

# 2024 Mississippi AER Conference

## *Inclusive Horizons: Navigating Assistive Technology and Accessibility*

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed to help education and rehabilitation professionals working with individuals with visual impairments or blindness increase their knowledge and skills in providing accessibility to information, in using assistive technology, in ethics and in the understanding of the impacts of vision loss as barriers to independence and participation in society.

### **Conference Objectives:**

- Create a platform for networking and sharing experiences among attendees, foster a supportive community dedicated to advancing accessibility and inclusion for those with visual impairments.
- Become familiar with those technologies that focus on the needs of the visually impaired community, as well as mitigate some of the technology challenges faced by the visually impaired community.
- Empower people with visual impairments to effectively navigate and utilize assistive technologies to enable greater independence and participation in society.

### **Target Audience:**

Parents, Students with Visual Impairments, Counselors, Special Educators (Transition Coordinators, Paraprofessionals, Teachers), Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Certified Low Vision Therapists, School Administrators, Veterans, Employers, Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialists, Social Workers, Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinators, and Advocates

### **Continuing Education:**

Continuing Education Credits **17 hours** for Mississippi Educators is being requested as well as credit for other professions: ACVREP, Mississippi OT – 17 hours, CRCC.

**Special note:** Each session less than 1 hour is not approved for credit with CRCC.

## 2024 Mississippi AER Conference

### ***Inclusive Horizons: Navigating Assistive Technology and Accessibility***

## **AGENDA**

### **Day 1, Thursday, September 19, 2024**

8:00 – 8:45	Continental Breakfast, Register/Sign-in, Socialize, Networking
8:45 – 9:45	<a href="#"><u>Jane D. Harty, MAER President: Opening Session: <i>Our Future is NOW!</i></u></a>
9:45 – 10:00	Break
10:00 – 11:30	<a href="#"><u>KEYNOTE: Sam Seavey, <i>Learn How To Live Your Best Blind Life!</i></u></a>
11:30 – 12:15	Lunch with presentation on the MAER organization and Awards Ceremony
12:15 – 12:30	Break
12:30 – 1:30	<a href="#"><u>Session 3: Garrett Pendergast and Chris Coonce, <i>Advancing Vision Rehabilitation: Empowering Independence Through Telehealth and Remote AT Instruction</i></u></a>
1:30 – 2:30	<a href="#"><u>Session 4: Sam Seavey, <i>The Future Of Assistive Technology - One Word, Robots!</i></u></a>
2:30 – 2:45	Break
2:45 – 3:45	<a href="#"><u>Session 5: Dr. Phillip Rumrill, Dr. Zaccheus Ahonle, Dr. Stuart Rumrill, <i>Issues and Ethics in Helping Workers with Visual Impairments and Blindness Identify, Request, and Implement On-the-Job Accommodations</i></u></a>
3:45 – 4:00	Break
4:00 – 5:00	<a href="#"><u>Session 6: Herbert Humphrey, <i>Advances in Technology Part 1</i></u></a>
5:00 – 5:15	Door Prize, Wrap Up, and Dismiss

## 2024 Mississippi AER Conference

# *Inclusive Horizons: Navigating Assistive Technology and Accessibility*

## AGENDA

### Day 2, Friday, September 20, 2024

8:00 – 8:45	Continental Breakfast, Register/Sign-in, Socialize, Networking
8:45 – 9:45	<a href="#"><u>Session 7: Tyler Griffin: AT@MS</u></a>
9:45 – 10:00	Break
10:00 – 11:00	<a href="#"><u>Session 8: Garrett Pendergast, Harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Empowerment: Enhancing Accessibility and Productivity in Vision Services</u></a>
11:00 – 12:00	<a href="#"><u>Lunch &amp; Session 9: Herbert Humphrey, Advances in Technology Part 2</u></a>
12:00 – 12:15	Break
12:15 – 1:45	<a href="#"><u>Session 10: Alicia Wolfe &amp; Tyler Griffin, Empower and Innovate: A Collaborative Journey in Accessibility and Assistive Technology</u></a>
1:45 – 2:45	<a href="#"><u>Session 11: Cheri Harbour, Seeing Beyond Barriers: Empowering Independence with Assistive Technology for Vision Loss</u></a>
2:45 – 3:00	Break
3:00 – 4:00	<a href="#"><u>Session 12: Anne Steverson and Jamie Boydston, Empowering Abilities: Assistive Technology in the Workplace for People who are Blind or Have Low Vision</u></a>
4:00 – 5:00	<a href="#"><u>Session 13: Michael Tuttle via Zoom, Digital Use and Experiences of Students with Visual Impairment</u></a>
5:00 – 5:15	Door Prize, Wrap Up, and Dismiss

