

# The Office of the Mississippi Secretary of State

## Five Year Strategic Plan

*For the Fiscal Years 2023 - 2027*



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SECRETARY OF STATE

## 1. Agency Mission Statement

The Secretary of State's Office exists and is committed to serving the citizens of the State of Mississippi by fulfilling our statutory requirements in a transparent, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

## 2. Statement of Agency Philosophy

First established in the 1817 Constitution of the State of Mississippi, the Mississippi Secretary of State has since been entrusted with several additional duties, responsibilities, and functions by the State Legislature. We are dedicated to being both a service and information agency - committed to modeling efficient, effective operations and prudent resource management. We will always conduct our business with the understanding we work for all Mississippians.

## 3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

*(From the "Statewide Strategic Plan for Performance and Budgetary Success – Building a Better Mississippi" created by the Mississippi Legislature in July 2014)*

- a. STATEWIDE GOAL – “To develop a robust state economy that provides the opportunity for productive employment for all Mississippians”
- b. STATEWIDE GOAL – “To ensure that current and future generations have access to the state's abundant natural resources through restoration, protection, conservation and wise development of those resources”
- c. STATEWIDE GOAL – “To create an efficient government and an informed and engaged citizenry that helps to address social problems through the payment of taxes, the election of capable leaders at all levels of government and participation in charitable organizations through contributions and volunteerism”

## 4. Overview of the Agency 5-Year Strategic Plan

Over the next five years, the Secretary of State will continue to increase efficiency through streamlining operations, shrinking the size of government where possible, and continuing to serve Mississippians to the best of our ability. These efforts will support the Agency's mission to fulfill duties in a transparent, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The Secretary of State's Office will continue to operate as a results-based, goal-driven Agency.

Specifically, the Agency will complete the implementation of the following projects:

- a) Online Management of Public Lands. Online management of 16<sup>th</sup> Section lands began in 2019. School districts are now able to file annual reports and submit leases online. The division is working through changes and enhancements to the system and is providing training to the school districts on its use. Sections 29-1-3 and 29-3-82 were amended during the 2020 Legislative session to require all school districts electronically file by

FY2022 or 2023. Additionally, the Tidelands system is in the process of being modified to work with the Department of Marine Resources' new permitting system.

- b) Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. President Donald Trump signed a \$380,000,000.00 Omnibus Bill in March 2018, with Mississippi receiving \$4,483,541.00. On December 20, 2019, President Donald Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2020 authorizing an additional \$425,000,000.00 in new Help American Vote Act funds. Of that money, Mississippi received \$5,037,597.00. These amounts were calculated by the U.S. Government using the State of Mississippi's Voting Age Population. In August 2020, the Elections Assistance Commission (EAC) advised that the two separate awards were amended into a single grant with an indefinite period of performance. As instructed by the EAC, these funds may be used to replace voting equipment that utilizes a voter-verified paper record; implement a post-election audit system that provides a high-level confidence in the accuracy of the final vote tally; upgrade election-related computer systems to address cyber vulnerabilities identified through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or similar scans or assessments of existing election systems; facilitate cybersecurity training for the state Chief Election Official's office and local election officials; implement established cybersecurity best practices for election systems; and fund other activities that will improve the security of elections for federal office. The State of Mississippi was required to provide a 5% match for the 2018 Federal funds, which equals \$224,117.00. As of June 30, 2019, the State matched these funds. During the 2018 Regular Legislative Session, the Legislature approved a \$210,000.00 re-appropriation of FY2018 appropriated funds to FY2019. The remaining balance of \$14,117.00 was paid from the Agency's FY2019 Appropriation. The State of Mississippi is required to provide a 20% match for the 2020 Federal funds, totaling \$1,007,519. For FY21, our office received a reappropriation of FY20 funds in the total amount of \$950,000 to act as a partial match between the 2020 HAVA Grant and 2020 CARES Act Grant. \$303,371 of this amount was spent for CARES, with the remaining \$646,629 spent for the 2018/2020 Election Security HAVA grant. During the 2021 Legislative session, we received a re-appropriation of \$950,000 from FY21 funds to complete fulfillment of the remaining required State match. Since June 30, 2019, MSOS has distributed \$3,170,434 to secure and develop the Statewide Elections Management System (SEMS) and in support of allowable elections-related purchases by the following counties: Benton, Calhoun, Clarke, Coahoma, DeSoto, Franklin, George, Greene, Grenada, Hancock, Harrison, Hinds, Itawamba, Jackson, Jones, Kemper, Lafayette, Lamar, Lauderdale, Leake, Lincoln, Madison, Marion, Monroe, Neshoba, Newton, Panola, Pearl River, Pike, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Quitman, Rankin, Simpson, Stone, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Walthall, Winston and Yalobusha.
- c) Y'all Business Website. In FY21, the Agency partnered with the Mississippi Small Business Development Center to build out the site's GIS functionality for the general public's use. The goal and outcome of this collaboration has been to make Y'all Business a useful tool for small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to attract and educate future Mississippi businesses. The Agency will continue to devote assets to compiling and publishing business data on a county-by-county basis.
- d) Ongoing Network Security and Data Protection. The Secretary of State has been recognized as a leader in state government cybersecurity. As such, the Agency will

