



MISSISSIPPI LEAD
LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

2025-2026 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
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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.





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JAMESHYIA BALLARD

State Women, Infants, and Children's (WIC) Program Director
Department of Health

Jameshya Ballard currently serves as the State Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Director for the Department of Health's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program. The MSDH WIC Program aims to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, referrals to health care, and breastfeeding promotion and support. Dr. Ballard is a native of Hollandale and a graduate of Alcorn State University and the University of Southern Mississippi. She began her career at MSDH in 2015 as the State Breastfeeding Coordinator and later became the state's first WIC Vendor Management Director, leading the transition from direct distribution to retail food delivery, and helping to authorize and maintain WIC-authorized retail grocery stores and pharmacies across the state. Dr. Ballard is an advocate for health equity and aims to help improve maternal and child health outcomes by implementing initiatives that reduce barriers to program access and improve quality of care for WIC participants.



ANDREW BICKNELL

Chief Technical Officer
Mississippi Public Broadcasting

Andrew Bicknell directs the technical operations for Mississippi Public Broadcasting and manages the information technology, traffic control, audio, video, and transmission engineering departments that develop the technical services division. Andrew has over 40 years of experience in radio, television broadcast, communications, information technology, as well as audio and video engineering. He has managed large technical projects such as the communications refit at Casey Station in Antarctica, installing broadcast antennas atop the Sears Tower in Chicago for the U.S. conversion to digital television, as well as project managing the audio, video, and IT upgrades for major oil and gas corporations in Houston, Texas. Andrew recently moved to Mississippi from Perth, Australia via Houston, Texas, and Little Rock, Arkansas.



CATHERINE BRETT

Clinical Medical Director
Division of Medicaid

Catherine Brett, MD, MPH, FACPM, is a board-certified expert in preventive medicine and women's health, with over 20 years of experience in healthcare. She is a skilled clinician and surgeon, recognized for receiving awards related to patient satisfaction and safety throughout her career. As the Clinical Medical Director of Health Informatics for the Division of Medicaid, Dr. Brett supervises the tracking and reporting of clinical outcomes, designs and conducts research studies focused on population health, assesses both internal initiatives and external program performance, and incorporates evidence-based health strategies into quality improvement efforts for the state. With strong communication skills and a collaborative leadership approach, she works to educate and involve healthcare professionals, community partners, and external stakeholders in crucial discussions to advance DOM's Comprehensive Quality Strategy.



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LESLIE BREWER

Chief Financial Officer
Department of Marine Resources

Leslie Brewer is the Chief Financial Officer at the Department of Marine Resources, bringing over 5 years of experience to the position. She manages all accounting, procurement, and grant functions. With 27 years in accounting and finance in private, public, and state sectors, she has held a Certified Public Accountant license in Mississippi for 23 years.



RICK BURRIS

Chief Scientific Officer
Department of Marine Resources

Rick Burris is the Chief Scientific Officer for the Department of Marine Resources. He received his Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Marine Biology from the University of Southern Mississippi. Rick began his career with the Department of Revenue in 2007 as a fisheries scientist. From 2014 to 2019, he served as the Director of the Shrimp and Crab Bureau; from 2019 to 2021, he served as the Deputy Director of the Office of Marine Fisheries, where he managed both the commercial and recreational marine fisheries for the state of Mississippi. Rick is a Certified Fisheries Professional and a past president of the Mississippi Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. He currently provides representation on the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Technical Coordinating Committee, the Mississippi State University Wildlife Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Board, the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium Advisory Council, the Mississippi Based RESTORE Act Center of Excellence Executive Steering Committee, and is a proxy to the executive director on the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council.



SHANNON COKER

Director of Communications and Government Affairs
Mississippi Forestry Commission

Shannon Coker, APR, brings over 23 years of diverse experience in state government, healthcare, and association management, with more than 16 years dedicated to management and leadership roles. She currently serves as the Director of Communications and Government Affairs for the Mississippi Forestry Commission. Prior to this role, she was the Executive Director of the Dental Association. Shannon holds a Master of Science in communication and a bachelor's degree in public relations, both from Mississippi College.