## 2024 Mississippi AER Conference

### ***Inclusive Horizons: Navigating Assistive Technology and Accessibility***

## **AGENDA**

### **Day 3, Saturday, September 21, 2024**

8:00 – 8:30	Continental Breakfast, Register/Sign-in, Socialize, Networking
8:30 – 9:30	<a href="#"><u>Session 14: Dr. Barbara Coatney &amp; Robert Hamaker, <i>Stay Safe at Home</i></u></a>
9:30 – 10:00	<a href="#"><u>Session 15: Dorothy Young, <i>Services in Mississippi for Persons Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired</i></u></a>
10:00 – 10:15	Break
10:15 – 11:15	<a href="#"><u>Session 16: Rebecca Mathis, <i>Assistive Technology Solutions for Blindness and Visual Impairment</i></u></a>
11:15 – 12:15	<a href="#"><u>Lunch &amp; Session 17: Megan Fleming, <i>That All May Read: Accessible Library Services from Talking Book Services</i></u></a>
12:15 – 12:30	Break
12:30 – 1:15	MAER Business Meeting
1:15 – 1:30	Door Prize, Wrap Up, and Dismiss

**Day 1 • Thursday, September 19, 2024**

***Agenda***

**8:00 – 8:45 a.m.**

**Continental Breakfast, Register/Sign-in, Socialize, Networking**

**Day 1 • Thursday, September 19, 2024**

## ***Agenda***

**8:45 – 9:45 a.m.**

**Opening Session: *Our Future is NOW!***

**Jane D. Harty, MAER President**

**Jane** is in her eighteenth year of teaching the visually impaired. She thinks of herself more of a facilitator who comes alongside than a teacher. Upon college graduation, she was honored with *University of Toledo's Outstanding Special Education Student Award*. Jane has taught in schools for the blind in Kentucky and Mississippi. She has worked itinerantly in Ohio, Kentucky and Mississippi. Jane serves on the *Advisory Committee for the Museum of the American Printing House for the Blind*. In 2017, she was elected by her peers as *MS School for the Blind District Teacher of the Year* and was awarded the *MAER Sam Johnson President's Award*. Jane has been an active *AER* member since college, and currently serves as state president.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will learn of resources in and out of the state through the partnerships shared during the forum.
- Participants will engage in a reflective activity to determine where their own knowledge and skill lies in supporting or empowering individuals with visual impairments.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

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**9:45 – 10:00 a.m.**

**Break**

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## ***Agenda***

**10:00 – 11:30 a.m.**

**Session 1, Keynote: *Learn How To Live Your Best Blind Life!***

**Presenter (Keynote): Sam Seavey, The Blind Life LLC**

**Sam Seavey**, founder of The Blind Life YouTube channel, is a leading expert in assistive technology with over 65,000 subscribers and 900+ videos. Diagnosed with Stargardt's at 11, Sam has spent 30 years researching assistive devices. He shares tips, device reviews, and interviews with the VIP community. Featured in USA TODAY and WIRED Magazine, Sam collaborates with companies like Apple and Google and manages an assistive technology program, helping everyone live their best blind life.

**Description:**

Sam Seavey shares his expert knowledge on assistive technology for the visually impaired through YouTube, podcasting, consulting, and training. With over 65,000 subscribers and nearly 900 videos, he posts weekly on his YouTube channel, The Blind Life, and a podcast by the same name. In this presentation, Sam will discuss his journey from being diagnosed with Stargardt's in adolescence to becoming a top influencer in the blind community, collaborating with major organizations and tech giants.

**Learning Objectives:**

Following this presentation, attendees will be able to:

- Indicate what "The Blind Life" is, and its benefit as a resource in the assistive technology space.
- Identify several key steps that led to Sam becoming one of the top social media influencers in the blind and visually impaired community.