continue to improve security by using the latest software and hardware from industry leaders to prevent ransomware, when possible, as well as provide for efficient recovery. The Agency has implemented and expanded the capabilities of an API-based business fraud prevention process to verify the identity of external users, and an enterprise wireless solution will be deployed across the Agency using the latest technologies in wireless security. A data management program is being developed to help classify and archive data, as well as identify data in need of encryption. As the Secretary of State's network requirements have evolved through the pandemic, continued investments in technologies to track hardware and network traffic will be fine-tuned to provide the best service possible.

- e) Ongoing Improvements to the Statewide Elections Management System. Maintaining a secure and accurate voter registration system is of utmost importance to our office. The agency will develop a secure communications module for users on the SEMS network. A secure ballot delivery system will be developed for the SEMS application to facilitate overseas citizens, as well as military personnel stationed throughout the United States or abroad, and others who qualify under Mississippi law. GIS capabilities will be added to SEMS to improve accuracy and facilitate tasks such as redistricting, reporting, and the production of maps.
- f) Online submission of securities notice filings began in 2003. Over the past five years, as platforms became available, the Agency has increased its utilization to make electronic filing of offerings more widely available. We will continue our work to add three more filed offering types that can be electronically processed automatically.

## **5. External / Internal Assessment & Internal Management Systems**

### **5.1 External/Internal Assessment**

- Changes in the economy, whether positive or negative, may affect the number of business filings processed – which may increase or decrease Business Services revenues.
- Legislative directives may change the course of projects and priorities. (Examples – Voter ID legislation, Help America Vote Act, Campaign Finance, The Vulnerable Adults Act, etc.)
- As more database hacking and network insecurities rise, IT costs follow this trend. The Agency has a strong focus on protecting sensitive information and will adopt and implement the latest cybersecurity products and practices needed to secure data in the Agency's custody.

### **5.2 Internal Management Systems**

Through ongoing quantitative and qualitative assessments, agency leadership determines how well the needs of our constituents have been met. Management policies are in place to closely monitor and address deficits in performance. The Agency has partially implemented paperless systems and automated processes to ensure consistent standards and will continue to develop and deploy technologies and methodologies aiding in this effort.

## 6. Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Measures by Program

### PROGRAM #1 - BUSINESS SERVICES

#### BUSINESS SERVICES (BS) GOAL A

To provide a wide range of services to individuals and companies who conduct business in Mississippi, including those starting a business within the state.

##### **BS OBJECTIVE #A1:**

Timely and accurately file all corporate, LLC, partnership, and other business documents to allow new and existing businesses to complete business transactions within the state.

*Outcome:* All corporate business documents filed and posted to the Agency website.

##### **A1.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* - Number of corporate and other business documents filed.

