

MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MISSISSIPPI

STRATEGIC PLAN FY2027 - FY2031



1. Comprehensive Mission Statement:

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), as the state's primary economic development agency, strives to enhance Mississippi's economy through various avenues such as business retention, new business recruitment, trade, tourism, film, energy, asset investment and grant administration, military affairs, and small business development. MDA provides its services to the state's existing and potential business community, as well as to local governments and economic development organizations.

2. Statement of Agency Philosophy

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) is Mississippi's primary economic development entity, focused on attracting new businesses, supporting the expansion of existing industry, and promoting sectors like energy, small businesses, exports, film, and tourism. Committed to integrity, accountability, excellence, and transparency, MDA fosters investment through structured programs and partnerships for sustainable growth. We value innovation, collaboration, and community, empowering our staff through continuous training to ensure Mississippi's competitiveness. By setting economic performance goals and efficiently allocating resources, we strive to positively impact every Mississippian.

3. Relevant Statewide Goal and Benchmarks

Statewide Goal #1 Economic Development: To develop a robust state economy that provides opportunities for productive employment for all Mississippians.

Category: Business Climate Relevant Benchmark #1

Mississippi's business climate is a key factor in location decisions for new corporate investment and expansions of existing businesses.

- 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)
- Energy price per million British thermal units (BTUs): commercial sector
- Energy price per million British thermal units (BTUs): industrial sector
- Annual percentage change in resident population

Category: Commercial Activity Relevant Benchmark #2

MDA's overall mission aims to increase the level of commercial activity in Mississippi's economy through several of its divisions.

- Per capita gross domestic product
- Percentage contribution of manufacturing sector to state's gross domestic product
- Percentage contribution of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sector to state's gross domestic product
- Volume of cargo activity at the state's ports, measured in twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) and tonnage
- Number of passengers enplaning and deplaning at the state's airports
- Number and frequency of passenger and cargo flights
- Tourism measured in number of visitors and dollars generated
- Number of new technology start-ups
- Venture capital investments measured in dollars and number of deals

Category: Job Growth Relevant Benchmark #3

MDA works with local and regional economic development organizations, utility partners and elected officials throughout the state to support private-sector job creation from new and existing industries.

Additionally, MDA actively markets the state to prospective companies and stakeholders to position it for success.

- Net job growth
- Annual percentage change in non-farm jobs

- Number of jobs in each of the Mississippi Development Authority's seven targeted industries: advanced manufacturing, aerospace, agribusiness, automotive, energy, healthcare, and shipbuilding
- Number of jobs in manufacturing sector
- Number of jobs in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sector
- Number of jobs associated with new technology start-ups
- Number of new businesses and jobs resulting from Mississippi Development Authority global business contacts (national recruitment, international investment and trade)
- Number of new businesses and jobs resulting from Mississippi Development Authority minority and small business development contacts

Category: Employment and Income Relevant Benchmark #4

- Average pay and total payroll of jobs associated with new technology start-ups

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

Category: Commercialization of Academic Research Relevant Benchmark #5

- Number of private sector companies created as a result of activities at Mississippi public universities

Statewide goal #3 Public Safety and Order: To protect the public's safety, including providing timely and appropriate responses to emergencies and disasters and to operate a fair and effective system of justice

Category: Emergency Preparedness Relevant Benchmark #6

- Average emergency response time to natural and man-made disasters
- Average time for businesses to recover following a natural or man-made disaster

Statewide Goal #4 Natural Resources: 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.

Category: Energy Relevant Benchmark #7

- Per capita energy consumption in British thermal units (BTUs)
- Total energy production in trillion British thermal units (BTUs)
- Renewable energy production (in kilowatt hours)
- Number of alternative fuel and hybrid-electric vehicles registered in Mississippi

Statewide goal #5 Infrastructure: To ensure the construction and maintenance of infrastructure (including roadways, waterways, railways, airports, water and sewer systems, pipelines, electricity lines, broadband connections, public buildings) adequate to meet the needs of citizens and the business community and to foster economic growth

Category: Transportation Relevant Benchmark #8

The state's infrastructure is a key factor in growth and development opportunities for industries across Mississippi.

- Public airport utilization, capacity, and connectivity
- Port utilization, capacity, and connectivity
- Measure of the state's rail system capacity and condition
- Percentage of state's rail mileage that can accommodate double stacked cars

- Ton-miles of freight shipped by railroad
- Public transit utilization and capacity

Category: Public utilities

Relevant Benchmark #9

MDA will provide leadership in interagency coordination to encourage appropriate infrastructure investment that drives economic development. Site selectors, consultants and companies looking for new locations for expansions seek out locations that are “project-ready” and “shovel-ready.”

- Percentage of local sewer and water infrastructure in immediate need of repair and replacement and associated costs
- Ratio of supply of electricity generation capacity to demand

4. Overview of the Agency Five-Year Strategic Plan

Competition for domestic and foreign direct investment is strong, particularly in the Southeastern region of the United States, which is among the fastest-growing areas in the country. Industries currently seek locations with established infrastructure and industry support, along with a skilled workforce. As the global economy accelerates, Mississippi requires effective business recruitment and retention strategies to compete for investment projects.