**Session Length: 90 minutes**



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**11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**

**Lunch with Presentation on the MAER Organization Awards  
Ceremony**

**12:15 – 12:30 p.m.**

**Break**

**Day 1 • Thursday, September 19, 2024**

## ***Agenda***

**12:30 – 1:30 p.m.**

### ***Session 3: Advancing Vision Rehabilitation: Empowering Independence Through Telehealth and Remote Assistive Technology (AT) Instruction***

**Presenters: Garrett Pendergast and Chris Coonce, Veterans Affairs**

**Garrett Pendergast**, a Blind Rehabilitation Specialist at the Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center, Veterans Affairs, specializes in assistive technology (AT), Telehealth, Remote and in-person AT & Expanded Core Curriculum instruction, Orientation & Mobility, and Vision Rehabilitation Therapy. Certified as a CATIS, COMS, CVRT, and CTVI, Garrett holds three Master's degrees: Vision Rehabilitation Therapy and O&M from Western Michigan University, and Special Education with a Visual Impairment Emphasis from the University of Arizona. He focuses on using diverse technologies and advanced teaching methods to improve the lives of those with vision loss.

**Chris Coonce**, a pioneering Telehealth Trainer at Biloxi Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center, has over three years of experience and recently earned their CATIS certification. Chris played a key role in developing basic assessments, enabling comprehensive training for Veterans at VA Blind Rehabilitation Centers. Passionate about technology and its impact on independence, Chris believes Telehealth enhances teaching effectiveness and enjoys sharing new advancements with individuals experiencing vision loss.

#### **Description:**

Discover how we're transforming Vision Rehabilitation through cutting-edge telehealth solutions and remote assistive technology instruction. Explore our comprehensive approach to reaching more individuals, enhancing accessibility, increasing independence, and achieving meaningful outcomes for individuals experiencing vision loss.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will understand the scope and benefits of telehealth solutions in vision rehabilitation, including their application in remote assistive technology instruction.
- Participants will describe effective methodologies and technologies used in one-on-one and group settings for enhancing accessibility and independence among individuals with vision loss.

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- Participants will evaluate the impact of telehealth and remote AT instruction on achieving meaningful outcomes in vision rehabilitation, supported by case studies and success stories.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

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**1:30 – 2:30 p.m.**

### ***Session 4: The Future Of Assistive Technology - One Word, Robots!***

**Presenter: Sam Seavey, The Blind Life LLC**

**Sam Seavey**, founder of The Blind Life YouTube channel, is a leading expert in assistive technology with over 65,000 subscribers and 900+ videos. Diagnosed with Stargardt's at 11, Sam has spent 30 years researching assistive devices. He shares tips, device reviews, and interviews with the VIP community. Featured in USA TODAY and WIRED Magazine, Sam collaborates with companies like Apple and Google and manages an assistive technology program, helping everyone live their best blind life.

#### **Description:**

Sam Seavey, from The Blind Life, will discuss the current state and future of assistive technology for the visually impaired, suggesting that it may be more sci-fi than we imagine. This presentation will offer insights into the exciting advancements and potential future developments in assistive technology. He will explore whether robots will take over the world or become key to our independence.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Following this presentation, attendees will be able to:

- Indicate what "The Blind Life" is, and its benefit as a resource in the assistive technology space.
- Articulate many of the current most popular cutting edge assistive technologies for the blind and persons with low vision.
- Identify what future assistive technology for the blind and persons with low vision might include.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

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**2:30 – 2:45 p.m.**

**Break**

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## ***Agenda***

**2:45 – 3:45 p.m.**

***Session 5: Issues and Ethics in Helping  
Workers with Visual Impairments and Blindness Identify, Request, and  
Implement On-the-Job Accommodations***

**Presenters: Dr. Phillip Rumrill, University of Kentucky,  
Dr. Zaccheus Ahonle, MS State University,  
and Dr. Stuart Rumrill, University of Illinois**

**Phillip Rumrill**, Ph.D., CRC, is a Professor of Counselor Education and Director of Research in the Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Rumrill is well-known as one of leading rehabilitation and disability studies researchers in the U.S. He has authored or co-authored some 475 professional publications including 16 commercially published books in the field of rehabilitation counseling. He is a highly sought speaker at national and international conferences in various social science fields.

