



**5 Year Strategic Plan  
Fiscal Year 2026-2030**

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## *AccelerateMS Mission & Vision*

**MISSION:** Engineer and continuously improve a state-wide, fully integrated talent development system where Mississippians excel in a dynamic, globally-connected economy through effective awareness-building, education, training, and job placement services that employers value.

**VISION:** A world-class workforce aligned to Mississippi's unique economic portfolio and labor market, driving increased and sustained individual, community, and statewide prosperity.

## *Synopsis for AccelerateMS' Five-Year Strategic Plan*

AccelerateMS, in conjunction with our partners and stakeholders, has deployed millions of dollars through the Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Fund, the MS Works fund, the American Rescue Plan Act fund, the K12 grant program, and through general funds for the office's budget and the career coach program. Significant improvement in existing fund focus and operations has been made and the new K12 grant program, called EquipMS, has been established as well. The Office continues to utilize funds to establish new workforce programs in areas such as advanced manufacturing, broadband, construction, and logistics. Existing programs such as nursing, diesel technology, CDL, and utility linework continue to receive enhancements to meet the growing and immediate market demand. Additional funds are being utilized to meet the demand of new industries such as Amazon Web Services, Huber Engineered Wood, and Amplify Cell Technologies. The office has undertaken significant work to enhance the available technological system and will continue that work well into FY26.

Additionally, significant efforts are being made to ensure Mississippi Public High School students have access to quality career coaching and in FY25, AccelerateMS will fund a minimum of 200 career coaches to serve 209 schools-every school in the state that wants one. Work related to high quality CTE and improving the alignment between K12 and postsecondary education and training programs is occurring as well, leading to policy recommendations to improve outcomes and ultimately the availability of an adequate labor force.

AccelerateMS holds to the tenant that we are never done improving and continues searching for ways to make lives better, more fulfilling, and more productive through workforce strategy development and deployment. This strategic plan highlights the key focal areas that AccelerateMS has used, and will continue to use, toward organizing efforts to improve Mississippi's workforce, will delineate amongst the programs that fall within each area, and be broken down into individual fiscal years. Key objectives will be addressed, along with the goals necessary to achieve those objectives.

This plan will be organized using the focal areas:

- **General Office Operation:** personnel and operations associated with maintaining of office structure.
- **Triage Strategy:** defined as strategy targeting more immediate and emergent needs facing workforce health and vitality in Mississippi.

- ***Horizons Thinking***: defined as strategy targeting workforce needs of the future marketplace and economic demand.
- ***Customizable Training***: defined as strategy targeting workforce needs specific to expanding OR new industry partners in the state of Mississippi.

AccelerateMS Programs that fall within these focal areas are highlighted and strategic planning will be made based upon reasonable, realistic, and appropriate forecasting.

## ***Funding Sources & Fiscal Responsibilities***

### **Annual Funds**

AccelerateMS currently has authority over funds derived from multiple sources. Three (3) distinct funds accumulate as a result of the state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) tax: The Workforce Enhancement Training Fund (WET), the MS Works Fund, and the State Workforce Investment Board Fund (now called the Office of Workforce Development Bank Account). While these funding amounts fluctuate based on the total taxes collected on a yearly basis, they generally result in approximately \$27 million combined each year. Beginning in FY24, AccelerateMS also operates through a state appropriation detailed below, serving both office operations and the state's career coach program.

#### ***Workforce Enhancement Training Fund***

The Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) fund accrues approximately \$20 million each year and is used for training program purposes in collaboration with the community college system at the direction of AccelerateMS. This fund operates through two primary means: 1) an annual allocation to each requesting college based on requests submitted to the office and 2) awards for 'special projects' serving specified needs supported by industry requests, demands, or needs in the associated region.

#### ***Mississippi Works***

The MS Works Fund generates approximately \$5 million each year. These funds are utilized primarily for training programs associated with new and expanding industries or for the purpose of employee retention or creating a work-ready pool of applicants. Funds are available for the office to use in collaboration with community colleges, IHLs, and local workforce development areas in Mississippi, and other areas deemed appropriate to support specific industry needs meeting program rules.

#### ***State Workforce Investment Board Fund (Office of Workforce Development Bank Account)***

This fund generates approximately \$1.2 million each year. In FY24, a K12 Micro-Grant Program, established by the Legislature, was operationalized, and \$1.4M was awarded to K12 entities across the state following a competitive grant process. These funds generally do not increase, so in future years, this program will award an average of \$1M per year to priority K12 programs.

#### ***State Appropriation***

In FY25, AccelerateMS, through the fiscal agency of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) received \$15 million of state funds for the continuation and expansion of the

Career Coach Program. These resources will allow for the original program to continue as well as the expansion of the program to allow for additional career coaches to identified, hired, and deployed in areas of the state without prior access to any coach within the previous iteration of the program.

Additionally, during the 2024 legislative session, AccelerateMS received, an appropriation of state funds for its office operation. AccelerateMS received an appropriation of \$3.88 million for the expressed purpose of maintaining office operations in FY25.

