



MISSISSIPPI LEAD

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

2024-2025 COHORT

A Strategic Leadership Program by the





MISSISSIPPI LEAD
LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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MISSISSIPPI LEAD

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About Mississippi LEAD

Program Length:

2 Years

Delivery Mode:

Virtual (Live Online Sessions)

Target Audience:

Senior Leaders in Mississippi State Government

Program Purpose:

The Mississippi LEAD (Leadership, Excellence, and Development) program is a two-year virtual initiative designed to equip senior leaders in Mississippi state government with advanced leadership skills. The program aims to build a community of visionary leaders capable of driving change, fostering collaboration, and enhancing the effectiveness of state government operations.

Program Structure:

The LEAD program consists of monthly training sessions focusing on a wide range of leadership topics. Each session is designed to offer participants actionable insights, practical tools, and a collaborative environment to refine their leadership competencies.

Key Components

- **Monthly Training Courses:** Each month, participants will attend live virtual sessions covering a variety of leadership themes, including strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, decision-making, crisis management, and fostering innovation.
- **Interactive Learning Modules:** Participants will engage in dynamic, interactive activities such as case studies, group discussions, and simulations that allow them to apply learned concepts in real-time.
- **Guest Speakers and Expert Panels:** The program will feature talks and panels from recognized leadership experts, experienced public servants, and industry leaders who bring fresh perspectives and best practices.



MISSISSIPPI LEAD
LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Mississippi LEAD Programming Overview

Sample Monthly Training Topics

- Accountability Leadership in the Public Sector
- Communication Skills for Effective Leaders
- Enhancing Critical Thinking Skills for Senior Leaders
- Ethical Leadership in State Government
- Navigating Government Leadership with Emotional Intelligence
- Problem-solving for Senior Leaders
- Strategic Time Management for State Government Leaders
- Change Management and Resilience
- Crisis Leadership
- Fostering Innovation and Creativity
- Performance Management and Accountability
- Building High-Impact Teams
- Leadership in a Diverse Workforce

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Mississippi LEAD program, participants will:

- Demonstrate enhanced strategic thinking and decision-making skills.
- Effectively lead and manage organizational change.
- Cultivate a culture of collaboration, innovation, and accountability within their agencies.
- Navigate complex challenges and opportunities in state government with confidence.
- Build a network of like-minded leaders committed to improving public service in Mississippi.

Program Commitment

Participants are expected to commit to attending all monthly sessions, actively engaging in discussions, and completing any assigned pre-work or reflection exercises. The program encourages participants to dedicate time outside of sessions for personal leadership development and project work. This program is an opportunity for Mississippi's senior government leaders to sharpen their leadership skills, collaborate with peers, and drive meaningful progress across the state.

For more information on Mississippi LEAD, visit www.mspb.ms.gov.





2024 - 2025 COHORT



BRIDGETTE R. BELL

Senior Administrative Officer
Department of Child Protection Services

Bridgette R. Bell joined the Department of Child Protection Services in July 2021 and became the executive's Operations Officer. In February 2022, she became the Deputy Commissioner in Finance and Procurement. She oversees finance services, including planning and analysis, procurement services, and federal reporting. Before joining MDCPS in 2021, Bridgette worked for a diverse range of organizations, including the Department of Human Services, Military Department, and Department of Mental Health. Bridgette has her bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Southern Mississippi. She also has a master's in public policy and administration from Mississippi State University. Bridgette resides in Brandon with her husband. She is blessed with four kids and four grandchildren. Bridgette is also a board member for the Human Services Finance Organization. Working with MDCPS is the most rewarding job because, to Bridgette, "Family Matters Most" in her personal and professional lives.



TRACY BUCHANAN

Deputy Administrator - Health Services
Division of Medicaid

Tracy Buchanan is the Deputy Administrator of Health Services at the Division of Medicaid. She is a registered nurse with vast clinical and administrative healthcare experience spanning more than 30 years. In 2011, she transitioned to state service gaining invaluable knowledge and experience in public health policy as a policy program nurse at the Division of Medicaid. In 2015, she became the Nurse Administrator of several programs within the Office of Long-Term Care. In 2018, she was promoted to the role of Clinical Policy Advisor for External Affairs. In 2019, she became the Director of Long-Term Services and Supports. Currently, she leads multiple health program areas and is responsible for guiding the administration of those programs while fostering the agency's mission to responsibly provide access to quality health coverage for vulnerable Mississippians.