**Zaccheus J. Ahonle**, Ph.D., CRC, is an Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Rehabilitation Counseling Program at MSU. He holds a doctorate in rehabilitation counseling from the University of Texas at Austin and has more than 10 years of experience as a certified rehabilitation counselor, educator, and scholar. With a robust track record of publications and conference presentations, he is deeply committed to advancing the field of rehabilitation counseling and promoting service equity for underserved populations.

**Stuart Rumrill**, Ph.D., LPC, CRC is a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the department of Kinesiology and Community Health. He received his doctorate in Rehabilitation Counselor Education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has over ten years of experience working with individuals with disabilities. His research interests include substance use disorders, quality of life and well-being, accommodation planning and ADA compliance, assistive technology and traumatic brain injury, and autism spectrum disorder and college success.

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## ***Agenda***

### **Description:**

Presenters will share the win-win approach to reasonable accommodations as an effective strategy for implementing workplace supports for clients with visual impairments and blindness. One available tool to identify workplace supports is the Work Experience Survey, a situational needs assessment that has been widely used in accommodation planning with a variety of client populations. Presenters will also discuss ethical and practical considerations related to accommodation planning and worksite service delivery during the still-ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. (2019). *Continuing Education Pre-Approval Manual For Organizations Providing Continuing Education To Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRCs), Canadian Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CCRCs), and CRCs Holding A Master Addictions Counselor (MAC) Or Clinical Supervisor (CS) Adjunct Designation.*

### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

- Present the win-win approach to reasonable accommodations as an effective strategy for implementing workplace supports for clients with visual impairments and blindness.
- Describe a situational needs assessment tool that has been widely used in accommodation planning with a variety of client populations.
- Discuss ethical and practical considerations related to accommodation planning and worksite service delivery during the still-ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

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**3:45 – 4:00 p.m.**

**Break**



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## ***Agenda***

**4:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

### ***Session 6: Advances in Technology, Part 1***

**Moderator: Herbert Humphrey, City of Jackson**

After completing his military career in 2001, which included participating in the First Gulf War, **Herbert Humphrey** worked as a Paralegal/Legal Assistant in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area for 11 years. In 2012 Herbert was diagnosed as legally blind, resulting from a brain tumor. After a successful surgery to remove the tumor, he attended and successfully completed blind rehabilitation at the Addie McBryde Center for the Blind and the Blind Rehabilitation Center, VA Hospital, Biloxi, MS. He went on to work as Advocacy Coordinator for Mississippi Industries for the Blind, a position he held for 5 and a half years. Herbert is currently ADA Compliance Coordinator for the City of Jackson. Herbert is married with 5 children.

#### **Description**

This is an informative session regarding some of the most recent advances in technology or services available to support individuals with vision loss, including cortical visual impairment.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this session, participants will...

- Be able to name at least one new application useful for addressing the needs of those with cortical visual impairment.
- Be able to inform other professionals and individuals experiencing vision loss of at least 2 new technological advances.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

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***Agenda***

**5:00 - 5:15 p.m.**

**Door Prize, Wrap Up, and Dismiss**

## Day 2 • Friday, September 20, 2024

### ***Agenda***

8:00 – 8:45	Continental Breakfast, Register/Sign-in, Socialize, Networking
8:45 – 9:45	Session 7: Tyler Griffin: <i>AT@MS</i>
9:45 – 10:00	Break
10:00 – 11:00	Session 8: Garrett Pendergast, <i>Harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Empowerment: Enhancing Accessibility and Productivity in Vision Services</i>
11:00 – 12:00	Lunch & Session 9: Herbert Humphrey, <i>Advances in Technology Part 2</i>
12:00 – 12:15	Break
12:15 – 1:45	Session 10: Alicia Wolfe & Tyler Griffin, <i>Empower and Innovate: A Collaborative Journey in Accessibility and Assistive Technology</i>
1:45 – 2:45	Session 11: Cheri Harbour, <i>Seeing Beyond Barriers: Empowering Independence with Assistive Technology for Vision Loss</i>
2:45 – 3:00	Break
3:00 – 4:00	Session 12: Anne Steverson and Jamie Boydstun, <i>Empowering Abilities: Assistive Technology in the Workplace for People who are Blind or Have Low Vision</i>
4:00 – 5:00	Session 13: Michael Tuttle via Zoom, <i>Digital Use and Experiences of Students with Visual Impairment</i>
5:00 – 5:15	Door Prize, Wrap Up, and Dismiss

