



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT *of* EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

**Mississippi Department
of Employment Security**

Five-Year Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2025-2029

Mississippi Department of Employment Security

I. Comprehensive Mission Statement for the Agency

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), the state's workforce agency, has a straightforward mission - *Helping Mississippians Get Jobs*. We complete our mission of connecting workers with jobs by providing job placement and training to workers and personnel services to businesses. MDES collects employer taxes that provide workforce training funding to Accelerate MS through the Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Fund, State Workforce Investment Board funding to Accelerate MS, which coordinates workforce development in Mississippi, and the MSWorks fund that supports workforce training activities approved by Accelerate MS in support of economic development activities. We manage the state's unemployment insurance trust fund and pay unemployment insurance benefits, an income stream that helps keep Mississippi families and communities afloat in tough economic times. MDES disburses Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Funds, National Dislocated Worker Grants, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, and Trade Adjustment Assistance funds.

II. Statement of Agency Philosophy, Values, and Principles

MDES is committed to managing workforce and unemployment programs by delivering great customer service to individuals and employers. Our philosophy is to treat everyone with respect and to conduct business using the highest professional standards possible.

III. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

Statewide Goal # 1: To develop a robust state economy that provides the opportunity for productive employment for all Mississippians

Relevant Benchmarks #1:

- Percentage of the civilian non-institutional population 16 years and over employed
- Percentage of Mississippians receiving workforce training services who are employed one year and five years after receiving training and their median salary
- Unemployment rate (unemployed persons actively looking for a job as a percentage of the size of the labor force; the sum of employed and unemployed persons)
- State business tax climate (comparison of more than 100 variables across five major areas of taxation: business taxes, individual income taxes, sales taxes, unemployment insurance rates and property taxes)
- Annual percentage change in non-farm jobs
- Net job growth
- Wage and salary disbursements

Statewide Goal #2: To make a quality public higher education available at an affordable cost that prepares Mississippians to become productive, financially self-sufficient members of society while meeting the human resources needs of Mississippi and its employers, including the creation of new jobs through the commercialization of university-based research

Relevant Benchmarks #2:

- Percentage of students trained through workforce education and training programs customized to meet the needs of local industries who successfully complete the program
- Wage gains of AA (university parallel) degree, AAS (technical) degree, and certificate or credential

IV. Overview of the Agency 5-Year Strategic Plan

MDES's primary goal is to help all Mississippians seeking employment or a career path find their career job. MDES will continue to partner with the state's employers to obtain their job listings. Our staff will work to identify and refer the most qualified candidate for each job opening in our system. If no trained candidates are available, we will act as a conduit between business and training providers to identify candidates with training potential for those jobs.

The agency will continue to assist employers as the state mandated provider of e-Verify service, ensuring that everyone referred to open positions posted in our system is eligible to work in the U.S.

MDES and its core partners have established a Hub for data-sharing. The four core WIOA partners ask six common questions, and based on the client's answer to the questions, the HUB interface allows any of those partners to refer clients for other services available from another partner.

MDES will continue to support MSGradJobs.com and MSTechJobs.com, an extension of our Wagner-Peyser labor exchange that allows students in Mississippi postsecondary institutions (public and private universities and community colleges) to receive weekly email messages containing job matches that correlate with the students' academic or technical majors. Students may sign up individually for this service, or they may be connected directly through a growing list of university and community college partners.

Over the next five years MDES will continue to be good stewards of the unemployment insurance (UI) trust fund, keeping it one of the most solvent UI trust funds in the nation. We will do this by collecting UI taxes in a timely fashion, by ensuring the people who are eligible for those benefits receive them, and by enacting processes to identify and stop potential fraud. MDES will continue to use technology and innovation to provide accurate, efficient, timely customer service as we operate within the parameters set forth by the United States Department of Labor.

Mississippi continues to lead and strengthen its partnership with Maine and Connecticut, as the active members of the ReEmployUSA Consortium. To further the consortium benefits beyond ReEmployUSA member states, Mississippi along with other members of ReEmployUSA continues to work with Missouri and Wyoming as part of the Innovate UI consortium on a feasibility study funded by USDOL, to create a shared support model across multiple states that have used Mississippi's ACCESS MS Unemployment Insurance system as the base to modernize their Unemployment Insurance systems. Missouri, Wyoming and New York borrowed the original work created by Mississippi for their modernization of the UI system. Missouri and Wyoming have already completed their modernization successfully while New York is progressing with their modernization. Mississippi continues to see significant value and reduced operational cost as a member of the ReEmployUSA consortium.