BRIAN DANIEL

Director of Accounting and Finance
Mississippi Development Authority

Brian Daniel is a native Mississippian who was born in Columbus and raised in Clinton, graduating from Clinton High School in 1991. Brian is a 1995 graduate of Mississippi State University. Brian started his career with the state in 1995 at the Department of Human Services in the Budgets and Accounting Division where he worked in several areas within the division and ultimately served as the Deputy Director of Budgets and Accounting. Brian worked at MDHS for 12 years before transferring to the Mississippi Development Authority in 2006 as the Director of Accounting and Finance. Brian and his wife Daphonie live in Raymond and enjoy spending time with family and friends.



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MIKE DEHAAN

Infrastructure Service Manager & Enterprise Architect
Department of Revenue

Mike Dehaan is the Infrastructure Services Manager and Enterprise Architect for the Department of Revenue. In his time at the agency, Mike has had the privilege of working with the entire technology estate as engineer, architect, and manager.



VERONICA DUNNING

Director of Procurement
Mississippi Community College Board

Veronica Dunning is the Director of Procurement for the Mississippi Community College Board, where she leverages her expertise to ensure efficiency and transparency in public spending. She's responsible for all aspects of purchasing, accounts payable, and asset management. With a master's degree in public administration, Veronica's commitment to public service and her meticulous approach to procurement have made her a key figure in her field. She is a member of the Mississippi Association of Governmental Purchasing and Property Agents, the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Inc., the National Property Management Association. Veronica is a Certified Mississippi Purchasing Agent. Veronica is an active member of Toastmasters International, where she hones her public speaking and leadership skills. Veronica is also a proud member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, embodying the values of scholarship, service, sisterhood, and finer womanhood. Outside of her professional and organizational roles, Veronica is passionate about photography and travel. She finds joy in capturing the world through her lens and exploring new destinations, which fuels creativity and broadens her perspectives. Her love for serving others is evident both in her career and personal life, where she actively seeks opportunities to make a positive impact on those around her.



CINDY GARDNER

Museum Division Director
Department of Archives & History

Cindy Gardner came to Mississippi in 1999 to work as a collections registrar at the Old Capitol Museum. During her time at MDAH, she has also served as Field Services Curator and Director of Collections. In 2011, Cindy was given the added responsibility to serve as the Two Mississippi Museums Project Manager where she worked directly with the architects, exhibit designers, fabricators, and AV firms for both the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. In 2016, she was promoted to Two Mississippi Museums Administrator, and in 2019, she became the Museum Division Director, overseeing the strategic and operational responsibilities of eleven museums and historic sites across the state.



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TYLVESTER GOSS

**Division Director of Administrative Hearings
Department of Human Services**

Tylvester Goss is the Division Director of Administrative Hearings for the Department of Human Services. Tylvester earned his undergraduate degree from Tougaloo College and his law degree from the University of Tennessee. His job experience includes serving as a Chapter 7 Bankruptcy Trustee, a Staff Attorney for a Chapter 13 Trustee, and Special Assistant to the Mississippi Attorney General. Previously, Tylvester shared a private law practice, Davis, Goss & Williams Law Firm.



CALEB HAMMONS

**Assistant State Aid Engineer
Office of State Aid & Road Construction**

Caleb Hammons is a Professional Engineer (PE) with a degree in Chemical Engineering. Caleb has worked 12 years in the Materials Division at the Department of Transportation and 5.5 years at the Office of State Aid and Road Construction. He enjoys spending time with his family, particularly his wife and his son, who is in 1st grade. As a former Ole Miss track and field athlete, Caleb enjoys running in his free time.



KAMERON HARRIS, DRPH

**Chief Compliance Officer
Department of Human Services**

Kameron M. Harris, DrPH, currently serves as the Chief Compliance Officer at the Department of Human Services. As the Chief Compliance Officer, Dr. Harris is responsible for establishing standards and implementing procedures to ensure that the Office of Compliance is effective and efficient in identifying, preventing, and correcting noncompliance with applicable laws and regulations. The Office of Compliance is comprised of four divisions: Monitoring, Programmatic Quality Control, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Quality Control and Internal Audit. Together, these divisions provide support to ensure the Agency has effective internal controls, adheres to all laws and regulations, ensures processes are documented as standard operating procedures and assists all divisions to work collaboratively and maintain communication. Dr. Harris previously served as the Director of External Audit Contract Management with the Division of Medicaid. Dr. Harris graduated from Dillard University with a B.S. in Biology and received her master's and doctorate degrees from Jackson State University in public health science.