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JOHN FERRELL

Chief Deputy, School & Districts of Transformation
Department of Education

John Ferrell currently serves as the Chief Deputy of School and District Transformation at the Department of Education. A dedicated educational leader, John has a proven track record of fostering innovation and excellence. During his tenure as Assistant Superintendent of Education for the New Albany School District, he helped the district maintain an "A" accountability rating and implemented groundbreaking initiatives such as the 4T Academy in collaboration with Toyota Mississippi. He also developed a distinguished K-12 workforce development program recognized by Accelerate Mississippi and expanded career exploration and career coaching programs across the district. With a passion for leadership development, John created the New Albany Aspiring Administrator Academy and guided the schools toward Apple Distinguished School status. His work has consistently placed the district in the top 10% of state accountability rankings. Currently pursuing a Doctorate in Educational Leadership at William Carey University, John continues to drive transformative change in education throughout Mississippi.



DERRICK GARNER

Deputy Commissioner
Department of Corrections

Derrick Garner, CPA, CPM, CFE, is a highly accomplished finance professional and public administrator with over 20 years of experience. Currently serving as Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Finance for the Department of Corrections, he has held key leadership roles, including Director of Compliance at the State Auditor's Office. Derrick is dedicated to driving innovation, efficiency, and excellence in public service and financial management.



ALICIA HARRIS

Chief Financial Officer
Mississippi Public Broadcasting

Alicia Harris brings 22 years of experience in state accounting to her current role. She began her career at Mississippi State Hospital, where she held various positions in accounting, budgeting, and finance, ultimately rising to the position of Chief Financial Officer. In 2019, she took on the Chief Financial Officer role at Public Broadcasting, overseeing all financial operations and ensuring compliance with state budget regulations. Alicia has completed the Certified Public Manager Program and the Human Resources Certification Program offered by MSPB. Additionally, she is a Certified Mississippi Purchasing Agent and is a graduate of the State Executive Development Institute at the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and Community Development. Alicia earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Southern Mississippi and a master's degree in public policy and administration from Mississippi State University. Originally from Brandon, she currently resides there with her family.



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ROCHELLE HICKS

Director of Tourism
Mississippi Development Authority

Rochelle Hicks serves as the Director of Visit Mississippi, the Tourism Division of the Mississippi Development Authority; she was appointed by Governor Tate Reeves in July 2023. As Director, Rochelle oversees the state's tourism brand, advances tourism initiatives, and promotes Mississippi to a broader domestic and international audience. Rochelle leads the effort to promote Mississippi as a destination for tourists by highlighting the state's rich history, cultural and natural resources, and recreational opportunities. She and her team oversee many notable programs and initiatives including the operation of Mississippi's 12 welcome centers. Prior to her appointment, Rochelle was Director of Advancement Initiatives at Canopy Children's Solutions. She has over 25 years of experience in the Mississippi tourism industry, previously serving as Executive Director of the Mississippi Tourism Association (MTA) and Deputy Director of the Ridgeland Tourism Commission. During her tenure at MTA, Rochelle played a vital role in passing legislation to promote the state's Bicentennial in 2017 and Senate Bill 2193 in 2019, which provides permanent funding for advertising and marketing tourism. Rochelle currently represents Visit Mississippi as treasurer of the United States Civil Rights Trail, the Mississippi Blues Trail, the Mississippi Country Music Trail, and Travel South USA.



ELIZABETH HOLBERT JONSON

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications & Publications/Communications Director
Office of the Secretary of State

Elizabeth Holbert Jonson is currently the Assistant Secretary of State for Communications and Publications for the Secretary of State. In this dual role, she serves as the Communications Director to Secretary of State Michael Watson and oversees all statutory responsibilities of the publications division. Prior to her service in state government, she held numerous roles in higher education, including administration and athletic academics at institutions across the Southeast, such as Auburn University, Ohio University, the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and Louisiana State University at Alexandria. While serving as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications, she was named "Practitioner of the Year" by the Public Relations Association of Louisiana Central Chapter. Having returned home to Mississippi to continue her 10+ years in public service, the former University of Mississippi softball student-athlete is proud to establish roots with her husband and three children in order to serve her native state.



WILLIAM A. KURIGER JR.

Director of Software Development
Department of Child Protection Services

William A. Kuriger Jr. is the Director of Software Development at the Department of Child Protection Services. He has seven years of experience as the Lead Business Systems Analyst at the Office of the Secretary of State and two years as a Data Warehouse Administrator at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. William is a retired United States Navy veteran and holds a bachelor's degree in computer engineering from Mississippi State University. He also taught software engineering technology for seven years as an adjunct instructor at Holmes Community College, followed by another seven years as a full-time faculty member.