*Efficiency* – Corporate documents filed on the website within two business days.

*Explanatory* - To ensure our turnaround time is among the fastest in the nation.

##### **BS OBJECTIVE #A2:**

Timely and accurately file all Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) documents to allow lenders and borrowers the security necessary to conduct business in Mississippi.

*Outcome:* All UCC documents filed and posted to the Agency website.

##### **A2.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of UCC documents filed.

*Efficiency* – UCC documents posted on website within two business days.

*Explanatory* - To ensure our turnaround time is among the fastest in the nation.

##### **A2.2 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of UCC searches requested and completed.

*Efficiency* – UCC searches completed within two business days.

*Explanatory* - To ensure our turnaround time is among the fastest in the nation.

##### **BS OBJECTIVE #A3**

Timely and accurately file other Mississippi business documents submitted to our office.

*Outcome:* All other business documents completed and returned to customer.

##### **A3.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of notary and apostille registrations and applications processed.

*Efficiency* – Notary/Apostille applications processed within two business days.

*Explanatory* - To ensure our turnaround time is among the fastest in the nation.

#### **BS OBJECTIVE #A4**

Provide excellent customer service to those doing business in Mississippi.

*Outcome:* All inquiries answered timely and accurately.

##### **A4.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of phone calls received.

*Efficiency* – Answer at least 95% of all business services customer phone calls.

*Explanatory* - To ensure customers are assisted without delay and are never unnecessarily placed on hold.

##### **A4.2 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of work orders (other business searches) requested and completed.

*Efficiency* – Work orders completed within two business days.

*Explanatory* - To ensure our turnaround time is among the fastest in the nation.

#### **BUSINESS SERVICES (BS) GOAL B**

To create an efficient government agency to regulate business-related matters assigned under the Agency's purview: charitable organizations and fundraisers, the sale of securities and securities dealers, scrap metal dealers and processors, the pre-need funeral industry, perpetual care cemeteries, and other regulatory matters.

##### **BS OBJECTIVE #B1:**

Register and regulate all charitable organizations and fundraisers who solicit contributions in Mississippi.

*Outcome:* All charity and fundraiser documents filed and posted to the Agency website.

##### **B1.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of Charity/Fundraiser registrations and renewals processed.

*Efficiency* – Registrations and renewals posted to the website as soon as approved.

##### **BS OBJECTIVE #B2: Charities**

Investigate charity complaints and/or violations of the State's charitable laws and levy fines or dissolve charities, when necessary.

*Outcome:* All examinations and investigations performed timely.

##### **B2.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of examinations, investigations, and complaints.

*Efficiency* – Contact complainant within two business days.

*Explanatory* – Within 2 business days of receiving complaint, an investigation case is opened.

##### **BS OBJECTIVE #B3: Securities**

Register and regulate both the sale of securities and the securities professionals who sell them.

*Outcome:* All securities documents filed and posted to the Agency website.

### **B3.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of security registrations and renewals (offerings).

*Efficiency* – Offerings reviewed within five business days of receipt of complete security document package.

*Explanatory* – To ensure expedient review to facilitate capital formation.

### **B3.2 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of security registrations and renewals (firms/agents).

*Efficiency* – Firms/agents reviewed within 10 business days of receipt of complete security document package.

*Explanatory* – To ensure expedient review to support new securities business.

### **BS OBJECTIVE #B4: Securities**

Investigate securities complaints and/or violations of the State's securities laws and levy fines. When necessary, work with federal and state prosecuting authorities to investigate violators of the State's securities laws.

*Outcome:* All examinations and investigations performed timely.

### **B4.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of examinations, investigations, and complaints.

*Output* – Number of legal actions (actions, dispositions or complaints) completed.

*Efficiency* – Contact complainant within two business days.

*Explanatory* – To efficiently and effectively initiate investigations and work toward their rapid resolutions.

### **BS OBJECTIVE #B5: Regulation and Enforcement**

Register and regulate scrap metal dealers and processors, the pre-need funeral industry, perpetual care cemeteries, and athlete agents. Publish Mississippi Administrative Bulletin and Mississippi Administrative Code.