### **One-Time Funds:**

One-time funds are funds or awards to the office to serve a specific purpose either from the Mississippi Legislature, a federal source, or other funding entity. To date, AMS has one-time funds from the Mississippi Legislature (ARPA, Poppy, and Technology Improvement) and MDES (Department of Defense, OLDCC).

#### *Project Poppy 'Special' Fund*

AccelerateMS, as a function of the Project Poppy MMEIA legislation, was allocated a total of \$2M for administrative costs directly tied to the project. FY25 was allocated \$1M of the funds and FY26 will be allocated \$500,000. Funds appropriated are utilized to support contracted requirements related to recruiting, technology, and training for the project.

#### *Technology Enhancement Fund*

AccelerateMS received a \$1.5M one-time appropriation to enhance technology associated with office tracking systems in FY25.

#### *American Rescue Plan Act*

- Additional ARPA funds were legislatively assigned during the 2023 and 2024 legislative sessions for the creation of workforce training programs.
- All programs have been established and awarded funds. \$32M of the \$88M in funding has been reimbursed.
- The end of the program is December 2026

#### *Department of Defense*

MDES, in partnership with AccelerateMS, was awarded funding in the amount of \$4,999,634 from the Department of Defense, Defense Manufacturing Community Support Program in 2022. Known as MS-SHIPS, the Mississippi-Shipbuilding Industry Preparedness for National Security Consortium works to undertake a \$6,694,579 project to bolster national security by modernizing Mississippi's shipbuilding industry by enhancing sector capacity, capability, competitiveness, and resiliency. The project will create a skilled and diverse talent pipeline for the region's shipbuilding industry, accelerate adoption of Industry 4.0 manufacturing practices in the shipbuilding supply chain, and develop advanced solutions designed to enhance worker safety. Consortium members will implement regionally tailored strategies in support of each goal, ensuring partners have a broad reach and a lasting impact. Formally, MDES serves as AMS' fiscal agent so is considered the grant recipient.

## ***Goals & Objectives for AccelerateMS***

### **General Office Operations**

AccelerateMS, still a relatively young organization that's been in operation since April of 2021, has grown and developed to ensure it can operate its complex mission. The labor market continues to provide for a challenging workforce situation, requiring a direct focus and to consider solutions differently as there are many nuances today that didn't exist even a few years ago. As such, strategic planning requires more short-term (less than 2 years) focus than long-term in the moment. However, all annual goals derive from the overarching goals of AccelerateMS:

- Goal 1: All Mississippians will have increased earning potential.
- Goal 2: All Mississippians will have the opportunity to work in a meaningful career.
- Goal 3: All Mississippians will have the opportunity to complete education and training programs that align with meaningful careers.
- Goal 4: All Mississippians will have access to high quality workforce services through a network of service providers.

### ***Fiscal Year 2026***

**General Office Operations:** AccelerateMS plans to request a minimum of \$6 million to address staffing and cost of living adjustments and to continue to expand training and recruitment service provision to new and expanding businesses to avoid complex, one-time funding requests annually. We are anticipated to spend approximately \$ 4.5 million for personnel, \$250,000 for office business travel, \$250,000 for supplies and equipment, and \$1,000,000 for contractual services. These funds are necessary to support critical operations as the office moves forward with better coordination and deployment of workforce strategy in Mississippi and the administration of the funds outlined above. Creating new programs to address identified needs requires human capital to support the work to be done.

- Goal 1 – Review current outcomes from the state workforce plan and adjust the plan as necessary. Complete rewrite of full combined WIOA plan to incorporate existing programs and Perkins Funds.
  - Basis of Measurement: Complete WIOA rewrite with Perkins included.
- Goal 2 – Seek continuous improvement in all processes and procedures regarding the direction and use of Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Funds, MS Works Funds, K-12 micro-grant funds, and any other funds designated to the office.
  - Objective – Evaluate the established individual tracking and fund tracking software and determine any gaps in services
  - Objective – Identify areas of excess administrative burden and streamline processes and procedures.

Basis of Measurement – Minimum of two (2) partner meetings to determine efficacy of computer-based program with list of needs created.

- Goal 3 – Continue to support new and expanding companies providing significant investment in Mississippi through Talent Solutions.

- Objective – Serve a minimum of 3 new companies with customized recruitment and training programs
- Goal 4 – In partnership with MDES and LWDAs, establish integrated, virtual WIOA support services.
- Goal 5 – Examine and review existing career coach program to determine success. If program remains successful, seek appropriate funds to expand into adult populations.

### ***Fiscal Year 2027***

**General Office Operations:** AccelerateMS plans to request a minimum of \$6 million to address staffing and cost of living adjustments and to continue to expand training and recruitment service provision to new and expanding businesses to avoid complex, one-time funding requests annually. We are anticipated to expend approximately \$ 4.5 million for personnel, \$250,000 for office business travel, \$250,000 for Supplies and equipment, and \$1,000,000 for contractual services. These funds are necessary to support critical operations as the office moves forward with better coordinating and deploying workforce strategy in Mississippi and administering the funds outlined above. Creating new programs to address identified needs requires human capital to support the work to be done.