A new trend has emerged regarding site availability, which has become a key factor in major development projects. Mississippi is considered a participant in this area partly due to investments made through the MDA's Site Development Grant Program, which has allocated nearly \$120 million to site development over recent years. Careful investment decisions in these projects are viewed as important for the state's future as customer development is at present.

The development and marketing of business sites has become necessary for attracting companies that want to invest. As a result, Mississippi's growth strategy is designed to adapt to market demands and incorporates significant outreach and marketing elements.

As a rural state, Mississippi relies on MDA for both recruitment and expansion activities, as well as supporting local economic developers and leaders to take advantage of development opportunities. Over the next five years, the MDA will focus on five priority areas, aiming to enhance Mississippi's competitiveness in economic development and business investment. These strategies align with statewide benchmarks set by the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.

The five focus areas of the strategic plan include business environment, infrastructure and available real estate for business locations and expansions, workforce, economic development service delivery, and increased tourism outreach.

In the next five years, the MDA aims to develop a more competitive, streamlined business environment. This includes reviewing business tax, property tax, and incentives to attract private sector investment and employment. Streamlining and adequately funding discretionary incentives and adjusting tax incentives to fit contemporary industry needs are primary objectives. The goal is to expand Mississippi's commercial base, creating additional career opportunities with higher wages and/or benefits for residents. A broader economic base may decrease the likelihood of residents seeking employment out of state. While various factors influence the gross domestic product, the strategy's aim is to grow the economy and yield a return on investment.

Another core focus is to improve the state's infrastructure and increase visibility of available real estate for business development. MDA has identified key sites for economic development and will continue to update this list as sites are used or become available. The agency will establish baseline requirements for all marketable sites and share them with local partners. Collaboration with third parties will identify sites that meet certification standards and have desirable attributes for site selection consultants. Additionally, MDA will provide grants to communities for site due diligence and improvements and promote adoption of its online state site location service, which features desktop and mobile access, search capabilities, and GIS mapping. This effort supports local investments in real estate to meet current and future industry needs. Coordinating federal and state community development resources can help local communities better position themselves for economic opportunities. MDA will also work with Accelerate MS to help utilize workforce development incentives.

Economic development service delivery remains a priority, with goals for improved effectiveness. All divisions within MDA are assessed for mission alignment. Agency goals include growing the economy ahead of neighboring states, raising wages, and increasing tourism and related spending. Metrics are defined at both the divisional and staff levels to monitor effectiveness and accountability. Through outreach, MDA aims to raise awareness of its goals and collaborate with state, local, and regional partners. Training for local civic and elected leaders about the economic development process is included, along with coordination with stakeholders and associations. Ongoing professional development for recruiting and leadership teams is part of Mississippi's strategic plan, reflecting the need for technical knowledge in a data-driven economy.

The MDA also plans to strengthen tourism outreach and marketing to increase visibility of Mississippi's cultural, recreational, and culinary assets. The objective is to attract more visitors and increase state revenue from tourism. Tourism is a significant source of jobs and revenue, and the creative economy—including film, music, and visual arts—contributes to this sector. By promoting these industries, Mississippi seeks to encourage business investment and tourism.

5. External/Internal Assessment

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) recognizes the distinct business needs of the state while remaining attentive to the broad range of external factors impacting global commerce. MDA utilizes various tools and assessments to identify effective global business practices, thereby positioning both the agency and the state for economic advancement. A recent demonstration of this approach includes the success of the state's site development grant program. Following insights from site location consultants and other experts that Mississippi was losing economic development opportunities to neighboring states due to a shortage of competitive, developed sites, MDA recommended the implementation of a three-tiered site development strategy for publicly owned sites. These locations have since emerged as some of the most sought-after for large-scale industrial projects in the southeastern United States, and in certain cases, globally.

Redirection of Agency Mission Due to Changes in State Statutes or Regulations

In 2019, MDA was authorized for a total headcount of 270 employees; currently, it is authorized for 209 positions, reflecting an increase of 12 in the past fiscal year. Concurrently, the responsibilities related to grant administration and other programs have escalated. This trend has placed considerable pressure on personnel within key divisions: Business Incentives, Community Incentives, and Finance and Accounting. All three divisions now require additional qualified staff with financial expertise to administer grants efficiently and maintain accountability. While MDA remains diligent in enforcement and compliance, these growing demands have impacted its ability to operate with optimal efficiency and timeliness. Furthermore, the capacity of local leaders to effectively plan and support community and economic development initiatives remains a challenge, which further heightens demands on MDA personnel to ensure prudent and compliant expenditure of federal and state funds.

Recent legislative developments have resulted in the decision to separate the Tourism division (Visit MS) from MDA, following a precedent set by the establishment of Accelerate MS in 2020. This restructuring necessitates careful planning to ensure both agencies achieve operational and budgetary success.

