

2026 ANNUAL MAPDD CONFERENCE



AGENDA

APRIL 21–24, 2026

BEAU RIVAGE RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER
BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The Executive Directors of the Planning and Development Districts welcome you to the 2026 Annual PDD Conference. The PDDs would like for this conference to help you better understand what is happening from a local, state, and national perspective. Communities face many challenges and the PDDs hope that this conference will help you find new opportunities to address those challenges.

GENERAL SESSIONS: This year's conference will feature three outstanding speakers for the general sessions. We are pleased to welcome Chris Chism, Superintendent of Pearl Public School District and a leading voice in the practical application of artificial intelligence, as our opening session speaker. Sally Doty, Director of the Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi (BEAM), will provide a featured presentation during Wednesday's luncheon, where she will share an update on the state's ongoing efforts to expand high-speed internet access. Dr. Lavon Gray will close out the general sessions as the keynote speaker for Thursday's luncheon, focusing on transforming workplace conflict into an opportunity for growth and collaboration.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS: We will have numerous concurrent sessions throughout the conference. This will include panel discussions related to federal and state grant funding opportunities, legislative updates from MAS and MML, workforce training opportunities, human resources, financial resources for small businesses, and continuing education credit for social workers among many other topics of interest to conference participants. From learning how to put together successful grant projects, to promoting economic growth and workforce training, you'll be able to find something of interest and educational in each concurrent session.

ENTERTAINMENT: Tuesday will include the TRIO Golden Gator Golf Classic and the Early Bird Reception at Town Green sponsored by TRIO Community Meals & a Paint and Sip class sponsored by Loving Health Care Services, as well as a Line Dance Class. Wednesday will end with a Cocktail Hour followed by dinner on your own. Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served Thursday at the Gala Reception and entertainment will be provided by After Party. Then on Friday, join us for breakfast before you start your trip home.

HELPFUL TIPS

Door prizes will be given away during luncheons, the opening session, and the closing session.

CEUs for Social Workers are available for select concurrent sessions. Approved sessions are noted throughout the agenda and are listed in the back. Please make sure you sign in at the appropriate session(s). Social Workers will find an Attendance Certificate in the back of this agenda to keep up with the sessions you attend and as proof of your attendance to obtain your credits.

Two (2) Certified Municipal Official (CMO) elective credits are available for attending the PDD conference. Those seeking CMO credits should be sure to sign in at the registration desk to receive credit for your attendance.

Be sure to get your **Exhibitor Page**, found in the back of the agenda, stamped by each exhibitor, sign it, and bring it to the closing session on Thursday in order to be eligible to win one of numerous door prizes that will be given away.

All conference sessions and activities, including the Gala Reception, are dress casual.



Conference Agenda

**Name badges are required for admittance to all events.
Please turn all cell phones to “silent” during sessions.**

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Registration/Exhibitor Setup

Beau Rivage Convention Center

11:30 am – 5:00 pm
TRIO Golden Gator Golf Classic
The Trio Golden Gator Golf Classic will be held at the Sunkist Country Club in Biloxi. Lunch will be provided for golfers at 11:30 am with a shotgun start at 12:30 pm.

Sunkist Country Club



Sponsored by  **TRIO**

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Paint and Sip
Join us to unwind and get creative in a guided painting class while sipping refreshments. Advance registration is required.

Camellia Ballroom

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,Inc.



2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Azalea C & D

Boots on the Beach Line Dance Class

Step onto the dance floor and join us for an instructor led line dance class. No experience required. The class is designed for all experience levels. Advance registration is required.



6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Town Green

Early-Bird Reception

Join us at the Biloxi Town Green on Highway 90, just east of the Beau Rivage, for an Early-Bird Reception. We will kick off the conference with musical entertainment provided by the Brad Sapia Band.



**Check out the MAPDD Merchandise table
near the Magnolia Ballroom for MAPDD gear!**

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Please turn all cell phones to “silent” during sessions.