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CADY PORTER LACKEY

Policy Advisor
Office of the Governor

Cady Porter Lackey is a licensed attorney in Mississippi and admitted to practice before the Mississippi Supreme Court. She earned her J.D. from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 2020, where she actively participated in various student organizations, including the Student Bar Association and the Federalist Society. Cady also graduated cum laude from her undergraduate studies at Ole Miss in 2017, where she was a Trent Lott Leadership Institute Scholar and a participant in the Chancellor's Leadership Class. Currently, Cady serves as Policy Advisor to Governor Tate Reeves, where she advocates for the Governor's policy agenda including tax reform, economic development, infrastructure modernization, and public safety. Previously, she was a Policy and Legal Director at the Public Service Commission. She also brings with her legal experience from the Insurance Department and Balch & Bingham LLP. Cady is also active in her community, serving as a member of several local organizations, including the Rankin County Republican Women and the Capital Area Bar Association. Cady and her husband are both active members of First Baptist Church of Fannin and live in Rankin County with their dog Wellie.



JON MCCORMICK

Director of Government Affairs
Office of the State Auditor

Jon McCormick is the Director of Governmental Affairs for the Office of the State Auditor as well as a member of the technical assistance team. Jon began his career in government with the Auditor's Office in 2018 in the Technical Assistance division. He recently took over the role as Director of Governmental Affairs in January 2024. Jon holds a Bachelor and Master of Accountancy as well as a law degree from the University of Mississippi. Jon possesses both his law license and CPA license in the state of Mississippi. He is honored to be a part of the second ever Mississippi LEAD cohort and looks forward to being a part of a group that will play a pivotal role in our state government in the coming years.



YOLANDA NASH

Chief Financial Officer
Office of the Attorney General

Yolanda Nash serves as the Chief Financial Officer for the Office of the Attorney General. She has also served as an audit manager with the Office of the State Auditor and the Director of Accounting, Bonds, and Financial Management at the Office of the State Treasurer. Prior to her government career, she spent nine years as an auditor with national, regional, and local accounting firms. Yolanda is a Certified Public Accountant as well as a Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM), certified by the Association of Government Accountants. She is a member of the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants (AICPA), the Mississippi Society of Certified Public Accountants, and the Association of Government Accountants, where she serves on the Chapter Executive Committee for the Jackson chapter.



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JASON POPE

Deputy Executive Director, Workforce Programs
Department of Employment Security

Jason Pope, Ph.D., M.B.A., serves as the Deputy Executive Director of Workforce Programs at the Department of Employment Security, where he oversees employment services and various workforce initiatives for MDES. He possesses extensive experience in workforce and economic development, facilities management, and the energy sector. Jason dedicated over 17 years to various roles at the state's largest community college, during which he supported entrepreneurs at the Small Business Development Center, worked as a Workforce Development Specialist providing training at WIN job centers across the state, created customized training programs for private companies, and led award-winning sustainability initiatives. He holds a bachelor's degree in banking and finance from Mississippi State University, an M.B.A. from Mississippi College, and a Ph.D. in public policy and administration from Jackson State University. Jason is actively involved in several organizations, including the Mississippi Chapter of the American Physical Plant Association, the Mississippi Recycling Coalition, Habitat for Humanity – Madison County, the Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance, and STOP SMA. He is a dedicated public servant committed to advancing workforce and economic development for the residents of Mississippi.



JASON RABY

Director of Information Technology
North Mississippi Regional Center

Jason Raby is the Director of Information Technology at North Mississippi Regional Center, a position he has held since April 2015. He grew up near Memphis and earned a bachelor's degree in computer engineering from Mississippi State University, where he also played drums in the marching band for four years. In his spare time, Jason enjoys watching his two sons play sports, read, and garden. As a committed leader in state service, he consistently seeks ways to learn and improve, focusing on technological advancements that can benefit Mississippi's workforce and boost business development.



LAURA RING

Deputy Executive Director, External Relations
Department of Employment Security

Laura Ring serves as the Deputy Executive Director of External Relations at the Department of Employment Security. Over her 19-year career with the agency, Laura has brought her expertise to various critical areas including human resources, information technology, program management, and grant management. In her current role, Laura leads the Communications, Labor Market Information, Workforce Data Reporting, Apprenticeship, and Grant Management teams. Her leadership ensures the effective delivery of workforce services and drives innovation in support of Mississippi's economic growth. Laura earned her Bachelor of Science in business administration from the University of Southern Mississippi, where she built the foundation for her career in public service.