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JOE HAWKINS

Deputy Executive Director
Mississippi State Board of Contractors

Joe Hawkins currently serves as the Deputy Executive Director of the Mississippi State Board of Contractors. Joe is a dedicated public servant and a proud veteran of the United States Army, where he served with distinction in the 101st Airborne Division during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. With a strong foundation in leadership and strategic thinking gained from his military service, Joe transitioned to a career in public service, where he has excelled for 15 years. Joe holds a bachelor of science and a master of arts from Arizona State University, reflecting his commitment to continuous learning and professional development. He has further enhanced his expertise through multiple certification programs with the Mississippi State Personnel Board, including the Certified Public Manager Program and the Human Resources Certification Program. Throughout his career, Joe has consistently demonstrated a passion for service, a dedication to excellence, and a deep commitment to the communities he serves.



JENNIFER HEAD

Director of Administration & Finance
Department of Banking & Consumer Finance

Jennifer Head has over 27 years' experience in State government, with 23 years in a supervisory capacity. Jennifer currently serves as the Director of Administration with the Department of Banking & Consumer Finance where she manages and directs the office and financial aspects of the agency. In her free time, she enjoys traveling and spending time with family and friends. Jennifer and her husband currently reside in Madison with their two dogs, Otis (13) and Bella (2).



STEPHANIE HEDGEPETH

Chief Administrative Officer
Department of Information Technology Services

Stephanie Hedgepeth is a change agent with 16 years of experience managing teams and developing strong leadership skills. Her wide range of experience and chronic curiosity has led her to her current role as Chief Administrative Officer at the Department of Information Technology Services. From strategic planning and developing a performance management program, to identity and access management and leading statewide IT procurement, Stephanie brings a unique mixture of knowledge and experience that has served her responsibilities well. As a strong Myers-Briggs ENFP, Stephanie enjoys attending and presenting at national conferences allowing her to discuss challenges and share success stories as well as learn how enterprise IT functions in other states. With a strong work ethic and a sturdy foundation in quality improvement, Stephanie is a champion for data-driven decision making and planning for strategic, incremental change to achieve big wins for the citizens of Mississippi.



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DANIEL JORDAN

Chief Information Officer
Secretary of State's Office

Daniel Jordan is the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Information Security Officer (ISO) for the Secretary of State's Office. With over 15 years of experience in IT and cybersecurity, including 7 years working with the state of Mississippi, he oversees the agency's technology and security efforts. Daniel holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and cybersecurity, which supports his focus on maintaining a reliable and secure IT infrastructure. Before joining the Secretary of State's office, Daniel was the vice president at Seventh Knight, a Mississippi-based cybersecurity company dedicated to protecting organizations from ransomware. Following that, he served as the CEOT at the Department of Child Protection Services, managing IT operations and security initiatives. Earlier in his career, Daniel worked in healthcare as a Network Administrator at Southeast Mississippi Rural Healthcare, maintaining and securing the organization's IT infrastructure. Daniel's diverse experience across private cybersecurity, state government, and healthcare IT provides him with a comprehensive perspective and the expertise necessary to safeguard the technology and data assets of the State of Mississippi.



JENNIFER LENA

Deputy Executive Director
Mississippi Library Commission

Jennifer Lena is the Deputy Executive Director of the Mississippi Library Commission where she began her career in state government in 2010. An alumnus of Belhaven University, Jennifer earned a master's degree in public administration and a bachelor of science in management. She furthered her education with a second master's degree in library and information science from the University of Southern Mississippi. Jennifer holds multiple certifications including Certified Public Manager with Excellence and sits on several boards. Residing in Rankin County, Jennifer enjoys spending her free time with her family and traveling.



PATRICK J. LEVINE, SR.

Chief of Operations
Department of Marine Resources

Patrick Levine's faith in God and love for people drives him to be the best he can be for his family and his career. Patrick is currently the Chief of Operations for the Department of Marine Resources and has served the Mississippi Gulf Coast in law enforcement for over 20 years. He assists in program management, overseeing grants, procurement, policy, and budget consulting. Serving as the agency Emergency Response Officer, Patrick has assisted in numerous disaster recoveries. Patrick currently serves on the United States Coast Guard Northeast Gulf of Mexico Regional Maritime Security Committee as a liaison representing the State of Mississippi, Merit Health Biloxi Board of Trustees, Lake Forest Ranch Field Representative and Co-founder of Gulf Coast Orphan Care Alliance. Accomplishments include earning a master of science degree in criminal justice from William Carey University, Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Southern Mississippi, Eagle Scout (Troop 212 Biloxi), Gulf Coast Business Council Masters Leadership Program. Patrick has been married for 23 years to April Levine. Together, they have seven children, two adopted through DCPS. Hobbies include Bar 2L Wagyu and Hay farm, hunting, fishing, dating his bride, and playing with kids.



