



5 Year Strategic Plan
Fiscal Year 2027-2031

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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 has created the opportunity to rethink how we spend funds and what we invest in. The Office continues to utilize funds to establish new workforce training 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. Funds continue to be dedicated to new and expanding industry to support economic development, by working directly with companies like Amazon Web Services, Huber Engineered Wood, and Amplify Cell Technologies. AccelerateMS has staff embedded with Amplify Cell Technologies as they provide a dual role of building out customized training as a service while serving as critical human capital for the company as it establishes operations. Through these efforts, a critical gap has been identified in the supply and demand of construction workers, specifically in Central Mississippi. This gap is expected to continue to widen without significant focus and investment.

AccelerateMS will establish its first Talent Solutions Center in the Jackson Metro in FY26 to meet this expanded need as a partnership with private industry, local community colleges, and South Central Mississippi Works. This effort can be duplicated in regions where an extreme and critical demand is prevalent as well as local partners to ensure funds are leveraged appropriately and necessary partners are at the table. AccelerateMS and MDES continue pursuit of federal grants to offset the anticipated costs of establishing these centers.

As of July 1, 2025, all workforce training dollars operated by the office are managed through the same software program (Grantrak) and all demographics are collected through MS Works platform, which removes duplicating work and formally aligns collection of data with federal workforce funds which is vital to ensuring funds are capitalized on and leveraged where possible. This also ensures data is aligned and wholistic for reporting moving forward. The Office continues work to enhance the available technological system as we identify future needs and realities.

Additionally, efforts continue to ensure Mississippi secondary students have access to quality career coaching and in FY26, AccelerateMS will fund a minimum of 209 career coaches in every public school in the state that wants one. Additionally, a new coach ‘train the trainer’ model began in FY26 where subject matter experts from critical need industries will be engaged regionally to ensure all career coaches understand critical occupation need areas like advanced manufacturing and construction.

Efforts to continue to drive high quality CTE and improving the alignment between K12 and postsecondary education and training programs are driving national partnerships with groups like the Strada Education Foundation, Lumina Foundation, and Kellogg. Significant enhancements to how we deliver, promote, and evaluate credentials of value are underway.

Lastly, AccelerateMS continues to examine ways to reduce administrative bureaucracy of operating the funding entrusted to the Office. This effort is ongoing and anticipated to reduce fund operating costs annually by 10 percent to decrease the overall budget need for ongoing programs and ensuring funds and human capital are available to support expanding needs.

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 is 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 occurs 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. These funds are experiencing an accruing balance that the Office is aware of and working to identify quality investments where the funds can be used as intended by the Legislature. The expectation is that these funds will be spent down by the end of FY27 as several community college partners ramp up priority occupation training in Central Mississippi, North Mississippi, and South Mississippi.

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 \$22 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 three primary means: 1) an annual allocation to each requesting training provider based on requests submitted to the office; 2) awards for 'special projects' serving specified needs supported by industry requests, demands, or needs in the associated region; and 3) through direct purchases made by the office to support regional workforce needs for equipment, contractual services, and training.

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 secondary institutions, community colleges, IHLs, and local workforce development areas in Mississippi. Funds are also used for 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 FY26, AccelerateMS, through the fiscal agency of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) received \$15.6 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. This request is not expected to increase in the near future unless additional needs are identified.

During the 2025 legislative session, AccelerateMS received, an appropriation of \$4.1M in state funds for its office operation. A request of \$5.6M is anticipated for FY27 to add staff to support the Talent Solutions Centers, fully fund staff that have been operating on federal grants, and

provide a new, statewide outreach and engagement effort to drive students and adults into priority occupations.

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 and Poppy) 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, FY26, \$870,000. Funds appropriated are utilized to support contracted requirements related to recruiting, technology, and training for the project. It is anticipated that these funds will be fully exhausted by FY29.

Technology Enhancement Fund

AccelerateMS received a \$500,000 continuation of funding to support technology costs associated with office tracking systems.

American Rescue Plan Act

- Additional ARPA funds were legislatively assigned during the 2023-26 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. This grant ends in FY28.

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 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 request. We are anticipated to expend approximately \$ 4.0 million for personnel, \$250,000 for office business travel, \$50,000 for Supplies and equipment, and \$1,700,000 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.

- 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 – Fully establish the Jackson Metro Talent Solutions Center with the full breadth of programming required locally.
 - Objective – Fully equip facility, place all MOUs and operating agreements into action, expand courses to meet identified needs.Basis of Measurement – Documents on file for associated agreements and training programs. Evidence of courses.
- 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 – Procure statewide training registration platform with separate instances for each partner and the Office holding an umbrella account.
- Objective – Identify areas of excess administrative burden and streamline processes and procedures.

Basis of Measurement – Statewide system procured and operating, statements from partners related to overall cost and time savings.

- 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.

- Goal 4 – Expand career coaching program into adult populations, specifically targeting those looking to upskill but unsure of quality opportunities.
 - Objective – increase ROI to individuals of working thus increasing average wages

Basis of Measurement – policy adjusted to allow for adults to be served by existing K12 Career coach program

- Goal 5 – 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.

Fiscal Year 2028

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 \$ 4.0 million for personnel, \$250,000 for office business travel, \$50,000 for supplies and equipment, and \$1,700,000 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 – Establish ROI for current outcomes from the state workforce plan and adjust the plan as necessary. Analyze outcomes from combined WIOA/Perkins Plan

- Basis of Measurement: Conduct ROI study.
- Goal 2 – Establish next two Talent Solutions Centers with the full breadth of programming required locally.
 - Objective – Fully equip facility, place all MOUs and operating agreements into action, expand courses to meet identified needs.

Basis of Measurement – Documents on file for associated agreements and training programs.

- Goal 3 - 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 – Reduce operating costs by 10% through reducing administrative burden.
 - Objective – Identify gaps in ability to serve industry and adjust guidelines and partner activities.

Basis of Measurement – Budget review for 10% reduction from this area and adjust full budget to apply saved funds to new programs; analyze stated gaps from employers to address within guidelines for funding in the future.

- 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, expand integrated, virtual WIOA support services.
 - Objective – provide integrated supportive services within Talent Solutions Centers
 - Objective – Improve efficiency for participants in programs to receive services and register for programs.

Fiscal Years 2029 – 2031

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, \$250,000 for Supplies and equipment, and \$2,500,000 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. As with all strategy development within AccelerateMS, this plan is subject to change, adjustment, and/enhancement as new information/opportunities become apparent.