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BRETT H. ROBINSON

Associate State Superintendent of Career, Technical, & Workforce Development Education
Department of Education

Brett H. Robinson currently serves as the Associate State Superintendent for the Career, Technical, and Workforce Development Education at the Department of Education. Prior to this role, he spent 20 years in the Clinton Public School District as a science teacher and football coach, the CTE Director, and the lead principal of Clinton High School. He was honored as the Clinton High School Teacher of the Year in 2009, the Clinton Schools Administrator of the Year in 2016, and received the Principal of the Year award from the Association of Secondary School Principals in 2022. In the last ten years, Brett has participated in various state committees and task forces, including the State CTE Director's Advisory Committee and the College and Career Readiness Task Force. He began his position as State CTE Director in June 2023. Brett holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Mississippi State University and both a master's and specialist degree in educational leadership from Mississippi College.



DR. MARY ANN ROSS

Chief of Staff
Department of Corrections

Dr. Mary Ann Ross brings over 25 years of executive leadership experience in corrections, mental health, education, substance use disorder treatment, permanent supportive housing, nonprofit management, and business consulting. Dr. Ross earned a doctorate in psychology with an emphasis in psychopharmacology/health psychology, a Master of Education in instructional technology, and a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice and social work. Dr. Ross is a licensed community mental health therapist, as well as a certified substance use disorder supervisor and holds professional certifications in human resource management/labor laws and specialized certifications in didactic instruction for individuals with moderate to severe intellectual/developmental disabilities.



KELLIE ANNE RUSHING

Internal Auditor
Department of Rehabilitation Services

Kellie Anne Rushing currently serves as the Internal Auditor for the Department of Rehabilitation Services, where she has dedicated 11 years of service to the agency. A distinguished alumna of Mississippi State University originally from Meridian, Kellie currently resides in Madison. In her leisure time, she enjoys cooking, traveling, and enjoying the company of her dogs.



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WENDY MOORE SHELTON

Deputy Executive Director
Department of Human Services

Wendy Moore Shelton is the Deputy Executive Director at the Department of Human Services. She has worked as a staff attorney for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi and has experience in both large and small law firms. Additionally, she has served as a municipal prosecutor and a municipal judge. Before her current position at MDHS, Wendy was the Deputy General Counsel for MDCPS. She graduated with honors in criminal justice from the University of Southern Mississippi and earned her law degree with special distinction from the Mississippi College School of Law. Wendy is also a certified professional with the Society for Human Resource Management. Originally from Oak Grove, she now resides in Sanford.



SUSAN SMITH-PATTERSON

Information Technology Manager
Department of Rehabilitation Services

Susan Smith-Patterson is a seasoned information technology professional with over 22 years of dedicated service at the Department of Rehabilitation Services. As the IT Applications and Development Manager, she leads the development and implementation of innovative IT solutions that enhance the agency's ability to serve Mississippians with disabilities. Susan possesses a proven track record in project management and has successfully led numerous IT initiatives, driving efficiency and growth within the organization. Susan is a Certified Public Manager and a graduate of MDRS's LEADRS leadership development program. Beyond her professional endeavors, Susan is committed to community service and enjoys spending quality time with her family traveling and camping. She is a proud member of the Civil Air Patrol, where she volunteers alongside her husband and son. She has been married for over 21 years and is the proud parent of a 15-year-old son.



ANDERSON (ANDY) THOMAS

Senior Attorney
Department of Environmental Quality

Anderson (Andy) Thomas currently serves as a Senior Attorney at the Department of Environmental Quality. He is the primary attorney for the Office of Restoration and provides advice and counsel to staff and leadership on a range of issues including contracts, procurements, environmental compliance, administrative law, real property law, and information law. Before joining MDEQ in May 2022, Andy served as a civilian attorney at the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense. Andy has been practicing law and a member of the Mississippi Bar since 2009. He graduated from Mississippi College School of Law in May 2009.