Economic Changes

During the first half of 2025, significant shifts in the federal and global economy, particularly regarding tariffs and trade, affected several MDA divisions, including Trade. While MDA has proactively responded to these changes and monitored their impact, there has not been a substantial decline in exports among tracked companies. As discussions around global tariff structures continue, MDA remains committed to identifying opportunities for Mississippi businesses. Additionally, energy availability has become a critical issue worldwide, prompting MDA to develop strategies positioning Mississippi for success amid evolving energy dynamics.

Regarding the film industry, despite Mississippi's appeal, several projects have opted for other states offering more attractive incentives. While incentives are not viewed as the sole determinant in attracting such projects, MDA acknowledges the need for further analysis to inform future legislative recommendations.

Federal Funding Availability

Within the initial six months of 2025, MDA encountered unanticipated reductions in federal funding, particularly from the Department of Energy. While other divisions also experienced decreases, no major structural adjustments have been necessary to date. However, a sustained reduction in federal support could impact divisions such as Energy and Natural Resources, Small and Minority Business Development, Community Incentives, and Trade. The Governor's Office of Military Affairs (GOMA) at MDA, though not a direct recipient of federal funds, works to ensure the ongoing viability and growth of federal military installations in Mississippi. Although no significant adverse effects have been observed to date, GOMA continues to monitor potential risks closely.

Technological Advances

Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and automation are transforming MDA's internal functions as well as the broader business environment. MDA is proactively adopting AI tools to enhance organizational efficiency. Externally, these technological innovations present new possibilities for business growth and site selection, and Mississippi is well-positioned to capitalize on these opportunities. In the past year, MDA has established partnerships with leading AI organizations such as AWS and NVIDIA to advance workforce development and ensure the state cultivates a skilled workforce prepared for future demands.

Demographic Changes

Mississippi currently experiences employment rates above the national average. While favorable, this trend has given rise to concerns regarding workforce availability. Although MDA has not observed a major negative impact on business recruitment, efforts are underway to address these perceptions. The Welcome Home initiative is expanding its focus beyond retirees to encompass the recruitment of Mississippi university graduates and military retirees from in-state bases.

Management Policies

During the past year, MDA undertook a comprehensive review of its organizational structure, strategic imperatives, goal-setting methods, performance evaluation processes, budgeting, and internal procedures. These initiatives have fostered greater efficiency, clarified expectations, and supported the development of agency-wide objectives and measurable results. Although these improvements were internally driven rather than externally mandated, they did reveal areas for enhancement, such as modest adjustments to grant programs and incentive frameworks, as well as the ongoing need for additional personnel, especially in grant compliance. Over recent years, MDA's management of state and federal grants has expanded significantly. Further details concerning objectives and key results are provided in section 5.1 (Internal Management Systems Used to Evaluate Agency's Performance).

5.1 Internal Management Systems Used to Evaluate Agency's Performance

Starting in April 2024, MDA began a review of its organizational structure, strategic priorities, goal-setting approaches, performance assessment methods, budgeting, and internal processes. As part of this effort, the agency implemented the goal-setting format described in Measure What Matters by John Doerr for developing agency-wide goals. This approach uses "Objectives" and "Key Results" (OKRs) to measure progress across divisions with differing economic development missions, focusing on clarity, alignment, and measurable outcomes.

Within the Doerr framework, objectives refer to qualitative goals informed by an organization's mission and vision, while key results specify quantifiable measures of advancement toward those objectives. At MDA, Division Directors collaborate with the executive team to develop division-level OKRs, which are incorporated into the agency's overall OKRs. Divisions also participate in a Quarterly Division Review to assess OKRs as well as legislative and federal reporting requirements, personnel assignments, budget compliance, and other indicators. Objectives are included in each division director's annual performance evaluation to monitor achievement of division goals. This process provides an opportunity for an annual review of management policies, operational procedures, and structure at MDA. If a division does not meet its key results within a given year, the division director and executive team identify the issues and determine the resources or corrective measures needed to address them. The previous cycle highlighted the need for additional resources in training and research.

MDA will continue to update this process annually to align its strategic plan with established objectives and key results, supporting accurate legislative requests related to the agency's economic development activities.

6. Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures by Program for FY 2027 through 2031

MDA serves as the state's agency for economic development, tourism, and community advancement. Its main responsibilities include supporting private-sector job creation through business locations and industry expansions, attracting new investments and revenue, and promoting the state's business opportunities and cultural features internationally.

MDA's primary areas of activity include business development, community development, site development, tourism, and brand promotion. Utilizing state and federal funding, MDA competes for job growth and investment, helps municipalities and rural communities prepare infrastructure for economic development, and promotes Mississippi as a location for tourism and business.

To achieve these objectives, MDA oversees four principal programs: Economic Development/Incentives, Community Development/Incentives, Support Services, and Tourism (Visit MS). Annual program goals and outcomes are established in line with appropriations and are described below along with corresponding objectives and outcomes.

Program 1: Economic Development and Incentives

GOAL A: To promote Mississippi as a highly regarded location for new business investment and to grow the state's economy faster than surrounding states.

OBJECTIVE A.1.

Support the creation of 3,000 new careers and \$1.7 billion in investment by recruiting targeted new companies to Mississippi

Outcome: Growth or strengthening of the state's employment

A.1.2. STRATEGY

Develop comprehensive short- and long-term recruitment strategies through marketing and research efforts to identify target companies within previously identified strategic sectors.