The agency will continue to collect and distribute Labor Market Information used to illustrate the employment and unemployment picture in the state. These statistics also identify employment sectors poised for growth; and they are used to help economic development professionals market our workforce to potential businesses moving to the state or expanding in the state.

MDES continues to identify ways to streamline internal processes and procedures that will create a more efficient and cost-effective workflow. During this year, MDES made great strides identifying opportunities to improve efficiency during its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These efficiencies support our workforce planning as we anticipate further reductions in staff due to retirements and decreased federal funding. MDES has established, with approval from the Mississippi State Personnel Board, a career pathway model for employees.

V. Internal /External Assessment Section

Employment Services

The majority of Employment Services (ES) programs are federally funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act, through the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), which defines performance measures. The WIOA and Wagner-Peyser performance measures are negotiated prior to each program year. The WIOA increased the number of performance measures defined and tracked by USDOL and changed the criteria for some existing measures. Timing of systems modifications to capture the data in the new formats required by USDOL could impact performance numbers and result in reduced funding. The Wagner-Peyser performance measures, negotiated each program year, were also changed slightly.

Unemployment Insurance

MDES is required to meet federal guidelines for administering the UI tax programs. The performance measures for the UI programs, defined by USDOL, relate to timeliness of claims, timeliness and quality of appeals, timeliness of employer tax registrations and detection of overpayments. Unforeseen events, such as disasters, cause an influx of

claims for which the agency may not be staffed. Any large influx of claims may impact timeliness, quality, and overpayments.

Labor Market Information

The majority of programs operated by the Labor Market Information Department are federally funded. Our ability to collect data and publish information is completely dependent on getting federal funding. Much of the data published comes from surveys of employers either through mail or by telephone collection. These surveys would be impacted by any large-scale disasters or reduction in available funding.

The agency has management policies in place to track performance as it relates to the U.S. Department of Labor standards for each program. Tracking procedures include monthly and quarterly updates for each program standard outlined by USDOL.

MDES's state-of-the-art technology systems include reporting that provides performance measurements to USDOL. In addition to numbers provided by technology systems, USDOL requires periodic on-site monitoring of program elements.

MDES executive and management staff continually search for ways to streamline processes to improve efficiency, maximize funding, and increase customer access to our services. The agency seeks supplemental funding to fund projects that support these efforts.

Because the agency is 100 percent federally funded, reductions in federal appropriations or the inability to access funds may significantly impact the organization's operations.

VI. Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures by Program

Fiscal Year 2025 - 2029

Employment Services

GOAL A:

To provide an integrated array of Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services to job candidates and to help Mississippi's employers find and hire the best qualified people for their jobs

A.1. OBJECTIVE: Provide labor exchange services to job candidates so they can enter employment

Output: Percentage of participants who enter employment

Efficiency: Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated amounts for entered employment

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 71.1% for employment rate 2nd quarter after exit

A.1.1. Strategy: Provide Mississippi's job-match technology that helps job candidates find jobs and employers to locate skilled workers. *Output:* Number of job applicants who find jobs

Output: The number of employers who find workers

A.1.2. Strategy: Coordinate Governor’s Job Fair Network events throughout the state to help meet the needs of employers, the unemployed and under-employed, graduating college students, and veteran military service members

Output: Number of employers participating in job fairs

Output: Number of job candidates participating in job fairs

A.1.3. Strategy: Provide services such as soft skills training courses, job search workshops, resume preparation assistance, and basic computer skills classes

Output: Number of job candidates with an individual employment plan

Explanatory: Reduce the number of job candidates who lack the soft skills needed to enter the workforce

A.2. OBJECTIVE: Provide labor exchange services to enhance employment retention

Output: The percentage of job candidates who retain employment *Efficiency:* Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated amounts for employment retention

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL’s goal of 71.3% for employment rate 4th quarter after exit

A.2.1. Strategy: Provide services such as soft skills training courses, job search workshops, resume preparation assistance, and basic computer skills classes

Output: Number of job candidates who retain employment

Explanatory: Reduce the number of job candidates who lack the soft skills needed to retain employment

A.3. OBJECTIVE: Provide labor exchange services to job candidates to ensure they meet median earnings goals defined by USDOL.

Output: Median earnings of job candidates who find work

Efficiency: Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated median earnings

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL’s goal for \$4,386 median earnings 2nd quarter after exit

A.3.1. Strategy: Provide Mississippi’s job-match technology that helps job candidates find jobs and employers to locate skilled workers. *Output:* Number of job applicants who find jobs

Output: Number of employers who find workers

A.3.2. Strategy: Coordinate Governor’s Job Fair Network events throughout the state to help meet the needs of employers, the unemployed and under-employed, graduating college students, and veteran military service members.