7:30 am

Beau Rivage Convention Center

Morning Pastries



Sponsored by

corebridge
financial

7:30 am – 5:00 pm

Beau Rivage Convention Center

Registration

8:00 am – 9:00 am

Azalea A & B

Healthy Eating

Chef Mario Reyes, Trio

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Camellia Ballroom

**Opening Session with Chris Chism,
Superintendent of Pearl Public School District**

Chris Chism is a nationally recognized educational leader, speaker, and innovator with more than 30 years of experience in public education. As Superintendent of Pearl Public School District, he is known for forward-thinking leadership, data-driven decision-making, and pioneering work in the practical application of artificial intelligence in K–12 education. A leading voice on AI in education, Chism has delivered hundreds of presentations across the country and provided training to educators, policymakers, and industry leaders. He brings a practical, results-oriented perspective on how artificial intelligence can enhance teaching, learning, and organizational effectiveness.



10:15 am – 11:15 am

Azalea A & B

Preparing for Peace: End-of-Life Legal Planning*

Al Cutturini, North MS Rural Legal Services

* CEU approved session

10:15 am – 11:45 am

Azalea C & D

MAS & MML Legislative Update

Steve Gray, Mississippi Association of Supervisors
Troy Johnston Mississippi Municipal League
Derrick Surrette, Mississippi Association of Supervisors

10:15 am – 11:45 am

Magnolia E

What's Working in Workforce: A Multi-Region Directors Panel

Allison Hawkins, Southern Mississippi PDD
Robin Parker, Central Mississippi PDD
Terry Treadaway, Three Rivers PDD
Mitzi Woods, South Delta PDD

10:15 am – 11:45 am

Magnolia F

Say the Thing: Leading Through Difficult Conversations

Scott Stinson, Central Mississippi PDD

10:15 am – 11:45 am

Magnolia G & H

Fundamentals of Person-Centered Practice*

Michelle Brazeal, USM Person Centered Planning Institute
Diane Smith, USM Person Centered Planning Institute

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Magnolia Ballroom

Luncheon with Sally Doty, Director of the Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi

Sally Doty, Director of the Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi (BEAM) office, will provide an update on the state's ongoing efforts to expand high-speed internet access. Her presentation will highlight recent progress, key funding initiatives, and strategies to connect communities across Mississippi. Gain insight into how broadband expansion is supporting economic development, education, and improved quality of life for Mississippians.



1:45 pm – 2:45 pm

Azalea A & B

Legal Rights and Protections for Aged/Vulnerable Adults*

Stephen Gay, Mississippi Attorney General's Office
Honorable Bennie Richard, Washington County Chancery Court Judge

1:45 pm – 3:00 pm

Azalea C & D

Fiscal Roundtable

PDD Staff Only

* CEU approved session

<u>1:45 pm – 3:00 pm</u>	Magnolia E
Federal Funding Opportunities from ARC, DRA, & SCRC Matthew Campbell, Delta Regional Authority Tim Climer, Mississippi Development Authority-SCRC Andrea Rose, Appalachian Regional Commission	
<u>1:45 pm – 3:00 pm</u>	Magnolia F
AI as Your Grant Management Partner: Streamlining Budgets, Compliance, and Communication Robin Parker, Central Mississippi PDD	
<u>1:45 pm – 3:00 pm</u>	Magnolia G
MDA Business Loans: Overview and Certification Gernika Collins, Mississippi Development Authority Michael Cooley, Mississippi Development Authority Dr. Latonia Gordon, Mississippi Development Authority James Kangar, Mississippi Development Authority	
<u>1:45 pm – 3:00 pm</u>	Magnolia H
GIS Next Generation 911 Wes Edwards, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Preston White, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency	
<u>1:45 pm – 3:00 pm</u>	Camellia A
Planning Essentials for Lifetime Health, Wealth, and Security Philip Buchanan, Courtney Elder Law Associates	
<u>3:15 pm – 4:15 pm</u>	Azalea A & B
Legal Planning for Alzheimer’s Caregivers Sam Buchanan, Mississippi Center for Legal Services	
<u>3:15 pm – 4:30 pm</u>	Azalea C & D
PERS 101 Keyonte’ Jackson, Public Employees’ Retirement System	
<u>3:15 pm – 4:15 pm</u>	Magnolia E
MDA Funding Opportunities Lisa Maxwell, Mississippi Development Authority	
<u>3:15 pm – 4:15 pm</u>	Magnolia F
Apprenticeships: Building Tomorrow’s Workforce Today Mitzi Woods, South Delta PDD	