**Day 2 • Friday, September 20, 2024**

***Agenda***

**8:00 – 8:45 a.m.**

**Continental Breakfast, Register/Sign-in, Socialize, Networking**

**Day 2 • Friday, September 20, 2024**

## ***Agenda***

**8:45 – 9:45 a.m.**

### **Session 7: *AT@MS***

#### **Moderator: Tyler Griffin, Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments**

**Tyler Griffin** is a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments with 12 years' experience in the field. He is currently employed at Sonja Biggs Educational Services (SBES) providing various service opportunities for students with visual impairments via a hybrid instructional model including braille and assistive technology support. Tyler is an active board member at large with the Mississippi Chapter of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (MAER).

#### **Description:**

In this session, participants will engage with one another about what equipment and practices are currently being utilized with success. Participants will also learn more about the latest and greatest assistive technology practices to consider incorporating into their practice.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will identify 3 or more pieces of equipment, and/or instructional methods/practices that are being used in the state of Mississippi.
- Participants will identify 3 or more trending topics or products related to assistive technology within the United States and beyond.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

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**9:45 – 10:00 a.m.**

**Break**

**Day 2 • Friday, September 20, 2024**

## ***Agenda***

**10:00 – 11:00 a.m.**

### ***Session 8: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Empowerment: Enhancing Accessibility and Productivity in Vision Services***

**Presenter: Garrett Pendergast, Owner GPVS, LLC**

**Garrett Pendergast**, a Blind Rehabilitation Specialist at the Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center, Veterans Affairs, specializes in AT, Telehealth, Remote and in-person AT & ECC instruction, Orientation & Mobility, and Vision Rehabilitation Therapy. Certified as a CATIS, COMS, CVRT, and CTVI, Garrett holds three Master's degrees: Vision Rehabilitation Therapy and O&M from Western Michigan University, and Special Education with a Visual Impairment Emphasis from the University of Arizona. He focuses on using diverse technologies and advanced teaching methods to improve the lives of those with vision loss.

#### **Description:**

Discover how Artificial Intelligence (AI) revolutionizes accessibility and productivity in vision services, empowering individuals with vision loss and enhancing the capabilities of professionals in the field. Explore practical applications of AI across work, school, home, and community settings, highlighting its transformative impact on assistive technologies.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will be able to introduce the transformative role of AI in enhancing accessibility and independence for individuals with visual impairments.
- Participants will explore different types and applications of AI in assistive technology, focusing on its practical use at work, school, home, and in the community.
- Participants will discuss strategies for vision professionals to effectively integrate AI technologies to enhance services and improve productivity.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

**Day 2 • Friday, September 20, 2024**

## ***Agenda***

**11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

### **Lunch & Session 9: *Advances in Technology, Part 2***

**Moderator: Herbert Humphrey, City of Jackson**

After completing his military career in 2001, which included participating in the First Gulf War, **Herbert Humphrey** worked as a Paralegal/Legal Assistant in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area for 11 years. In 2012 Herbert was diagnosed as legally blind, resulting from a brain tumor. After a successful surgery to remove the tumor, he attended and successfully completed blind rehabilitation at the Addie McBryde Center for the Blind and the Blind Rehabilitation Center, VA Hospital, Biloxi, MS. He went on to work as Advocacy Coordinator for Mississippi Industries for the Blind, a position he held for 5 and a half years. He is currently ADA Compliance Coordinator for the City of Jackson. Herbert is married with 5 children.

#### **Description**

This is an informative session regarding some of the most recent advances in technology or services available to support individuals with vision loss, including cortical visual impairment.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this session, participants will...