Output: With additional legislative appropriations, increase international contacts, recruitment missions, recruiting events with partners, trade shows, marketing campaigns and media outreach

Outcome: 3,000 new careers

Outcome: 225 qualified national prospects

Outcome: 1,000 national recruitment contacts

Efficiency: strategic and data driven research and marketing to achieve a 10-fold return on investment and increased win rate

A.1.3. STRATEGY

Increase international recruitment interactions – in target countries and in Mississippi – through an efficient outreach effort, resulting in expansion of FDI source networks and strengthening of existing contacts

Output: More strategic approach results in intensification of efforts in target countries

Output: Increase consultant and company contacts to 1,000

Outcome: More customer awareness of Mississippi and its sites, more exposure to projects so Mississippi can compete

Outcome: Increased number of projects to compete for and win

A.1.4. STRATEGY

Implement more strategic approach to engagement with foreign representatives and consultants based on country-specific recruitment strategies

Output: Increase lead generation in target countries

Outcome: Higher quality FDI leads to higher success rate and improved return on investment

A.1.5. STRATEGY

Market the value of a Mississippi location in FDI target countries to achieve 15 new business global contacts

Output: Increasing quality of engagement in selected target countries

Output: Increasing contacts for FDI to 1,500 and trade to 1,500

Outcome: Greater number of potential FDI projects and more opportunities for existing industries to do business in foreign markets

A.1.6. STRATEGY

Provide trade opportunities to existing Mississippi businesses in growth export markets and expand international relationships

Output: Ten export trade missions and target-sector trade shows, including virtual events

Outcome: Net export sales of \$2.2 million statewide

Outcome: Twelve new Mississippi companies to the export market and 38 Mississippi firms expanding their current exports

Efficiency: By efficiently using the federal State Trade Expansion Program, MDA can assist eligible businesses with lower costs for trade promotion activities (i.e., trade shows, business-to-business trade missions, international market research) by nearly 50% on travel and export promotion related costs.

GOAL B: To support and enhance the competitiveness of new and existing minority- and women-owned businesses to broaden the economic base and maximize opportunities

OBJECTIVE B.1.

Create additional wealth in Mississippi for minority and women entrepreneurs through increased sales opportunities for Mississippi goods and services, new and expanded job creation and capital investment

Output: 8,000 minority and small business contacts

Outcome: Increase contracting opportunities and improve technical assistance delivery to diverse and emerging businesses

Outcome: provide technical assistance to 3000 disadvantaged contacts

Efficiency: 100% utilization of print, social media, virtual and in-person outreach education and training to reach businesses around the state

B.1.1. STRATEGY

Define the objectives of each program and offering, assess effectiveness and refine or eliminate programs as needed

Output: Programs that are accessible and responsive to the needs of the minority- and small-business community

Outcome: Easily accessible minority directory source listings search tools, more productive bonding programs, expanded support and strategic administration of MDA's Contractors Academy and the APEX Accelerator, allowing minority- and women-owned businesses to compete more effectively for contracting opportunities

Efficiency: Increase the number of new certifications by 35 each year, increase the level of exposure to minority businesses in contracting requests, expand the list of contracting partners participating in the Academy

B.1.2. STRATEGY

Provide the managerial, financial and technical assistance needed for minority- and women-owned businesses to successfully compete for federal, state and local government contracts, including commercial contracts

Output: process 250 minority business certification applications among 3,000 interested businesses

Outcome: Support 150 state contracts with minority- and women-owned businesses for \$55,000,000 in value

Outcome: Assist 15 new startup minority- and women-owned businesses

Outcome: Increase the number of certified minority- and women-owned businesses by 35 each year

Outcome: Graduate 50 contractors through the Contractors Academy

Outcome: Increase the use of assistance programs such as the Minority Surety Bond Guaranty Program and Capital Access Construction Loan Program to grow minority participation in construction and building trade contracts with state agencies and local units of government

Efficiency: Increase the rate of contracting opportunities to be bid on by minority businesses by 3% yearly

B.1.3 STRATEGY

Continue to promote the Diversity Initiative for state public procurement and support contracting opportunities at the federal level

Output: Collaborate with 86 state agency heads or procurement officers

Output: Administer the APEX Accelerator to support 100 federal minority contracts

Outcome: Increase the number of state minority contracts awarded

GOAL C: Grow the state's economy by supporting the expansion of existing in-state industries

OBJECTIVE C.1.

Support the creation of 3,000 jobs and 30 business expansions through a robust redevelopment of existing industry and business research, contacts, and surveys

Output: 750 contacts

Outcome: Growth and strengthening of the state's employment

Efficiency: utilization of digital tools, research staff, and cooperation with local economic development entities to lessen need for project managers time and attention to EIB activities

C.1.1 STRATEGY

Actively work with the state's existing employers to identify opportunities for growth and attempt to remove barriers to growth when possible

Output: Meet with key contacts and local developers and their existing companies throughout the year to satisfy their needs/requests

Output: Corporate/regional headquarters trips to identify and/or develop expansion opportunities with multiple industries operating in the state

Outcome: 3,000 new jobs and \$300 million investment

Efficiency: Won expansion projects compared by percentage to projects worked

C.1.2 STRATEGY

Actively partner with state's colleges and universities to maintain current awareness of workforce capacity, research and development milestones and key educational offerings for the state

Output: Actively work with Accelerate MS and workforce allies across the state

Outcome: Increased ability to identify and address workforce issues on behalf of an existing industry before becoming a threat to ongoing operations in the state

GOAL D: Provide an efficient and economical energy system through a statewide plan that supports public and private consumers

OBJECTIVE D.1.