**Triage:** Defined as strategy and goals targeting more immediate and emergent needs facing workforce health and vitality in Mississippi.

- Goal 1 – Execute year 2 of state WIOA Plan while creating a unified state plan.
  - Objective – Create and adjust funding programs (as legislatively allowed through AccelerateMS operated funding sources) to support identified gaps and needs.
  - Objective – Provide recommendations to state and local partners for how funds should be spent based on gaps identified.
  - Convene partners to submit true, combined WIOA plan including Perkins.

Basis of Measurement – Documented review of core partner programs.

- Goal 2 – Improve processes and procedures regarding the direction and use of Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Funds, MS Works Funds, and K-12 micro-grant funds.
  - Objective – Evaluate the established computer-based program and determine any needs.
  - Objective – Identify areas of excess administrative burden and streamline processes and procedures.

Basis of Measurement – Minimum of two (2) partner meetings to determine efficacy of computer-based program with list of needs created.

- Goal 3 – Pursue additional funding to support efforts related to increasing the labor force participation rate.
  - Objective – Seek sources of funding that align with state goals and supplement available funding.

- Objective – Align available state dollars with any pursuant efforts to ensure alignment of the system.
- Basis of Measurement – Apply for a minimum of one (1) additional non-state funding source.

*Horizon Thinking:* Defined as strategy and goals targeting the improvement of the long-term health and vitality of Mississippi’s workforce.

- Goal 1 – Identify and partner with entities engaged in technology development to ensure alignment of workforce development efforts.
  - Objective – Determine workforce training and development related gaps and provide guidance for potential ways to mitigate existing challenges.
  - Objective – Align available funding, where feasible, to support efforts.

Basis of Measurement – Participate in a minimum of two (2) external programs with related partners, providing workforce development guidance on associated efforts.

- Goal 2 – Analyze and create opportunities and pathways to benchmark in K12 Career and Technical Education.
  - Objective – Connect more CTE K12 programs to industry for each respective ecosystem, identify respective credentials of value.
  - Objective – Report progress at the MS Horizons Symposium with industry sector and educational partners.

Basis of Measurement – Evaluate inventory of courses in each ecosystem to ensure continued connection between CTE courses and available high-quality career paths.

- Goal 3 – Identify opportunities for Teacher Experiences within industry sectors along with area career coaches (hands-on learning and in an experiential format).
  - Objective – Increase connection and cooperation between teachers and career coaches.
  - Objective – Increase teacher awareness of high-quality career opportunities.

Basis of Measurement – Highlight conducted experiences and acknowledgement of report at MS Horizons Symposium.

*Customizable Training:* Defined as a program available to new or expanding businesses with the specific goal of providing resources to quickly scale up recruiting, screening, and training capabilities.

- Goal 1 – Secure appropriate resources and reassess needs for customized training based on previous year’s feedback and anticipated project work.
 

Basis of Measurement – Associated budgets created and communicated to leadership using specific economic development projects as model(s).
- Goal 2 – Associated team members and program ready for deployment.



Basis of Measurement – Documentation created, and two (2) feedback sessions hosted by AccelerateMS.

General Review of Overall Yearly Strategy Expectations: Internal review of all strategies and outcomes to be performed on an annual basis.

### ***Fiscal Years 2028 – 2030***

**General Office Operations:** AccelerateMS plans to request a minimum of \$7 million to address staffing and cost of living adjustments. It is anticipated we will expend approximately \$4.5 million for personnel, \$250,000 for office business travel, \$775,000 for Supplies and equipment, and \$1,500,000 for contractual services. These funds are necessary to support critical operations as the office moves forward with better coordination and deployment of workforce strategy, including the provision of talent solutions in Mississippi and the administration of the funds outlined above. Creating new programs to address identified needs requires human capital to support the work to be done.

- Goal 1 – Review current outcomes from state workforce plan, adjust plan as necessary.
- Goal 2 – Seek continuous improvement in all processes and procedures regarding the direction and use of Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Funds, MS Works Funds, K-12 micro-grant funds, and any other funds designated to the office.
- Goal 3 – Continue to pursue additional funding to support efforts related to increasing the labor force participation rate and providing customized talent solutions.
- Goal 4 – Identify and partner with entities engaged in technology development to ensure alignment of workforce development efforts.
- Goal 5 – Examine and review existing career coach program to determine appropriate age level of intervention.
- Goal 6 – Monitor overall structure and budget for program based on existing and anticipated needs.

**Conclusory Statement regarding Strategic Plan:** AccelerateMS is determined to effectuate much needed improvement toward workforce strategy development and deployment. The plan identifies known challenges and opportunities. It is anticipated that societal changes may force additions to this plan as the workforce continues to recover from COVID and associated impacts. As with all strategy development within AccelerateMS, this plan is subject to change, adjustment, and/enhancement as new information/opportunities become apparent.