- Be able to name at least one new application useful for addressing the needs of those with cortical visual impairment.
- Be able to inform other professionals and individuals experiencing vision loss of at least 2 new technological advances.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**



**Day 2 • Friday, September 20, 2024**

***Agenda***

**12:00 – 12:15 p.m.**

**Break**

**Day 2 • Friday, September 20, 2024**

## ***Agenda***

**12:15 – 1:45 p.m.**

### **Session 10: *Empower and Innovate: A Collaborative Journey in Accessibility and Assistive Technology***

**Moderators: Alicia Wolfe, APH Outreach Specialist  
and Tyler Griffin, Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments**

**Alicia Wolfe** is a seasoned Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVI) and uses her 26 years' experience in her role as APH's Outreach Specialist for the Southeast Region of the U.S. Simultaneous to serving as a TSVI, Alicia spent 14 years as the Transition Program Coordinator at a Lighthouse. Her experience further includes working as an adjunct professor for Florida State University's Program in Visual Disabilities and presenting at local, state, and national events.

**Tyler Griffin** is a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments with 12 years' experience in the field. He is currently employed at Sonja Biggs Educational Consulting (SBES) providing various service opportunities for students with visual impairments via a hybrid instructional model including braille and assistive technology support. Tyler is an active board member at large with the Mississippi Chapter of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (MAER).

#### **Description:**

This collaborative set of group activities will promote engagement and fun among participants and also raise awareness about the importance of accessibility and assistive technology. With support from APH, participants will engage in a technology-themed *Escape Room* activity as well as choosing to produce *Collaborative Artwork* or a *Guided Sensory Walk*.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will:

- **Foster Collaboration and Teamwork:** Encourage professionals to work together in a supportive environment, promoting the exchange of ideas and collaborative problem-solving related to accessibility and assistive technology.
- **Enhance Understanding and Empathy:** Increase participants' awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, fostering empathy and a deeper commitment to creating inclusive environments and technologies.

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## ***Agenda***

- Promote Innovation and Creativity: Inspire participants to think creatively about designing and implementing assistive technologies and accessible solutions, leveraging diverse perspectives and experiences to drive innovation.
- Build a Community of Practice: Strengthen the professional network among participants by providing opportunities for meaningful interactions and knowledge sharing, creating a lasting community dedicated to advancing accessibility and assistive technology.

**Session Length: 90 minutes**

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## ***Agenda***

**1:45 – 2:45 p.m.**

### **Session 11: *Seeing Beyond Barriers: Empowering Independence with Assistive Technology for Vision Loss***

**Presenter: Cheri Harbour, North Mississippi Medical Center, Low Vision Rehab**

**Cheri Harbour** earned her bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from The University of Alabama-Birmingham in 1990. After practicing as a generalist OT, she specialized in Low Vision Rehabilitation. She completed her Graduate Certificate in Low Vision Rehabilitation in 2010 and her master's degree in OT in 2012. Cheri holds a Specialty Certification in Low Vision Rehabilitation. She currently provides Low Vision Rehabilitation at the North Mississippi Medical Center Retina Center. She actively contributes to her field through conferences and guest lectures and serves on the MAER Education Committee.

#### **Description:**

This lecture covers a wide range of both assistive technology and accessibility technology available to those with vision impairments. Includes demonstrations of many of the featured topics.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will gain understanding of the wide range of assistive technologies available for individuals with vision loss, including screen readers, magnification, optical character recognition, smart phone apps, and others.
- Participants will develop insights into the common functional challenges faced by individuals with vision loss and how assistive/accessibility technologies can address these challenges.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

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***Agenda***

**2:45 – 3:00 p.m.**

**Break**

**Day 2 • Friday, September 20, 2024**

## ***Agenda***

**3:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

### ***Session 12: Empowering Abilities: Assistive Technology in the Workplace for People who are Blind or Have Low Vision***

**Presenters: Anne Steverson and Jamie Boydstun,  
National Research & Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision  
at MS State University**

**Anne Steverson** is a Research Associate III at the National Research & Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision, where she has been employed since 2013. Her research interests include job search skills for transition-age youth, assistive technology use on the job, mentoring, and improving employment opportunities. Previous research has focused on developing the 4to24 app for parents of and students with visual impairments and job retention and career advancement.