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DR. JO ANN MALONE

Associate State Superintendent
Department of Education

Dr. Jo Ann Malone began her career in education at the Mississippi School for the Blind as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired, teaching math and business to middle school and high school students from 2001-2006. She then went to the Department of Education as a Division Director in the Office of Student Assessment and later became the Director of Accountability Systems. She returned to the Mississippi School for the Blind to serve as Superintendent from 2014-2017. In 2017, Dr. Malone became Director of Accreditation at the Department of Education where she has been since that time. She acquired a bachelor's degree in business from Belhaven University, a master's degree in special education with an emphasis in deaf-blindness from the University of Southern Mississippi and a doctorate in higher education from Delta State University. Some of the highlights of Dr. Malone's career include being selected as a National Helen Keller Fellow, a member of the Community College Leadership Academy, and a graduate of the FBI Citizen's Academy. In her free time Jo Ann enjoys heirloom sewing for her grandchildren and of course....the beach.



ERIN MEYER

General Counsel
Department of Education

Erin Meyer currently serves as General Counsel to the Department of Education. Prior to this role, she served as Group Lead for Education in the State Agencies Division at the Attorney General's Office, where she was Lead Counsel to the Department of Education, State Board of Education, Licensure Commission and Commission on School Accreditation, and provided supervision to the attorneys assigned to the IHL, MCCB, and MCSAB. Erin has experience as a hearing officer advising various boards and commissions in the State of Mississippi and has appeared in courts through the State of Mississippi through her earlier work with the Department of Human Services. Erin began her legal career in Miami as a prosecutor handling matters involving sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, and abandonment. She currently resides in Madison with her husband Chris, an attorney with Burr Forman, LLP, and their three children.



DOUGLAS T. MIRACLE

Director of Civil Litigation
Office of the Attorney General

Douglas T. Miracle has worked in the Civil Litigation Division of the Attorney General's Office since 2012 after spending eighteen years practicing in the private sector. Doug became the Director of Civil Litigation in 2020 where he manages fourteen attorneys and three support staff members. As Director, Doug apportions his time between supervising cases, strategic planning, interaction with outside counsel, administrative duties, and general litigation responsibilities. Doug also provides counsel, on matters that concern or will likely give rise to civil litigation. The Division provides professional legal representation on behalf of the State, its agencies, officials, and employees in matters related to civil litigation in state and federal courts. Doug has served as lead counsel on a wide range of litigation for the State in both state and federal courts. Doug has successfully defended the Attorney General's investigative authority under State law and has specialized in constitutional challenges to state statutes, Section 1983 litigation, and other complex general litigation for the State. He has successfully argued multiple cases before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.



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SAMANDRA MURPHY

**Chief of Staff
Department of Rehabilitation Services**

Samandra Murphy, a native of Tchula, and an alumna of Jackson State University, embarked upon her career in state government as a Disability Examiner at the Department of Rehabilitation Services in 2005. Throughout her career, she has been committed to supporting individuals with disabilities across various roles. During her time in Georgia, she served as an Adjudication Officer and Staff Development/Training Coordinator with Georgia's Disability Adjudication Services. Other roles in Mississippi have included Program Auditor, Quality Assurance Director, and Director of Disability Determination Services. Additionally, she is a Certified Public Manager and graduate of MDRS's LEADRS Program. Currently, as the Chief of Staff at MDRS, she is dedicated to cultivating a culture of excellence and enhancing services to others, which stem from her core professional values. They are a relentless commitment to serving others and consistently pursuing excellence in all endeavors. With nearly 20 years of experience in state government, Samandra is pleased with the offering of the LEAD program and ecstatic to be a part of its inaugural cohort.