* CEU approved session

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm

Magnolia G

IRS Business Workshop

Barbra Bennett, Stakeholder Liaison Internal Revenue Service

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm

Magnolia H

Case Study: Developing PCI Rating of Roadways in Water Valley

Tommy Reynolds, City of Water Valley

Toby Sanford, Golden Triangle PDD

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm

Camellia A

Understanding and Reporting Medicaid Fraud*

Brandon Garrett, Mississippi Attorney General's Office

Brantley Walton, Mississippi Attorney General's Office

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Pool Terrace

Cocktails on the Terrace

Join us on the Pool Terrace for cocktails to unwind after a long day of sessions. Complimentary drink tickets were provided at registration with your name badge to be used at this event. Afterwards, enjoy dinner on your own at one of the Gulf Coast's great restaurants.



Thursday, April 23, 2026

Please turn all cell phones to "silent" during sessions.

7:30 am

Beau Rivage Convention Center

Morning Pastries



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7:30 am – 12:00 pm

Beau Rivage Convention Center

Registration/Exhibits Open

* CEU approved session

<p><u>8:00 am - 9:00 am</u> Empowering Aging Adults Through Digital Literacy: A Community Based Approach* Dr. NaTunya Johnson, The Educational Advancement Technology Foundation, Inc.</p>	<p>Azalea A & B</p>
<p><u>8:00 am - 9:00 am</u> EDA Training PDD Staff Only Lucas Blakenship, Economic Development Administration</p>	<p>Azalea C & D</p>
<p><u>8:00 am - 9:00 am</u> Understanding Adult Protective Services* Sunda Simmons Spears, Mississippi Department of Human Services Kimberly Weary, Mississippi Department of Human Services</p>	<p>Camellia A</p>
<p><u>9:15 am – 10:15 am</u> Older Americans Act Final Rule* Kyla McIntire, Advancing States</p>	<p>Azalea A & B</p>
<p><u>9:15 am – 10:15 am</u> Best Practices for Grants Phylis Benson, Golden Triangle PDD Angie Duvall, Northeast Mississippi PDD Allen Laird, Southwest Mississippi PDD</p>	<p>Azalea C & D</p>
<p><u>9:15 am - 10:15 am</u> Indirect Cost Essentials for PDDs Jason Brooks, Watkins, Ward and Stafford, PLLC</p>	<p>Magnolia E</p>
<p><u>9:15 am - 10:15 am</u> A Digital Delivery Model for Workforce and Beyond Robin Parker, Central Mississippi PDD Jason Pope, Mississippi Department of Employment Security</p>	<p>Magnolia F</p>
<p><u>9:15 am – 10:15 am</u> Using GIS to Leverage Decision Making from Live Data, Real Dollars, Instant Cost, and Asset Mapping Toby Sanford, Golden Triangle PDD Carl Zitta, Oktibbeha County</p>	<p>Magnolia G</p>
<p><u>9:15 am – 10:15 am</u> SBA Session Rhonda Fisher, Small Business Administration</p>	<p>Magnolia H</p>

* CEU approved session

9:15 am – 10:15 am

Camellia A

Understanding Mississippi's HCBS Waivers*

Donna Dukes, Division of Medicaid
Paulette Johnson, Division of Medicaid

10:30 am – 11:30 am

Azalea A & B

Suicide in the Aging Population*

Adriane Dorsey-Kidd, VA Medical Center

10:30 am – 11:30 am

Azalea C & D

Informational Session for Water/Wastewater Grant Opportunities

James Gammill, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
William Moody, Mississippi State Department of Health

10:30 am – 11:30 am

Magnolia F

Re-entry: Talent Unlocked

Allison Hawkins, Southern Mississippi PDD
Patricia Morrison, Southern Mississippi PDD
Crystal Woodhouse, Southern Mississippi PDD