**Jamie Boydstun** joined the National Research & Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision in 2023 as a research scientist, bringing expertise in manuscript development, and data collection, management, and analysis. Her current research explores assistive technology use, career mentoring, and employment outcomes and predictors for people who are blind or have low vision (B/LV). Her previous work focused on workforce, health, and transportation research. She earned a PhD in sociology from Mississippi State University.

#### **Description:**

Access technology (AT) is vital to employment success for people with blindness and low vision (B/LV). Based on findings from a longitudinal study, we will share information about the way AT is utilized in the workplace and the actual and preferred learning methods for AT use.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will identify ATs most commonly used by people who are B/LV in the workplace.
- Participants will describe AT self-efficacy levels of people who are B/LV who are employed and who are not employed.
- Participants will name actual and preferred learning methods of AT for people who are B/LV.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

**Day 2 • Friday, September 20, 2024**

## ***Agenda***

**4:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

### **Session 13: *Digital Use and Experiences of Students with Visual Impairment***

**Presenter via Zoom: Michael Tuttle, Florida State University**

**Michael Tuttle** is an assistant professor in the Visual Disabilities program at Florida State University. The courses he teaches include Unified English Braille, Assistive Technology for Students with Visual Impairments, and Accommodating Students with Visual Impairments. His research focuses on the role assistive technology can play in improving students with visual impairments' academic experiences and quality-of-life outcomes.

#### **Description:**

The presentation will explore the current landscape of assistive technology use among students from a national survey and through qualitative experiences. Implications and strategies for technology use in classrooms will be discussed.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will be able to identify the current practices used to support students with visual impairment's technology needs.
- Participants will be familiar with strategies for addressing gaps in current assistive technology services for students with visual impairments.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

**Day 2 • Friday, September 20, 2024**  
***Agenda***

**5:00 - 5:15 p.m.**

**Door Prize, Wrap Up, and Dismiss**



**Day 3 • Saturday, September 21, 2024**  
***Agenda***

8:00 – 8:30	Continental Breakfast, Register/Sign-in, Socialize, Networking
8:30 – 9:30	Session 14: Dr. Barbara Coatney & Robert Hamaker, <i>Stay Safe at Home</i>
9:30 – 10:00	Session 15: Dorothy Young, <i>Services in Mississippi for Persons Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired</i>
10:00 – 10:15	Break
10:15 – 11:15	Session 16: Rebecca Mathis, <i>Assistive Technology Solutions for Blindness and Visual Impairment</i>
11:15 – 12:15	Lunch & Session 17: Megan Flemming, <i>That All May Read: Accessible Library Services from Talking Book Services</i>
12:15 – 12:30	Break
12:30 – 1:15	MAER Business Meeting
1:15 – 1:30	Door Prize, Wrap Up, and Dismiss

**Day 3 • Saturday, September 21, 2024**

***Agenda***

**8:00 – 8:30 a.m.**

**Continental Breakfast, Register/Sign-in, Socialize, Networking**

## **Day 3 • Saturday, September 21, 2024**

### ***Agenda***

**8:30 - 9:30 a.m.**

#### **Session 14: *Stay Safe at Home***

**Presenters: Dr. Barbara Coatney, Time Touch Take, LLC  
and Robert Hamaker, Never Lose Sight**

**Dr. Barbara Coatney**, an educator, holds a Doctorate in Education from the University of Mississippi. Her background includes special education teacher, administrator, and university professor. In 2018, she was awarded the Minority Champion Small Business Administration (SBA) award for training. In 2021, she represented Mississippi at the White House because of her ability to train in small business. In 2022, Dr. Coatney received the GIVE Award, Governor's Initiative for Volunteer Excellence. She invented the Automated Time-Touch-Take Medication System for the blind and elderly.

For twenty years, **Robert Hamaker** served as Caesars and Bally's Entertainments' corporate internal auditor. He created the internal audit department at Hard Rock Casino and Hotel Biloxi when they reopened after Hurricane Katrina. Robert left Bally's Entertainment when he lost his sight in 2018. After spending six months at Addie McBryde, Robert helped them during the COVID crisis experiment with a new remote teaching program. His technology background includes: NVDA, JAWS, Narrator, Voiceover on iOS and TalkBack on Android. He teaches Voiceover classes and will soon teach JAWS to interested Never Lose Sight members. Robert serves as the President of Never Lose Sight.