Output: Number of employers participating in job fairs

Output: Number of job candidates participating in job fairs

A.3.3. Strategy: Provide services such as soft skills training courses, job search workshops, resume preparation assistance, and basic computer skills classes

Output: Number of job candidates with an individual employment plan

Explanatory: Reduce the number of job candidates who lack the soft skills needed to enter the workforce

GOAL B: Empower Mississippians to become more competitive in the labor market and get better jobs through WIOA programs and services

B.1. OBJECTIVE: Provide career and training services that help adults enter employment

Output: Percentage of adults who enter employment

Efficiency: Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated amounts for adults who enter employment

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 84.4% adult employment rate 2nd quarter after exit

B.1.1. Strategy: Develop work-based learning opportunities and training based on demand-driven occupations that increase skills and lead to employment. Verify outcomes using the UI quarterly employment and wage reports

Output: Provide work-based learning and training services to eligible individuals

Outcome: Percentage of adults who enter employment meets or exceeds USDOL performance measures

B.1.2. Strategy: Provide career services to include job search, resume preparation, and labor market information that lead to employment. *Output:* Provide work career services to WIOA eligible individuals *Outcome:* Percentage of adults who enter employment meets or exceeds USDOL performance measures

B.2. OBJECTIVE: Provide career and training services that help adults who enter employment retain employment.

Output: Percentage of adults who retain employment

Efficiency: Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated amounts for adults who entered employment retain employment

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 82.3% adult employment rate 4th quarter after exit

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 71% for adult credential attainment within 4 quarters after exit

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 58.3% for adult measurable skill gains

B.2.1. Strategy: Develop work-based learning opportunities and training based on demand-driven occupations that increase skills and lead to employment. Verify outcomes using the UI quarterly employment and wage reports

Output: Provide work-based learning and training services to WIOA eligible individuals

Outcome: Percentage of adults who retain employment meets or exceeds USDOL performance measures

B.2.2. Strategy: Provide career services to include job search, resume preparation, and labor market information that lead to employment. *Output:*

Provide work career services to WIOA eligible individuals *Outcome:* Percentage of adults who retain employment meets or exceeds USDOL performance measures

B.3. OBJECTIVE: Provide career and training services that ensure adults meet or exceed median earnings amounts defined by USDOL.

Output: Median earnings of adults who find work

Efficiency: Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated median earnings

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's adult median earnings goal of \$6,475

B.3.1. Strategy: Develop work-based learning opportunities and training based on demand-driven occupations that increase skills and lead to USDOL median wage rates. Verify outcomes using the UI quarterly employment and wage reports

Output: Provide work-based learning and training services to WIOA eligible individuals

Outcome: Adults earn median wages that meet or exceed USDOL performance measures

B.3.2. Strategy: Provide career services to include job search, resume preparation, and labor market information that lead to USDOL median wage rates

Output: Provide work career services to WIOA eligible individuals *Outcome:* Adults earn median wages that meet or exceed USDOL performance measures

B.4. OBJECTIVE: Provide career and training services that help dislocated workers enter employment.

Output: Percentage of dislocated workers who enter employment *Efficiency:* Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated amounts for dislocated workers who enter employment

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 74.8% for dislocated workers employment rate 2nd quarter after exit

B.4.1. Strategy: Develop work-based learning opportunities and training based on demand-driven occupations that increase skills and lead to

employment. Verify outcomes using the UI quarterly employment and wage reports

Output: Provide work-based learning and training services to WIOA eligible individuals

Outcome: Percentage of dislocated workers who enter employment meets or exceeds USDOL performance measures

B.4.2. Strategy: Provide career services to include job search, resume preparation, and labor market information that lead to employment *Output:* Provide work career services to WIOA eligible individuals *Outcome:* Percentage of dislocated workers who enter employment meets or exceeds USDOL performance measures

B.5. OBJECTIVE: Provide career and training services that help dislocated workers retain employment.