10:30 am – 11:30 am

Magnolia G

Fiscal TAC Session with Aging and Adult Services

Brenda Hille, Mississippi Department of Human Services

10:30 am – 11:30 am

Magnolia H

USDA Rural Development Small Business Resources

Timothy Baker, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development
Tonya Cowart, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development

10:30 am – 11:30 am

Camellia A

Elderly & Disabled Waiver Updates*

Donna Dukes, Division of Medicaid
Paulette Johnson, Division Of Medicaid

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Magnolia Ballroom

Luncheon with Dr. Lavon Gray

Dr. Lavon Gray will lead an engaging session focused on transforming workplace conflict into an opportunity for growth and collaboration. In this keynote, Choose to Defuse, participants will explore how unresolved conflict impacts productivity and how it can instead become a driver of innovation and stronger team dynamics. Dr. Gray will provide practical tools, including a clear three-step approach to resolving conflict and strategies for guiding difficult conversations toward positive outcomes.



* CEU approved session

1:45 pm – 3:00 pm

Camellia Ballroom

**Closing Session with Jamie Bendall,
Comedian - Lawyer - Realtor - Business Owner - Dad**

Jamie Bendall is a seasoned comedian, attorney, realtor, and entrepreneur who has spent more than 30 years entertaining audiences across the country with his engaging storytelling and relatable humor. An accomplished speaker and on-camera personality, he has appeared across radio, television, podcasts, and streaming platforms.



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Care to Live Your Life.

6:00 pm – 10:30 pm

Magnolia Ballroom

Gala Reception

Join us at the Gala Reception at 6 pm, where heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served and entertainment will be provided by **After Party**.



Friday, April 24, 2026

7:30 am – 9:30 am

Azalea Ballroom

Closing Breakfast

Join us for a hot breakfast before you head out on your way home. Breakfast buffet begins at 7:30 am and continues until 9:30 am.



CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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We thank these sponsors for their contribution to a successful conference.

Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts
Annual Conference

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

Continuing Education Hours for Social Workers

April 21– 24, 2026 • Biloxi, Mississippi

APPLICATION NUMBER: 26.11

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip Code _____

Social Worker License # _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

- BRING THIS FORM WITH YOU EACH DAY.**
- Fill in your name, contact information, and social work license number.
- Write in the confirmation number announced at the end of each session you attend below.
- KEEP THIS FORM FOR YOUR RECORD OF ATTENDANCE.**

Time	Session Title	Number of CE Units	Confirmation Number
<u>Wednesday, April 22, 2026</u>			
10:15 – 11:15	Preparing for Peace: End-of-Life Legal Planning	1 General	_____
10:15 – 11:45	Fundamentals of Person-Centered Practice	1 General	_____
1:45 – 2:45	Legal Rights and Protections for Aged/Vulnerable Adults	0.5 General	_____
3:15 – 4:15	Understanding and Reporting Medicaid Fraud	1 General	_____

(Continued on back)

Time	Session Title	Number of CE Units	Confirmation Number
<u>Thursday, April 23, 2026</u>			
8:00 – 9:00	Understanding Adult Protective Services	1 General	_____
8:00 – 9:00	Empowering Aging Adults Through Digital Literacy: A Community Based Approach	1 General	_____
9:15 – 10:15	Older Americans Act Final Rule	1 General	_____
9:15 – 10:15	Understanding Mississippi's HCBS Waivers	1 General	_____
10:30 – 11:30	Elderly & Disabled Waiver Updates	1 General	_____
10:30 – 11:30	Suicide in the Aging Population	1 General	_____

I certify that the information listed on this Certificate of Attendance indicates my attendance at the MAPDD Conference and the above listed CEU approved classes as indicated by the confirmation codes.

