentless support, Antoine builds opportunities through internships, job shadows, and personalized coaching, helping students navigate pathways from school to purposeful careers.
- Jana Carter (Clinton High School) Carter’s energy and empathy have made her a trusted connector to non traditional opportunities, including SCMW’s Step Up and Reconnect initiatives, expanding options for students beyond traditional college tracks.

## Workforce Champion Awards: Angela Hayes & Angela Crain

Two leaders whose dedication has left a measurable impact on workforce outcomes were honored with Workforce Champion Awards:

- Angela Hayes (Jackson WIN Job Center) From front line coaching to management, Hayes’ approach is deeply personal, walking alongside jobseekers through every stage of their journey.
- Angela Crain (Reconnect Program Manager) Crain has elevated



SCMW’s Reconnect training model, uniting employers, colleges, and state partners to expand access to skilled career pathways in fields such as advanced manufacturing, HVAC, electrical trades, and IT.

## Looking Forward

The 2025 SCMW Workforce Awards highlight the importance of partnership, innovation, and steadfast commitment in building a more resilient regional workforce ecosystem. These honorees serve as models for how collaboration across public, private, and nonprofit sectors can uplift communities and drive long term economic success.

For more information about SCMW initiatives and workforce opportunities throughout Central Mississippi, visit [SCMW.info](https://www.scmw.org).

*If the name and address of the recipient needs to be updated, please contact our office at 601-981-1511.*

## District Celebrates 35th Anniversary of “Santa for Seniors” with Community Sponsors

The Central Mississippi Planning and Development District/Area Agency on Aging (CMPDD/AAA) proudly celebrated the 35th anniversary of its annual “Santa for Seniors” holiday project, made possible through the continued support of valued community sponsors. This year, CMPDD partnered with the National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals (NABIP) and Home Instead, Incorporated, to successfully carry out this longstanding tradition of service and compassion.

Through the project, Christmas gifts were delivered to 380 seniors in need across the district’s seven-county service area. Staff, volunteers, and representatives from provider agencies joined together for the annual gift-wrapping celebration, which was hosted by Home Instead. Participants helped prepare each item with care and excitement for the seniors who would soon receive them.

As part of the program, seniors shared wish lists identifying both personal and practical needs. Sponsors and community donors generously supplied these items, which included robes, blankets, towels, bed linen, coats, shower chairs, toiletries, and other essentials. Many of the recipients were homebound or residing in



long-term care facilities, making the support especially meaningful during the holiday season. When gifts were delivered, seniors expressed heartfelt appreciation and were uplifted by the kindness extended to them.

For 35 years, “Santa for Seniors” has brought Christmas cheer and comfort to older adults who may otherwise go without. CMPDD is deeply grateful for the generosity and commitment of community donors, NABIP, and Home Instead, as well as the involvement of CMPDD staff and provider agencies who helped make this anniversary year a success. CMPDD/AAA looks forward to continuing this cherished tradition and strengthening partnerships that support seniors throughout the region.

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