BRIAN PERRY

**Chief of Staff
Department of Agriculture & Commerce**

As Chief of Staff for Mississippi Agriculture and Commerce Commissioner Andy Gipson, Brian Perry leads a team of 220 and oversees an annual budget of \$29 million. He serves as liaison to state and federal leaders and formulates and implements department initiatives and policies. Brian works with bureau and department directors to cover agriculture education (including the Agriculture and Forestry Museum), agriculture promotion and marketing, regulatory areas of meat, weights and measures, pesticides, invasive species, grain and seeds, farmers markets, consumer protection, ag-theft, petroleum, and oversight of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds including the Dixie National Rodeo and the Mississippi State Fair. He has represented Mississippi at meetings of the Tri-National Agricultural Accords, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA), and foreign trade missions. Prior to joining MDAC, Perry served as Field Director for U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith, Director of Special Projects for U.S. Senator Thad Cochran, Communications Director for U.S. Representative Chip Pickering, Political Director of the Mississippi Republican Party, and managing partner of Capstone Public Affairs. Brian serves on the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Humanities Council and the Board of the Mississippi Historical Society.



KELLYE GRAY RHODES

**Associate Commissioner
Department of Revenue**

Kellye Gray Rhodes was appointed Associate Commissioner at the Department of Revenue on December 1, 2022, by Commissioner Chris Graham. As Associate Commissioner of Taxpayer Services, she is responsible for the offices of Property Tax, Information Technology, Administrative Services, and the Mississippi Alcoholic Beverage Control Division (ABC). She is also responsible for Communications, Internal Audit, and the Training Division. Kellye has been employed with the Department of Revenue for over thirteen years and has worked in various business areas. Prior to being named Associate Commissioner, she worked as a Project Manager within the agency's Office of Information Technology. She has also worked as a Computer Tax Audit Specialist for the ABC and as a desk auditor in Corporate Income Tax. Kellye is also a former Sales Tax Division Director and previously worked as a Field Auditor on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Kellye earned a bachelor's degree of business administration with a concentration in accounting from Jackson State University. She is married and has one daughter.



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C. PATRICK ROBERTS

General Counsel
Mississippi Development Authority

Patrick Roberts serves as General Counsel for the Mississippi Development Authority. He has represented MDA since 2017. During that time, he has represented the state in over \$15 billion dollars in economic development projects. Prior to working at MDA, he was in private practice for over ten years.



MELVIN ROBINSON

Deputy Director of Information Technology
Department of Rehabilitation Services

Melvin Robinson joined the Department of Rehabilitation Services in March 2017 as part of the information technology team. He currently serves as an IT Manager. His career in state government began in April 2002 at the Department of Education, where he contributed to the offices of information technology, professional development, and technology Education. In 2011, he became the Director of Technology Education at Mississippi Public broadcasting. With over 23 years of IT experience, Melvin has successfully led state-wide technology initiatives across all agencies he has served. Melvin holds a bachelor's degree in industrial Systems and technology and a master's degree in technology education from Jackson State University. He is also a certified K-12 educator in Mississippi, having taught middle school in the Jackson Public School District. In addition, he has served as an adjunct instructor at career and technical colleges. Collectively, he brings 16 years of teaching experience in both K-12 and post-secondary education.



NIRMALA SAHOO

Project Manager Supervisor
Department of Environmental Quality

Nirmala Sahoo is an experienced information technology project manager with 18 years in the field, currently employed at the Department of Environmental Quality. She is deeply committed to her role, particularly in leading the application team, and values the strong relationships she builds, which she sees as essential to her success both at work and in her personal life. Nirmala takes pride in utilizing her leadership abilities to engage with the daily technological advancements in the industry. Despite being a certified Project Management Professional (PMP), she continues to expand her knowledge through the Mississippi LEAD courses. She recognizes that while project managers are expected to lead, the skills required for project management differ from those needed for effective leadership. Through her participation in Mississippi LEAD, Nirmala is gaining confidence in her leadership capabilities and acquiring valuable insights on becoming an exceptional leader.



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CRYSTAL UTLEY SECOY

Director of Consumer Protection & Assistant Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General

Crystal Utley Secoy is the Director of the Mississippi Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division. Crystal leads and participates in civil investigations and litigation relating to unfair and deceptive business practices, including privacy and antitrust, in conjunction with other attorneys general and federal agencies. She previously advised the Attorney General's Office on policy issues and served as Legislative Liaison. Crystal is a Certified Information Privacy Professional and is a Fellow for the American Bar Foundation. Prior to joining the Attorney General's Office, Crystal served as Pro Bono Counsel for the Mississippi Center for Justice for four years where she received the Spirit of Service Award from the Corporation for National and Community Service and awards from Governor Haley Barbour and the American Red Cross. Lastly, Crystal practiced law in Charleston, South Carolina before returning home to Mississippi to coordinate Katrina-related legal aid and pro bono for MCJ in 2006. She obtained an International Business Degree from the College of Charleston and her J.D. from the Mississippi College School of Law. Crystal is mom to two avid athletes and is a member of the Clinton Junior Civic League.