Maximize use of energy efficiency and renewable options through proper communication and outreach activities, strategies, technology deployment and new partnerships

D.1.1 STRATEGY

Promote the division to internal and external groups and work to advance initiatives by maintaining key stakeholder relationships

Output: Connect with a minimum of five external stakeholder groups, such as the Mississippi Energy Institute and universities

Output: Increase energy efficiency and renewable energy direct contacts to 10,000

Outcome: Development of programs and initiatives that bring together government and the private sector to promote sound energy policies

D.1.2 STRATEGY

Provide technical and financial assistance in Mississippi industrial, commercial, and institutional sectors.

Output: Conduct energy audits for public and private entities and provide information on energy cost-saving measures

Outcome: Measure energy savings that positively impact the bottom line for energy consuming sectors and identifying investment priorities

Efficiency: Amount of energy savings identified per each audits and the number and type of energy efficiency measures installed via projects funded through the division's grant and loan programs.

D.1.3 STRATEGY

Coordinate the development and implementation of a general energy management plan for state-owned-and-operated facilities

Output: Prepare State Energy Management Program annual legislative report to update the governor and provide technical assistance to agencies in developing five-year energy management plans

Outcome: provide strategies and best practices to energy management coordinators that foster energy efficiency awareness and maximize energy efficiency

Efficiency: Identify poor performing buildings using key metrics to identify cost-saving measures and investment priorities.

D.1.4 STRATEGY

Promote energy awareness throughout the institutional, industrial, and commercial sectors of the state.

Output: Conduct training sessions and programs for educators, facility and building operators, students, and the public to promote energy awareness

Outcome: Improve trainees' knowledge base on building energy efficiency and general energy awareness

Efficiency: Number of training participants, certifications and continuing education units issued

D.1.5 STRATEGY

The division is statutorily designated by the U. S. Department of Energy as the coordinating agency for energy emergency planning, response, and mitigation in the state which encompasses facilitating planning efforts that strengthens the resilience of Mississippi's energy sector from physical, cyber, and weather -related disruptions and emergencies.

Output: Develop and maintain the Mississippi Energy Security Plan (MESP), a comprehensive manual for state and local leaders charged with the responsibility of ensuring the health, welfare, and safety of the citizens during periods of energy emergencies.

Outcome: Strategically collaborate with federal and state agencies to effectively respond to energy emergencies for purposes of restoring private, institutional, and commercial systems to their full operating capability as soon as possible

Efficiency: Support timely responses and coordinated notifications to state government leaders, private sector entities, institutions, the media, and the public during the occurrence of energy emergencies and system failures, while identifying appropriate actions to be taken, including enactment of regulations, laws, and other actions by the state

Efficiency: Number of training exercises and emergency activations that require immediate mobilization in accordance with the federal and state statutes.

Goal E: Utilize federal research laboratories and military installations to attract and grow economic activity

OBJECTIVE E.1.

Grow military spending, support contracting opportunities with Mississippi businesses and encourage new military and research missions through the Governor's Office of Military Affairs (GOMA)

E.1.1 STRATEGY

GOMA has produced a guide outlining the ways military communities in the state can develop their assets and support military growth. GOMA also has worked with the Defense Communities Development Council and local economic development organizations to secure federal funding for a variety of new and improved assets (Department of Defense capital expenditures) within the state that will help communities attract relevant military missions. Deployment of the guide along with continued collaboration with senior military leaders will lead to new missions with more jobs.

Output: Actively support military communities leading to community and installation growth

Output: Work with Defense Communities Development Council to formulate new statewide planning

Outcome: Develop defense communities within the state to attract new and beneficial missions and job growth

E.1.2 STRATEGY

Support minority- and small-business growth through the identification of installation needs

Output: Work directly with installation leadership to identify 1) upcoming development projects that can produce new missions or improve support for existing missions and 2) identify gaps in vendor and contractor needs for those projects to increase awareness of contracting opportunities with local vendors

E.1.3 STRATEGY

Revitalize and empower relationships with existing legislatively condoned external partners such as Mississippi Enterprise for Technology to explore new opportunities for growth in the innovation economy.

Outcome: MDA will utilize external partners to further the internal mission

Outcome: Utilization of federal laboratory/technology resources to promote opportunities for innovation economy growth.

Output: Venture-backed companies will locate to MS because of opportunities to utilize federal test and evaluation spaces.

Efficiency: Formalized relationships with external partners will maintain headcount within MDA and not lead to staff increases

GOAL F: Grow Mississippi's economy by increasing number of filmed projects produced in the state

OBJECTIVE F.1.