Output: Percentage of dislocated workers who retain employment *Efficiency:* Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated amounts for dislocated workers who retain employment

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 73.7% for dislocated workers employment rate 4th quarter after exit

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 70% for dislocated workers credential attainment within 4 quarters after exit

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 60.4% for dislocated worker measurable skill gains

B.5.1. Strategy: Develop work-based learning opportunities and training based on demand-driven occupations that increase skills and lead to retained employment. Verify outcomes using the UI quarterly employment and wage reports

Output: Provide work-based learning and training services to WIOA eligible individuals

Outcome: Percentage of dislocated workers who retain employment that meets or exceeds USDOL performance measures

B.5.2. Strategy: Provide career services to include job search, resume preparation, and labor market information that lead to retained employment

Output: Provide work career services to WIOA eligible individuals *Outcome:* Percentage of dislocated workers who retain employment that meets or exceeds USDOL performance measures

B.6. OBJECTIVE: Provide career and training services that help dislocated workers meet or exceed median earnings amounts defined by USDOL *Output:* Percentage of dislocated workers who meet or exceed USDOL median earnings *Efficiency:* Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated wage rates for dislocated workers who enter employment

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of \$5,763 for median earnings for dislocated workers

B.6.1. Strategy: Develop work-based learning opportunities and training based on demand-driven occupations that increase skills and lead to employment. Verify outcomes using the UI quarterly employment and wage reports

Output: Provide work-based learning and training services to WIOA eligible individuals

Outcome: Dislocated workers earn median wages that meet or exceed USDOL performance measures

B.6.2. Strategy: Provide career services to include job search, resume preparation, and labor market information that lead to employment. *Output:* Provide work career services to WIOA eligible individuals *Outcome:* Dislocated workers earn median wages that meet or exceed USDOL performance measures

B.7. OBJECTIVE: Provide career and training services that help youth enter employment

Output: Percentage of youth who enter employment

Efficiency: Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated amounts for youth who enter employment

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 80.2% for youth employment rate 2nd quarter after exit

B.7.1. Strategy: Develop work-based learning opportunities and training based on demand-driven occupations that increase skills and lead to employment. Verify outcomes using the UI quarterly employment and wage reports

Output: Provide work-based learning and training services to WIOA eligible individuals

Outcome: Youth who enter employment or attain post-secondary education meet or exceed USDOL performance measures

B.7.2. Strategy: Provide career services to include job search, resume preparation, and labor market information that lead to employment. *Output:* Provide work career services to WIOA eligible individuals *Outcome:* Youth who enter employment or attain post-secondary education meet or exceed USDOL performance measures

B.8. OBJECTIVE: Provide career and training services that improves youth employment retention.

Output: Percentage of youth workers who retain jobs

Efficiency: Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated amounts for youth who retain jobs

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 80.1% for youth employment rate 4th quarter after exit

B.8.1. Strategy: Develop work-based learning opportunities and training based on demand-driven occupations that increase skills and lead to employment. Verify outcomes using the UI quarterly employment and wage reports

Output: Provide work-based learning and training services to WIOA eligible individuals

Outcome: Youth who enter employment or attain post-secondary education meet or exceed USDOL performance measures

B.8.2. Strategy: Provide career services to include job search, resume preparation, and labor market information that lead to employment. *Output:* Provide work career services to WIOA eligible individuals *Outcome:* Youth who enter employment or attain post-secondary education meet or exceed USDOL performance measures

B.9. OBJECTIVE: Provide career and training services that help youth increase credential attainment.

Output: Percentage of youth who increase credential attainment

Efficiency: Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated amounts for youth credential attainment

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 71.2% for youth credential attainment within 4 four quarters after exit

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of 59.9% for youth measurable skill gains

B.9.1. Strategy: Develop learning opportunities that increase credential attainment

Outcome: Youth who seek services through WIOA funded programs and are basic skill deficient to improve credential attainment

Outcome: Youth who seek services through WIOA funded programs achieve credential attainment with a performance target that meets or exceeds USDOL performance targets

B.10. OBJECTIVE: Provide career and training services that help youth meet or exceed median earnings amounts defined by USDOL

Output: Percentage of youth who meet or exceed USDOL median earnings

Efficiency: Meet or exceed USDOL negotiated wage rates for youth who enter employment

Outcome: Meet or exceed USDOL's goal of \$3,112 for median earnings for youth

B.10.1.Strategy: Develop work-based learning opportunities and training based on demand-driven occupations that increase skills and lead to employment. Verify outcomes using the UI quarterly employment and wage reports.