BOBBY STERLING, JR.

Director of Information Technology
Ellisville State School

Bobby Sterling, Jr. is the Information Technology Manager for Ellisville State School, a regional program for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, which is operated by the Department of Mental Health. He has worked for the agency for 29 years, and has served as the director of the Information Technology Department for the last sixteen years. Bobby grew up near McComb and graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi with a bachelor's degree in computer engineering technology. He and his wife have been married for 31 years and have two daughters, a twenty-five-year-old who is a federal probation officer and a sixteen-year-old who is a junior at Oak Grove High School. Bobby stated that being part of the Mississippi LEAD Program has been a great opportunity. "I have learned so much about communication skills, problem-solving, and decision-making for leaders. I have enjoyed all the classes and they have all had very valuable information to use in my management position." He added that the best thing about being employed at Ellisville State School is working with all the staff and meeting the people we serve. In his free time, Bobby enjoys watching sports and visiting with family and friends.



CRYSTAL THOMPSON

Chief Administrative Officer & Chief Financial Officer
Emergency Management Agency

Crystal Thompson currently serves as Chief Financial Officer & Chief Administrative Officer at the Emergency Management Agency. She's led the Agency's Support Services and Finance Administration since 2017. Crystal led the state's first ever response to a water crisis during the 2022 City of Jackson Water Crisis, where she served as the State Coordinating Officer responsible for coordination of all federal, state and local entities in their response to the crisis. In 2021 she oversaw the State's medical staffing response for the COVID-19 medical staffing crisis bringing over 400 additional health care workers to the state. In 2022 she received a proclamation for her efforts in the medical staffing mission from Governor Reeves. Crystal's teams are responsible for all funding, reimbursements, contracts and purchasing for all disasters. Under her leadership, the Agency manages over \$600 million in funding. Crystal has over 20 years' experience in the banking and finance industry. She has served her community as a board member of the Junior League of Jackson and the Jackson Academy Association. Crystal has a bachelor's Degree in Finance and Economics from Mississippi State University. She holds a SHRM-CP certification (Society of Human Resources Management Certified Professional) and is a Certified Retirement Services Professional.



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JASON THOMPSON

Director of Administrative Services
Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

Jason Thompson is the Director of Administrative Services at the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. He oversees the operations in information technology, human resources, license & boating, and accounting. Jason's tenure within the agency spans over 20 years. He is a graduate of Jackson State University and he received his bachelor's degree in Spring 2001. Jason was born in Jackson, but he currently resides in Ridgeland with his wife and two children. Jason aims to continue his leadership with MDWFP for many years and to strive daily to gain the knowledge required to lead a workforce. Ministry has also been a part of Jason's life for 20 years. One of his future goals is to pursue a master's degree in theology from Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Today, Jason serves as the Youth Director at Greater Fairview Missionary Baptist Church. Jason enjoys helping others and he plans to continue to operate in that capacity.



ELISA WELLS

Deputy Director
Department of Revenue

Elisa Wells has been employed with the Department of Revenue since December 2003 and is currently serving as the Office Director of Income Tax, where she has served since July 2022. As Office Director, Elisa oversees individual income tax, withholding tax, corporate income and franchise tax, and miscellaneous tax departments.



JARICUS WHITLOCK

Chief of Air Division
Department of Environmental Quality

Jaricus Whitlock started with the Department of Environmental Quality in 2009 and he has enjoyed every minute of it. Jaricus started in the Environmental Compliance & Enforcement Division before transitioning to the Environmental Permits Division at the on-set of the agency's reorganization in 2018. Since then, Jaricus has tried to learn as much as possible about the ever-evolving air regulatory universe and continues to do so in his new role as Chief of Air Division, which he started in October 2023.



ALON WOOD

Director of Information Technology
Mississippi State Personnel Board

Alon Wood is the Director of Information Technology at the Mississippi State Personnel Board. He has more than 37 years of experience in information technology. Before joining the Mississippi State Personnel Board, Alon worked as a Project Manager at Saks Fifth Avenue for 12 years. He began his career in state government at the Department of Human Services. Alon and his wife live in downtown Brandon. They have two daughters, one granddaughter, and one grandson.