*Outcome:* All regulatory documents filed and posted to the Agency website.

### **B5.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of scrap metal dealers and processors registered.

*Output* – Number of pre-need establishments and agents registered.

*Output* – Number of perpetual care cemeteries registered.

*Output* – Number of athlete agents registered.

*Efficiency* – All regulatory documents processed within 2 days.

*Explanatory* - To ensure our turnaround time is among the fastest in the nation.

### **BS OBJECTIVE #B6: Regulation and Enforcement**

Investigate complaints and/or violations involving scrap metal dealers and processors, the pre-need funeral industry, perpetual care cemeteries, and athlete agents. Suspend, deny, and revoke licenses, freeze trust funds, issue cease and desist orders, refer for criminal prosecution, and levy fines when necessary.

*Outcome:* All examinations and investigations performed timely.

#### **B6.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of examinations, investigations, and complaints.

*Efficiency* – Contact complainant within two business days.

*Explanatory* - To ensure complainants know their complaints are important.

### **PROGRAM #2 – ELECTIONS**

#### **ELECTIONS GOAL A**

Train local elections officials as required by law.

#### **ELECTIONS OBJECTIVE #A1:**

Train local elections officials who run elections in Mississippi.

*Outcome:* Train local elections officials on responsibilities in conducting elections at the local level.

#### **A1.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of Election Training Sessions.

*Output* – Number of Poll Workers to successfully complete online training.

*Efficiency* – Required attendees complete training and assessment.

*Efficiency* – Percentage of poll workers who successfully complete the online training on their first attempt.

*Explanatory* – Number/Type of elections occurring.

#### **ELECTIONS GOAL B**

Ensure public access to campaign finance and lobbyist reports filed with the Agency.

#### **ELECTIONS OBJECTIVE #B1:**

Timely process and make publicly available all required campaign finance and lobbyist filings and reports.

*Outcome:* Public access to campaign finance and lobbyist reports.

#### **B1.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* - Number of campaign finance reports.

*Output* – Number of lobbyist reports.



*Efficiency* – Percentage of reports posted to the Agency website within two business days of receipt.

## **ELECTIONS GOAL C**

Ensure public access to accurate voter information and elections information.

### **ELECTIONS OBJECTIVE #C1:**

Timely provision of voter and election information to members of the public, as requested.

*Outcome:* Provide timely and accurate voter and election information to the public.

### **C1.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* - Number of voter registrations updated on secure online website.

*Efficiency* – Percentage of elections hotline calls answered within one week of an election.

## **PROGRAM #3 – COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS**

### **COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS GOAL A**

Produce and distribute official state publications, including the General Laws, Local & Private Laws, House and Senate Journals, and the Judiciary Directory and Court Calendar, as well as the Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi, more commonly known as the Blue Book.

### **COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS OBJECTIVE #A1:**

To produce and distribute official state publications, agency publications, and other internal educational and meeting materials in a timely and accurate manner.

*Outcome:* State officials and public are updated with the most current publications, materials, and information in a timely and accurate manner.

### **A1.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of website/online postings of new materials.

*Output* – Agency promotions and exhibits.

*Output* – Non-statutorily required publications and documents produced.

*Output* - Statutorily required publications and documents produced.

*Output* – Number of bills chaptered and recorded.

*Efficiency* – Statutorily required documents published by the established date.

*Explanatory* - Aligns with our mission of making government more accessible and transparent.

### **COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS GOAL B**

To oversee educational, outreach and constituent programs, including the Promote the Vote education program for K-12 students.

**COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS OBJECTIVE #B1:**

Educate Mississippians on Agency services and other outreach topics.

*Outcome:* Make government more accessible and transparent via all agency websites.

**B1.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of visits to the Secretary of State's website.

*Efficiency* – New information added to the website within 2 days.

*Explanatory* - To ensure Mississippians have easily accessible and accurate information at their fingertips.