Recruit filmed productions to Mississippi while growing a Mississippi-based film industry to ensure local hiring of trained Mississippi crews and companies

F.1.1. STRATEGY

Build relationships with producers, directors and other industry decision makers, particularly those with Mississippi ties

Output: Leverage current budget and resources to increase promotional activities and marketing at targeted film festivals and industry events, in addition to targeted advertising to sell Mississippi as a filming destination

Outcome: Increased number of feature films, commercials, television shows and other filmed projects in the pipeline

F.1.2. STRATEGY

Support activities that facilitate the growth of a state film workforce

Output: Workforce training curricula to be shared with current educational programs, use of sponsorship dollars to specifically support training at state film festivals and events, facilitate film internship programs and related educational outreach

Outcome: A trained, stable and growing local film workforce available for hire to filmed productions locating in the state

Efficiency: By behaviorally targeting our consumer, we can customize the message to their specific interest areas, which allows more efficient spending on advertising dollars.

Program 2: Community Development and Incentives

GOAL A: Support the development of community assets and infrastructure so more Mississippi communities are qualified and able to compete for jobs and investment and provide a better quality of life for their citizens

OBJECTIVE A. 1.

Administer effective community infrastructure financial support to increase the competitiveness of Mississippi's communities for job creation and capital investment projects

Outcome: Communities that are prepared to compete for economic development opportunities

Outcome: Better public infrastructure and facilities to improve the lives of their citizens to retain population levels

A.1.1. STRATEGY

Effectively award and administer at least 100 grant and loan programs out of at least 225 requests for a total of \$50,000,000 (or as funding allows) in compliance with the law and intent of programmatic functions

Output: Provide 10 public infrastructure grants and loans annually to local units of government (municipal and county) in coordination with agency economic development projects

Output: Provide 50 basic public infrastructure grants and loans annually for municipal and county governments in support of general community development activities, making communities more competitive

Output: Proactively manage open projects to completion, with 25% of total open grants closed and 10 total loans successfully paid in full

Output: Analyze processes and approvals to ensure they are grounded in necessity and contribute to the effectiveness of the organization

Output: Monitor active projects to ensure compliance with programmatic guidelines and applicable laws

Outcome: Through successful compliance, technical assistance and project management, limit the number of findings issued on programs audited by the Office of the State Auditor or the federal government

A.1.2. STRATEGY

Better align community development projects with economic development priorities

Output: Review programs for effectiveness and modify guidelines to better align programs to job creation objectives

Outcome: Programs are geared more toward job creation and long-term community competitiveness, resulting in better investment of taxpayer funds

GOAL B: To provide effective financing and incentive options to meet the needs of prospective businesses and support Mississippi businesses as they work to increase competitiveness and grow in domestic and international markets

OBJECTIVE B.1.

Generate an overall \$10-to-\$1 leverage of private capital investments to public investments made into economic development projects

Outcome: An efficient application of incentives to bring location and expansion projects generating career opportunities for Mississippians and substantial investments to the state

B.1.1 STRATEGY

Continue to adhere to the adopted incentives framework so that offerings remain structured and are understood by project managers and leadership and decisions regarding incentives packages and assistance offers can more quickly be made

Outcome: Consistency and transparency in decision-making process

B.1.2 STRATEGY

Efficiently administer state grant, loan and tax incentive programs under MDA's purview, streamline processes and continually improve program monitoring and servicing as needed

Output: Implement grants, loans and tax incentives management system and review processes, monitoring tools and procedures to identify ways to improve effectiveness in the administration of these programs

Outcome: Manage the incentives management system to ensure more efficient program administration, timelier customer service, more user-friendly documents and processes, greater transparency in the incentive approval and administration process and enhanced reporting capabilities. In turn, substantially improved record-keeping will be achieved.

Outcome: Enhance the monitoring plans already implemented, providing for a more robust monitoring effort with a more rigorous approach to monitoring deadlines and conducting compliance checks to determine whether companies have met their jobs and investment requirements and maintained the requisite number of jobs for the required timeframe. Review 100% of projects that have met a monitoring deadline for compliance with program requirements.

Outcome: Work in conjunction with accounting to reduce maximum time to payment while maintaining consistent oversight

B.1.3 STRATEGY

Provide guidance and technical assistance on the state's statutory and discretionary incentives programs, including all of Mississippi's loans, grants and tax incentives, to businesses, consultants, internal audiences and other economic development professionals in the state

Output: Greater awareness of the state's incentives offerings, both internally and externally, is achieved, as is a greater level of comfort among the businesses that MDA serves regarding the incentives process

B.1.4 STRATEGY

Develop project-ready sites around the state to compete for additional economic development opportunities

Output: Manage the Site Development Grant Program, which supports local efforts to conduct the required due diligence to make a site project ready

Outcome: Additional sites that have the data necessary in terms of wetlands, environmental impacts, soil composition, etc. are required by companies and consultants before a location decision is made

Outcome: Increase the number of Mississippi sites that make it through the site-selection process, which will increase the likelihood of more projects choosing Mississippi

