

2028



FIVE YEAR Strategic Plan

2028/2032

Align | Train | Connect | Advance

www.acceleratems.org



1. Comprehensive Mission Statement

Align. Train. Connect. Advance.

The Office of Workforce Development (AccelerateMS) exists to align Mississippi's workforce, education, and economic development systems to create a globally competitive workforce that supports business growth, expands labor force participation, and connects Mississippians to quality careers aligned with the state's economic priorities.

2. Statement of Agency Philosophy

AccelerateMS believes Mississippi's workforce system must function as a unified development strategy aligned to economic development rather than a collection of disconnected programs.

The agency is committed to:

- Aligning workforce investments with economic development opportunities and priority sectors;
- Using data, measurable outcomes, and return-on-investment analysis to guide funding decisions;
- Prioritizing quality job placement, credential attainment, and labor force participation growth over program volume;
- Ensuring workforce development efforts are industry-driven and regionally responsive;
- Expanding access to workforce opportunities through coordinated support services and streamlined systems;
- Building statewide capacity through strategic partnerships among employers, education providers, workforce agencies, and community organizations.

AccelerateMS further believes that workforce development is fundamental to Mississippi's long-term economic competitiveness and must remain closely integrated with statewide economic development strategy and project recruitment efforts.

3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

Statewide Goal #1 Workforce 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, specifically the available population for work.

- Annual percentage change in resident population

Category: Commercial Activity**Relevant Benchmark #2**

AccelerateMS' overall mission aims to increase the quality of available workers through every division.

- Per Capita GDP (speaks to productivity)

Category: Job Growth**Relevant Benchmark #3**

- Net job growth,
- Annual percentage change in non-farm jobs,
- Number of jobs in each of MDA's seven targeted industries (adv. Man, aerospace, agribusiness, automotive, energy, healthcare, and shipbuilding);
- Number of jobs in manufacturing,

Category: Employment and Income**Relevant Benchmark #4**

- Percentage of the civilian non-institutional population 16 years and over employed;
- Percentage of Mississippians receiving workforce training services who are employed on year and five years after receiving training and their average salary;
- Job vacancy rate by industry and occupation,
- Unemployment rate,
- Average Annual Pay, Wage and salary disbursements,
- median household income,
- % of workers whose family income falls above 150% of the federal poverty guidelines

4. Overview of the Agency 5-year Strategic Plan

The Mississippi Office of Workforce Development, known as AccelerateMS, serves as the statewide integrator of Mississippi's workforce ecosystem, aligning education, workforce development, economic

development, and public investment toward common workforce outcomes. Mississippi must continue to build a workforce aligned to its unique economic portfolio.



Figure 1: Mississippi Workforce Development Alignment Framework

Over the next five years, AccelerateMS will continue transforming Mississippi's workforce development system from a collection of independent programs into a coordinated, data-driven talent development system aligned with the state's economic development priorities. The agency's primary role is to ensure Mississippi possesses the workforce capacity necessary to support business recruitment, business expansion, and long-term economic competitiveness while expanding opportunities for Mississippians to obtain quality careers.

As Mississippi experiences unprecedented economic development activity across advanced manufacturing, aerospace and defense, automotive, healthcare, energy, shipbuilding, logistics, technology, and other strategic industries, workforce availability has become one of the state's most significant competitive advantages—and one of its greatest challenges. AccelerateMS will continue working across education, workforce, economic development, and industry partners to ensure workforce investments are directly aligned with current and future employer demand. Workforce investments should produce measurable returns for workers, employers, and taxpayers and AccelerateMS continually works to examine outcomes to ensure this is occurring. To maximize the return on public workforce investments, AccelerateMS prioritizes occupations that are both critical to Mississippi's economy and capable of providing meaningful career opportunities for Mississippians. Priority occupations are identified through labor market analysis that considers current employer demand, projected workforce shortages, wage potential, economic impact, and regional industry needs. These occupations serve as the foundation for workforce investment decisions, helping align

education, training, career awareness, and employer services toward the occupations most essential to Mississippi's continued economic competitiveness and long-term prosperity.

Over the planning period, the agency will prioritize the development of a fully integrated statewide workforce system that reduces fragmentation, improves coordination among partners, leverages technology to streamline service delivery, and uses common performance measures to evaluate success. AccelerateMS will continue working with state agencies, educational and training institutions, workforce providers, employers, and regional partners to improve alignment of policies, funding, data systems, and customer experiences across Mississippi's workforce ecosystem.

AccelerateMS will further expand its role in supporting economic development projects by providing workforce strategy, customized talent solutions, labor market intelligence, and employer engagement services that help new and expanding businesses successfully establish and grow operations within Mississippi. The agency will continue strengthening partnerships with the Mississippi Development Authority, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Department of Corrections, Mag-Cor, the Department of Rehab Services, the Community College Board, IHL, individual community colleges, universities, local workforce development areas, K-12 education, and private industry to ensure workforce development remains closely integrated with statewide economic development efforts.

Technology modernization will remain a strategic priority throughout the planning period.

AccelerateMS will continue analyzing and making strategic recommendations related to the statewide workforce technology infrastructure to improve customer access, reduce administrative burden, strengthen data sharing among partners, and support more effective decision-making through integrated workforce data. These efforts will improve accountability while enabling policymakers to better measure workforce outcomes and return on public investment.