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BRIDGETTE THOMAS

Chief Counsel
Department of Revenue

Bridgette Thomas currently serves as the Chief Counsel for the Department of Revenue (DOR). As Chief Counsel, Bridgette oversees the Department's Legal Division, Bankruptcy Section, Review Board, and Office of Tax Policy. Prior to her position as Chief Counsel, she spent over 10 years as a senior attorney with DOR's Legal Division where she represented the agency as lead counsel in many of the state's corporate income and franchise tax cases. Before joining DOR, Bridgette spent several years practicing law in both the private and public sectors in the areas of insurance defense and child support enforcement. Bridgette holds a Bachelor of Accountancy and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Mississippi State University, as well as a J.D. from the University of Mississippi School of Law.



PAUL J. (PJ) WALDROP

Deputy Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer
Mississippi Development Authority

Paul J. (PJ) Waldrop has extensive strategy, management, and leadership experience combined with a government relations and economic development skill set. He is currently the Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer at the Mississippi Development Authority, overseeing initiatives to boost the state's economic growth. PJ has a rich background in public service and economic development, having previously served as the director of the Governor's Office of Military Affairs (GOMA) since its creation in 2021. PJ has also worked closely with the major business and economic development advocacy groups in the state, and with the Mississippi Congressional Delegation on a variety of projects and legislation to support the state's economy. Prior to his appointment as director of GOMA, PJ spent 15 years working as a staffer in the U.S. Senate, advising three different senators. During this time, PJ served as a legislative director and Deputy Chief of Staff overseeing legislative and operations staff. PJ holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Delta State University and a master's degree in economic development from the University of Southern Mississippi.



BETSY WARD

Security Operations Manager
Department of Information Technology Services

Betsy Ward is the Security Operations Manager at the Department of Information Technology Services, a role she has held since March 2021. In this position, she oversees the Enterprise Security Operations team, which is responsible for safeguarding the state's enterprise security infrastructure. Betsy plays a pivotal role in expanding these security protections to the public cloud, ensuring that the state's digital environment remains secure and resilient against emerging threats. With over 28 years of experience in the technology industry, she brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her role. Betsy spent 11 years in the private sector as a consultant in various positions such as technical writer, system tester, and web developer. In 2005, she transitioned to ITS, initially joining the e-Gov development team. In 2015, she shifted her focus to cybersecurity, where she has been instrumental in delivering enterprise cybersecurity solutions and services. Betsy holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in business information systems from Mississippi State University, and her career continues to reflect her commitment to advancing the state's cybersecurity efforts while fostering innovation and resilience in government technology services.



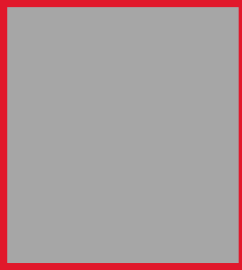
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KIMBERLY WHEATON

Senior Clinical Officer
Department of Child Protection Services

Kimberly Wheaton, LCSW, currently serves as Senior Clinical Officer with the Department of Child Protection Services. She provides administrative oversight and support to various program areas within the agency. Originally from Jackson, she earned her bachelor degree in psychology and her MSW from Jackson State University. Additionally, she holds a master degree in leadership focused on human resources from Belhaven University and she was a member of the 2021 cohort in the Millsaps Advanced Applied Leadership Program. Kimberly believes her daily work is more than just a job; it is part of her mission. She acknowledges that while the work can be tough, it is truly "heart work." It requires a commitment to engage with families, youth, and young adults during their most difficult times. Kimberly aims to be a transformational and servant leader in all her endeavors. She has dedicated over 15 years to her passion for social services.



WENDY WILSON WHITE

Deputy Inspector General
Department of Human Services



SHAWN WOLFE

Director of Cyber Crime
Office of the Attorney General

Shawn Wolfe currently serves as the Director of the Cyber Crime Division at the Attorney General's Office, where he oversees the Mississippi Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, the Mississippi Cyber Fraud Task Force, and the Digital Forensics Unit. He joined the office in 2023 after completing a 26-year career with the United States Secret Service (USSS). In his last position as the Resident Agent in Charge of the Jackson office, Shawn was responsible for managing the budget, investigations, and protective operations. He played a key role in establishing the Mississippi Cyber Fraud Task Force in collaboration with the Attorney General's Office in April 2021. From 2005 to 2009, he served in the Presidential Protective Division in Washington, D.C., and in 2010, he was selected for a congressional fellowship with the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee. After returning to investigations in 2011, he focused on financial crimes and protective threats, and in 2016, he was promoted to Assistant Special Agent In charge of the Congressional Affairs Division. Shawn holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in criminology from Florida State University.