GOAL C: Provide education and assistance with identifying community development projects that can lead to economic growth opportunities for small and disadvantaged communities

OBJECTIVE C.1

Assist communities in becoming more desirable places for public and private investment by providing community and economic development training and technical assistance for a broad-based, diverse team of local leaders

C.1.1 STRATEGY

Coordinate with economic development organizations and utility partners to plan and manage the annual Aspire Mississippi cohort designed to equip local leaders with the tools, knowledge and skills to become more effective in their economic development endeavors

Output: Four to six teams, each comprised of about 10 local leaders, committed to participating in monthly virtual and in-person educational sessions over a nine-month period

Output: Four to six community-based team projects are initiated and completed by the teams in alliance and coordination within MDA's stated economic development objectives

Outcome: An increase in knowledge and skills of specific topics in community and economic development by local leaders, thus strengthening the present and future leadership capacity in these communities

Outcome: Benchmarks of community-based team projects are met resulting in local leaders' abilities to successfully implement strategies that serve as catalysts for future projects

OBJECTIVE C.2

Provide responsive technical assistance that enables local leaders to solve problems through a coordinated and efficient process of engaging key stakeholder organizations in creative solutions to unique local challenges

C.2.1. STRATEGY

Build a comprehensive cohort of stakeholders with representatives from organizations that communicate regularly and share best practices that lead to a consistent and comprehensive approach to community assistance

Output: Provide regular opportunities for stakeholders to engage in conversations about the locations and types of assistance being provided to communities so the delivery of requested expertise is coordinated and not duplicated

Outcome: This coordinated approach among communities results in the measurable impact of services provided by the technical assistance providers, which creates greater impact at the local level

GOAL D: Utilize existing structure of retiree attraction program and expand to include family attraction/repatriation of former Mississippians

OBJECTIVE D.1

Provide support to communities seeking to attract retirees to the State of Mississippi

D.1.1. STRATEGY

Grow and strengthen Welcome Home Mississippi Retirement and assist the certified retirement communities in their efforts to attract retirees through statewide and localized marketing and promotion activities

Output: Receive at least 1,000 direct leads from marketing and promotion efforts and disseminate those leads to the appropriate certified retirement cities

Output: Provide technical assistance and training to the 12 retiree attraction directors

Output: Aggressively market the benefits of becoming a certified retirement city to select communities in Mississippi

Outcome: Convert 5% of the direct leads generated to retirees relocating to Mississippi

Outcome: Enable the 12 retiree attraction directors to increase their lead generation by 25% over the past year because of the training and technical assistance received

Outcome: Increase the number of certified retirement cities in Mississippi to 15

Objective D.2

The existing retiree attraction program – Welcome Home Mississippi – operates in the community development space and has opportunity to expand its current focus on retirees to include a family attraction/repatriation effort.

D.2.1 Strategy

Utilize research to determine the market for family attraction/repatriation of former Mississippians at least one of whom may be in a profession needed in Mississippi's private sector economy (business expansions and new-to-MS businesses).

Output: Expanded focus of existing program

Outcome: More families and professionals move or repatriate to Mississippi leading to economic growth

Efficiency: Synergistic support of other MDA programs

Program 3: Support Services

GOAL A: Support departmental staff and the state's economic development community by providing systems, services and information, which facilitate effective and efficient achievement of MDA's mission

A.1.1. STRATEGY

Actively position the state strategically in domestic and foreign markets through consumer-targeted advertising, marketing and event efforts

Output: Develop and execute economic development events, including virtual events, domestically and internationally

Output: Produce consumer targeted marketing collateral and advertising campaigns

Output: Generate 300,000 page views to MDA's primary website showcasing Mississippi's competitive advantages and success stories

A.1.2. STRATEGY

Strengthen the initiative and support networks among MEC and MEDC membership to closely align with the state's business climate goals and objectives

Output: Consolidated messaging, public-sector and private-sector collaboration

Efficiency: Economies of scale reduce duplication of effort

A.1.3. STRATEGY

Implement a Performance Based Career Path for accountability and excellence by encouraging MDA staff to meet and exceed metrics/goals and achieve professional development benchmarks

Output: MDA staff reviewed on a regular basis for progress toward their goals based on agreed-upon metrics

Output: Budgeting process reflecting the demonstrable effectiveness of each unit within MDA

Outcome: A more effective and efficient MDA with lower instances of turnover

A.1.4. STRATEGY

Be actively engaged with industry stakeholders and policymakers in working collaboratively toward overall statewide goals of improving Mississippi's business climate

Output: Discussions among stakeholders in public and private sectors about the process of economic and community development

Outcome: More informed and capable leadership around the state

A.1.5. STRATEGY

Improve financial management systems and processes to increase effective and efficient utilization and management of the agency's fiscal resources to achieve support services program administration of less than 9.5% of the total MDA budget.

Output: More efficient processing of invoices for economic development requests for reimbursement

Efficiency: Improve the state's position with developers and consultants as a place to locate a business

A.1.6. STRATEGY

Maintain and improve information technology designed and managed to assist MDA in meeting its economic development and community program objectives

Output: Utilize industry research and analytics to deploy leading technology to support efficient and effective work both in and out of the office

Output: More efficient processing of business intelligence and target market requests for information

Efficiency: Improve the state's position with developers and consultants as a place to locate a business

GOAL B: Support the development of communities and leaders around the state so they can successfully compete for jobs and investment (industrial, commercial or retail) through asset-development efforts

OBJECTIVE B.1.