**PROGRAM #4 - PUBLIC LANDS**

**PUBLIC LANDS GOAL A**

To return fair value for state-owned leased land and ensure that current and future generations have access to the State's abundant natural resources through restoration, protection, conservation, and wise development of those resources.

**PUBLIC LANDS OBJECTIVE #A1:**

Manage the Public Trust Tidelands, including fast lands and submerged lands, through application of conservation, preservation, and protection policies and principles to preserve and maintain their ecosystems and to prevent their despoliation and destruction.

*Outcome:* Lease Public Trust Tidelands, where appropriate, to generate revenue for the disbursement by the Legislature through the Department of Marine Resources for programs and projects relating to conservation, reclamation, preservation, acquisition, education, and enhancement of public access to the tidelands.

**A1.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of Tidelands leases managed.

*Efficiency* – Collection of leasehold rents or assessments within 30 days or assess a late penalty.

*Efficiency* – Collection of leasehold rents or assessments within 90 days or cancel the lease.

*Explanatory* - Invoice the "For Rent" leases approximately 30 days before the annual rent due date; lessees have thirty days after the due date to pay without penalty or interest. If not paid within the thirty days, we invoice the rent and penalty. If not paid within the second thirty days, we invoice the second penalty and give the ten-days' notice pursuant to the lease terms that the lease will be canceled absent payment of rent and penalties.

**PUBLIC LANDS OBJECTIVE #A2:**

Oversee management and leasing of more than 640,000 acres of 16<sup>th</sup> section public school trust lands by 101 local school districts by working cooperatively with the Mississippi Forestry Commission to manage the timber lands.

*Outcome:* Conserve, preserve, protect, and manage 16<sup>th</sup> section public lands in Mississippi.

**A2.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Publish notices of public bids for hunting and fishing leases, agricultural leases, and mineral leases on 16<sup>th</sup> section public school trust lands.

*Output* – Number of 16<sup>th</sup> section leases managed.

*Output* – Keep property records up to date on the Secretary of State’s Office website at [www.sos.ms.gov](http://www.sos.ms.gov).

*Efficiency* – Review of leases with an average turnaround time of less than 10 business days.

*Explanatory* – These outputs help to make sure we meet objective A2 by staying current with leases and providing school districts quick turnaround on lease review.

**PUBLIC LANDS GOAL B**

Return properties forfeited to the State for non-payment of taxes to productive use by generating tax revenue for local tax rolls through the sale to individuals, businesses, or state agencies.

**PUBLIC LANDS OBJECTIVE #B1:**

Return parcels to productive use on the local tax rolls.

*Outcome:* Timely and accurately process applications for tax-forfeited land purchases.

**B1.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of tax-forfeited applications processed.

*Output* – 500 tax-forfeited properties sold.

*Efficiency* – Tax-forfeited parcels from availability to completed sale and patent within 60 days.

*Explanatory* – The more tax-forfeited properties sold; the better tax income generated for local government.

**PROGRAM #5 - SUPPORT SERVICES**

**SUPPORT SERVICES GOAL A**

To create and maintain an environment of support to Agency employees, customers, and vendors, while modeling efficient and effective operations and prudent resource management in support of the functions and duties of the Agency.

**SUPPORT SERVICES OBJECTIVE #A1:**

Provide administrative and technical support to allow Agency employees to function at the highest level.

*Outcome:* Agency supported by administrative, executive, and technical staff.

**A1.1 STRATEGY**

*Output* – Number of payments processed.

*Output* – Number of technical services help desk requests resolved.

*Output* – Number of pieces of mail processed.

*Output* – Support Services less than or equal to 27% Total Agency Expenditures.

*Efficiency* – Payments processed within an average of less than 10 working days of invoice receipt.

*Efficiency* – Technical help desk calls answered, and tickets closed within an average of less than five business days.

*Efficiency* – Mail processed within an average of less than one working day of mailroom receipt.

*Explanatory* – Number of Support Services staff members employed by the Agency.