Output: Provide work-based learning and training services to WIOA eligible individuals

Outcome: Youth earn median wages that meet or exceed USDOL performance measures

B.10.2.Strategy: Provide career services to include job search, resume preparation, and labor market information that lead to employment
Output: Provide work career services to WIOA eligible individuals *Outcome:* Youth earn median wages that meet or exceed USDOL performance measures

Funding:

\$ 1,400,000..... General
\$ 53,883,291Federal
\$ 3,030,000..... Other

Unemployment Insurance

GOAL A: To register employers to pay unemployment tax, pay unemployment compensation to eligible individuals, make unemployment claims payment decisions, and provide appeal hearings

A.1. OBJECTIVE: Ensure New Employer Status Determinations are made within 90 days of the last day in the quarter in which the business became liable *Output:* The percentage of New Employer Status Determinations made within 90 days of the last day in the quarter in which the business becomes liable *Efficiency:* Meet or exceed required Tax Performance System (TPS) and Governmental Performance and Reporting Act (GPRA) percentages of determinations made within 90 days
Outcome: Meet or exceed 90% of New Employer Status Determinations made within 90 days

A.1.1. Strategy: Assign a Status Deputy upon application to review for liability and to determine proper status
Output: New Employer Status Determinations are made timely *Efficiency:* Required number of determinations will be made within 90 days as prescribed
Explanatory Measures: Increase the number of timely New Employer Status Determinations

A.2. OBJECTIVE: Ensure required percent of all first payment promptness is made in accordance with United States Department of Labor standards *Output:* First payment promptness
Efficiency: Meet or exceed required percentage for first payment promptness
Outcome: Meet or exceed 88% for first payment promptness

A.2.1. Strategy: Accept claims via online system, call center, and mobile devices, providing optional claims intake twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week

Output: Process weekly certifications for unemployment benefits within 14/21
Efficiency: Claims are processed within 14/21 days
Explanatory: Decrease the number of claims not paid within 14/21 days

A.3. OBJECTIVE: Ensure the median age pending of lower authority appeals meets the USDOL standards

Output: Issue decisions on unemployment appeals
Efficiency: Ensure median number of days for lower authority appeals is below the threshold established by USDOL
Outcome: Ensure median age pending for lower authority appeals is below 29 days

A.3.1. Strategy: Schedule cases for Administrative Law Judges within 10 days from the date the appeal is filed to ensure cases are adjudicated and decisions rendered in ≤ 30 days from filing

Output: Median case ages in ≤ 30 days
Efficiency: 100% of cases will age in ≤ 30 days
Explanatory: Increase the case age in ≤ 30 days

A.4. Ensure 76% of Separation Determinations with Quality Scores are equal to or greater than 95 points

Output: Quality nonmonetary separation determinations
Efficiency: Ensure nonmonetary separation determinations quality meets or exceeds the USDOL standards.
Outcome: Nonmonetary determination quality for separations meets or exceeds 76%.

A.4.1. Strategy: Provide nonmonetary training for investigation and adjudication staff

Output: Quality nonmonetary determinations
Efficiency: 76% of determinations will meet or exceed quality standards
Explanatory: Staff will review and audit random samples of work to ensure quality standards are achieved

Funding:

\$ 0..... General
\$ 88,224,158..... Federal
\$ 1,884,750..... Other

Labor Market Information

GOAL A: To develop a robust state economy that provides for productive employment for all Mississippians

A.1. OBJECTIVE: Produce economic statistics in accordance with federal grant requirements

Outcome: Local area unemployment statistics

Outcome: Current employment statistics

Outcome: Quarterly census of employment and wages *Outcome:* Occupational employment statistics *Outcome:* Number of labor market questions answered

A.1.1. Strategy: Estimates of Labor Force, Number Employed and Number Unemployed and Unemployment Rate for Mississippi, Counties, Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Workforce Development Areas, and selected cities

Output: 100% Monthly publication of Labor Market Data in accordance with standards established by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS)

A.1.2. Strategy: Non-farm employment estimates by industry for Mississippi and Metropolitan Statistical Areas

Output: 100% Monthly publication of State and Metro Trends, which provide over the month and over the year change in jobs, data produced in accordance with standards established by the USBLS

A.1.3. Strategy: Employment and average (mean) annual wage statistics by industry for businesses that are covered under Mississippi's Unemployment Insurance law; created for Mississippi, Counties, and Workforce Development Areas

Output: 100% Annual publication of Mississippi's Covered Employment and Wages in accordance with standards established by the USBLS

A.1.4. Strategy: Employment estimates and Mean, Entry, and Experienced Annual Wage statistics by occupation for Mississippi, Metropolitan Statistical Areas, and Workforce Investment Act Areas *Output:* 100% Annual publication of Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates in accordance with standards established by the USBLS

A.1.5. Strategy: Respond to inquiries from elected officials, media, economic developers and anyone else wanting information about Mississippi's workforce

Output: Answers to 100% of questions about labor market statistics

Funding:

\$ 0..... General

\$ 1,554,007..... Federal

\$ 0..... Other