Implement a program that will provide direction to communities on improving economic development competitiveness

B.1.1. STRATEGY:

Offer group training to leaders in communities, enabling the development and implementation of long-range plans geared toward economic development success. Sessions will include successful industrial development programs, retail development and community revitalization.

Output: Host 10 local training sessions around the state

Outcome: Twenty-seven local elected officials and local leaders with a better understanding of how economic development success can be achieved

B.1.2. STRATEGY:

Provide direct training of local elected officials and relevant partners of local elected officials.

Output: Training programs developed and implemented, known as “First Steps.”

Output: One-on-one consultative and training sessions related to fee-in-lieu, project development, site development, and economic development program creation.

Outcome: More comprehensive working relationships between MDA and local elected officials and more knowledge around the state regarding economic competitiveness

Outcome: More sites around the state will become eligible for site development funding leading to higher eligibility for significant economic development projects

Program 4: Special Projects and Pass Throughs

Section left blank intentionally

Program 5: Tourism

GOAL A: Grow the state's economy through aggressive advertising and marketing of the state's tourism assets in targeted media markets and through an optimum mix of media platforms

OBJECTIVE A. 1.

Host 30 million visitors resulting in \$7.5 billion in Mississippi expenditures

A.1.1. STRATEGY

Invest in a range of advertising outlets and Visit Mississippi program activations. Develop marketing and advertising campaigns and activations around Visit Mississippi's key pillars and annual themes. Align campaigns and activations with markets corresponding to key pillars, themes, state regions and geographic demographics.

Output: Leverage current appropriations through allocation to print, digital, broadcast and streaming media placements; inclusion in sales, sports and outdoor publications and guidebooks; digital influencers; website and social media content; research and data analytics to drive placement strategy.

Outcome: Generate 40,000 tourist inquiries and 1.3 million page views to the Visit Mississippi website through unique visitors and digital advertising

Efficiency: Higher return on every \$1 spent on advertising and marketing

Efficiency: Track overall program success and ROI through new investments in research services

A.1.2. STRATEGY

Strengthen regional and international partnerships to sell Mississippi as a destination internationally and connect Mississippi partners with our global contacts

Output: Media buys, social media campaigns and direct marketing to targeted international markets

Outcome: Increase in international travelers and international expenditures in the State

A.1.3. STRATEGY

Continue market-specific tactics to build international programs and increase international travel to Mississippi from established markets (United Kingdom, France, Germany) and developing markets

Output: Participate in international sales and media missions and trade shows, both in-market and domestic, to build relationships with international tour operators, itinerary planners and media. Host international trade and media familiarization tours in partnership with Mississippi DMOs and attractions.

Output: Joint marketing and participation in trade shows with CVBs, DMOs, convention centers and venues to recruit meetings and conventions

Output: Utilize international in-market representatives and regional marketing organizations such as Travel South International to leverage international impact opportunities including advertising co-ops and earned media

Outcome: International travelers are proven to stay longer and spend more money, resulting in more revenue for Mississippi and recognition as a premier destination in the American southeast.

A.1.4. STRATEGY

Continue development of leisure, group, business, sports and outdoor programs to increase domestic visitor spending year over year

Output: Lead coordination and programming of Visit Mississippi trade show booths with inclusion of Mississippi DMOs, attractions and venues to recruit domestic leisure, group tour, conference business

Output: Distribute multi-city and regional itineraries with new attractions, exhibits and events at trade shows and activations. Develop relationships with industry partners and fulfill itinerary planning service requests.

Outcome: Drive increase in tourism-related spending and length of stay by domestic visitors

GOAL B: Increase brand recognition, asset awareness and positive media coverage, resulting in increased economic development and leisure/cultural tourism travel to Mississippi

B.1.1. STRATEGY

Maintain Mississippi's 12 state welcome centers and cultural programs, including historic trail marker programs, to increase new and repeat visitor sentiment. Fulfill inquiry leads efficiently and effectively for greatest conversion rate and to achieve 2,842,273 tourists registered per year.

Output: Lead staff development initiatives and hospitality trainings for state welcome center employees; Provide up-to-date tour guides, informational brochures and calendars promoting Mississippi events, attractions, lodging and dining options.

Output: Develop and promote Mississippi's four cultural trails: the Mississippi Blues Trail, the Mississippi Freedom Trail, the Mississippi Country Music Trail and the Mississippi Writers Trail. Source and coordinate activations complementing Visit Mississippi pillars such as music-, culinary- and literary-themed festivals.

Outcome: Growing Mississippi's economy by encouraging more drive-market and drive-through visitors to stop and spend at Mississippi attractions, events, restaurants, and hotels

Efficiency: Measure success of pitches, promotions and earned coverage of all programs through monthly reporting by contracted public relations firm. Measure success of consumer activations by lead inquiry and fulfillment.