#### **Description:**

Would you like to learn about an automated medication system that provides ease and safety for those who would otherwise be forced to find "in-home" care or assisted living care, which is costly? The only thing that the user would need to do is push a button and take their medication.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- The attendees will be confident they can take their medication without making mistakes.
- Participants including caregivers will know what is necessary to keep their loved one safe at home.
- Participants will learn how to refer others with vision loss or directly contact the Never Lose Sight (NLS) organization themselves to access NLS assistive technology training and social outings.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

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## ***Agenda***

**9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

### ***Session 15: Services in Mississippi for Persons Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired***

**Presenter: Dorothy Young**

**Ms. Dorothy L. Young** is a graduate of Alcorn State University (B.S.); the University of South Alabama (M.S. in Counselor Education and Minor in Rehabilitation Counseling); and Belhaven University (Master's in Management). In 2000, Ms. Young began work as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind. In 2013, Ms. Young was promoted to the Director position for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind Services, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. Dorothy L. Young serves on the National Executive Leadership team as the Technology Chair for the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind.

#### **Description:**

This presentation will provide participants with information on the services that are currently available in Mississippi for working age adults who have a visual impairment. The participants will come away knowing the skills that individuals with a visual impairment need to thrive in their communities and to succeed in their work environments.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this session,

- Participants will learn how to better prepare their visually impaired clients for the workforce.
- Participants will learn of the skills that visually impaired individuals need to thrive and live independently in their communities.
- Participants will Increase their knowledge of the services available in Mississippi for working age adults with a visual impairment.

**Length of Session: 30 minutes**

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***Agenda***

**10:00 – 10:15 a.m.**

**Break**

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## ***Agenda***

**10:15 – 11:15 a.m.**

### ***Session 16: Assistive Technology Solutions for Blindness and Visual Impairment***

**Presenter: Rebecca Mathis, T.K. Martin Center at MS State University**

**Rebecca Mathis** holds both a M.S. in Biomedical Engineering and a B.S. in Biological Engineering from Mississippi State University. As a student, she co-oped at the T. K. Martin Center. Rebecca worked as a rehabilitation engineer for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in Louisville, Kentucky. In that capacity, she served with the commonwealth's AgrAbility project, received additional training at the Helen Keller National Training Center in the use of deaf-blind technology, and collaborated in a number of conferences and presentations.

#### **Description:**

This session will explore the new advancements in assistive technology that can impact the lives of individuals with visual impairments and blindness. Participants will engage in hands on learning and demonstration to learn about the capabilities and limits of available technology. Technologies covered will include apps, accessibility features, computer access and reading aids. The evaluation methods and process for AT will also be discussed.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will identify two apps designed for individuals with vision loss.
- Participants will list three computer or tablet access methods.
- Participants will describe the availability of assistive technology evaluations.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

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## ***Agenda***

**11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**

### **Lunch & Session 17: *That All May Read: Accessible Library Services from Talking Book Services***

**Presenter: Megan Fleming, Talking Books Services at the MS Library Commission**

**Megan Fleming** is the Outreach Librarian for Talking Books Services at the Mississippi Library Commission (MLC), committed to provide training and promotion across the state for services provided by Talking Books. Megan holds a bachelor's degree from Delta State and has served the public for 10 years, in both Bolivar and Madison counties. She looks forward to continuing to serve the public by connecting people with the valuable resources provided through Talking Books.

#### **Description:**

Libraries are fantastic sources of information and entertainment, but what happens when vision impairment becomes a barrier to accessing the same information as sighted individuals? Talking Book Services is here to bridge the gap and bring accessible library services directly to qualifying persons. This presentation will provide information on what services we offer, who qualifies, and how to assist individuals with signing up.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this session,

- Participants will understand the services offered by Talking Books
- Participants will know how to assist individuals sign-up for Talking Books.
- Participants will be knowledgeable about the specifics of using both the mobile app (BARD) and the physical Talking Books player.

**Session Length: 60 minutes**

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***Agenda***

**12:15 – 12:30 p.m.**

**Break**

**12:30 – 1:15 p.m.**

**MAER Business Meeting**

**1:15 – 1:30 p.m.**

**Door Prize, Wrap Up and Dismiss**