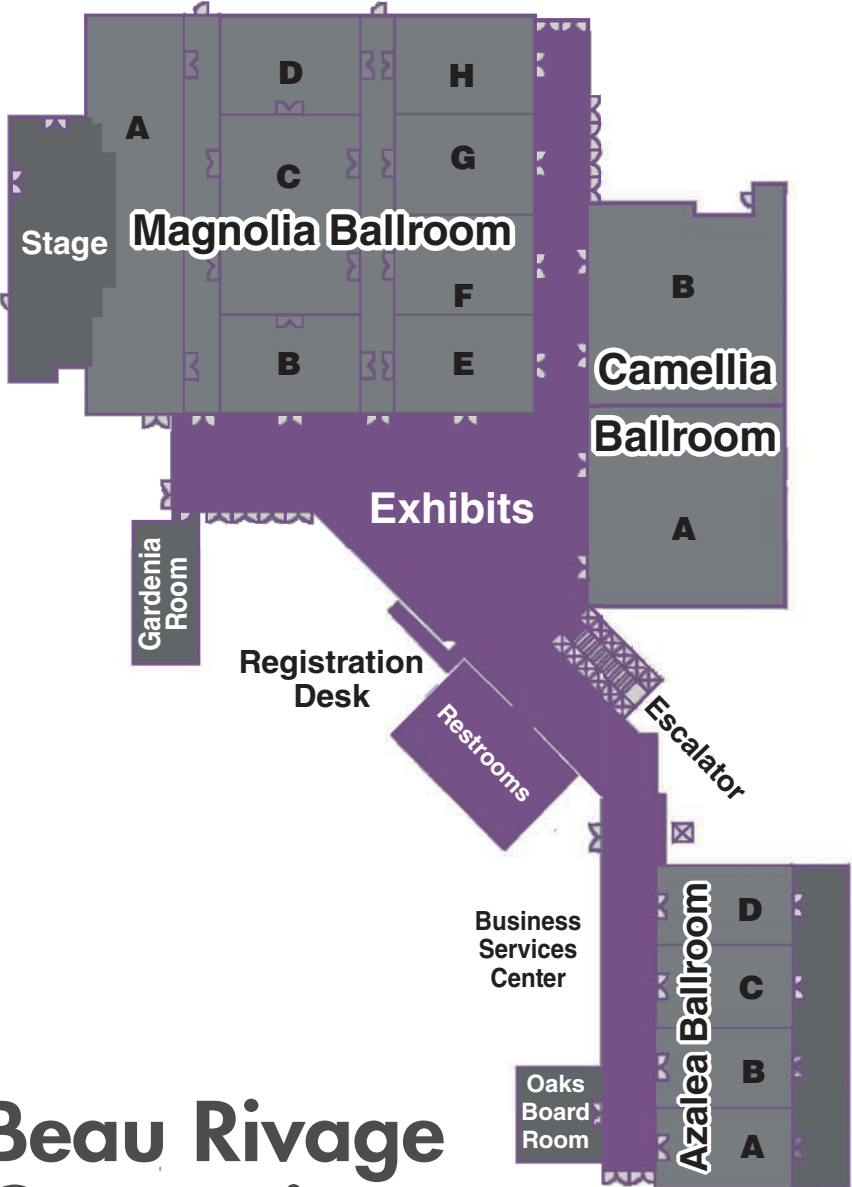
Signature

Date

Collect Exhibitor Stamps for Closing Session Prizes

- A First Name Basis Home Care**
- At Home Care, Inc.**
- C & C Nursing Company Hospice Care**
- C Spire**
- Corebridge Financial**
- Crews & Associates, Inc.**
- Doves Home Care, LLC**
- Faith and Hope Independent Living**
- Help at Home**
- Horizon Point Consulting, Inc**
- INCO-MED LLC**
- Love and Faith Personal Care & Respite**
- Loving Health Care, Inc**
- Medgar Evers Personal Care & Respite Services**
- Metro Medical Supply Company, LLC**
- MS Department of Transportation**
- MS Development Authority**
- Nursing Management Inc.**
- Office of the State Treasurer**
- Pileum Corporation**
- PPM Consultants**
- PRN Devices, Inc.**
- Reliable Healthcare Services, LLC**
- TRIO Community Meals**
- Truckworx**
- White Construction Company**

Print your name here and bring stamped page to closing session.



Beau Rivage Convention Center Floor



www.mspdds.org