Recognizing that Mississippi's workforce needs continue to evolve, AccelerateMS will also expand initiatives that prepare workers for emerging industries and future skill requirements, including artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing technologies, data centers, construction, healthcare, skilled trades, and other high-demand occupations critical to Mississippi's long-term economic competitiveness.

Throughout this planning period, AccelerateMS will maintain its focus on measurable outcomes rather than program activity. Priority occupations will remain the organization's organizing framework for aligning education, workforce development, and economic development investments toward the occupations most critical to Mississippi's future economy. Success will be evaluated by improvements in labor force participation, access to high-value training programs, enrollment in high-value training programs at all levels of education, employment in priority occupations, credential attainment, wage

growth, employer satisfaction, and the overall effectiveness of Mississippi's workforce system in connecting individuals to quality careers while meeting the workforce needs of employers.

To accomplish these priorities, AccelerateMS will focus its strategic efforts in five integrated areas:

1. Statewide Workforce System Alignment

Continue building a coordinated workforce ecosystem that aligns state agencies, educational institutions, workforce providers, employers, and regional partners around common priorities, shared accountability, and improved customer outcomes.

2. Talent Pipeline Development

Strengthen workforce pipelines by improving career awareness, expanding access to high-quality education and training, supporting industry-recognized credentials, increasing postsecondary attainment, and aligning educational pathways with Mississippi's current and projected workforce needs.

3. Employer Solutions and Economic Competitiveness

Deliver workforce strategies and customized talent solutions that support business recruitment, business expansion, and existing industry while ensuring employers have access to the skilled workforce necessary for continued growth.

4. Workforce Technology, Data, and Performance

Modernize statewide workforce technology, improve labor market intelligence, expand integrated data systems, and strengthen performance measurement to support continuous improvement and evidence-based decision making.

5. Workforce Innovation and Future Readiness

Prepare Mississippi's workforce for future economic opportunities by expanding initiatives supporting emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, advanced industries, apprenticeship, work-based learning, and other innovative workforce strategies that strengthen the state's long-term competitiveness.

5. External/Internal Assessment

AccelerateMS operates in a rapidly evolving workforce and economic development environment where demographic changes, technological innovation, employer workforce demands, and public policy continue to reshape Mississippi's labor market. The agency's ability to achieve its mission depends upon successfully

coordinating multiple public and private partners while adapting workforce strategies to meet changing economic conditions.

As Mississippi continues experiencing historic economic development investment, workforce availability has become one of the state's primary competitive advantages and one of its greatest long-term challenges. Sustaining economic growth will require continued alignment among education, workforce development, economic development, employers, and community partners to ensure Mississippi can produce, attract, and retain the talent necessary to support expanding industries.

AccelerateMS continually evaluates internal operations, external conditions, workforce trends, and labor market data to ensure resources remain aligned with the state's highest workforce priorities. Executive leadership regularly reviews performance measures, financial accountability, operational efficiency, and workforce outcomes to guide strategic decision-making and continuous improvement.

Internal Management Systems

AccelerateMS maintains an integrated management framework that emphasizes accountability, performance measurement, financial stewardship, and outcome-based decision-making. Agency leadership utilizes performance dashboards, financial reporting, workforce outcome data, labor market intelligence, and program evaluations to monitor organizational effectiveness and guide investment decisions.

Formal policies, internal controls, procurement procedures, grant management processes, and performance monitoring systems provide consistent oversight of agency operations while ensuring compliance with applicable federal and state requirements.

The agency continues investing in workforce technology modernization, integrated data systems, and enhanced reporting capabilities to improve transparency, strengthen accountability, reduce administrative burden, and provide policymakers with timely workforce intelligence.

Factors Affecting Achievement of Agency Goals: *AccelerateMS recognizes several significant factors that may influence the agency's ability to achieve strategic objectives over the next five years.*

1. Economic Competitiveness

Mississippi's continued success in recruiting and expanding businesses depends increasingly upon workforce availability. Large-scale economic development projects, population trends, labor force participation, and increasing competition from neighboring states will continue influencing employer workforce demand and the need for responsive talent development strategies.

2. Workforce Demographics

An aging workforce, changing participation rates, geographic disparities, declining populations in some communities, and evolving worker expectations require workforce strategies that engage broader populations while expanding access to education, training, and employment opportunities.

3. Technology and Artificial Intelligence

Rapid advances in artificial intelligence, automation, digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and emerging technologies are transforming workforce needs across nearly every industry.

AccelerateMS must continually adapt workforce strategies, training investments, and labor market intelligence to prepare workers for emerging occupations while helping employers respond to changing skill requirements.

4. System Alignment and Interagency Coordination

Mississippi's workforce system includes numerous agencies, educational institutions, workforce providers, and community organizations operating under different funding streams and statutory authorities. Continued collaboration, shared accountability, integrated technology, and coordinated policy development remain essential to maximizing public investment and improving customer outcomes.

5. Federal and State Policy

Changes in federal workforce legislation, grant funding, regulatory requirements, education policy, and state appropriations may affect program administration, available resources, reporting requirements, and strategic priorities.

6. Workforce Technology and Data

Modern workforce systems require reliable technology infrastructure, integrated data systems, secure information sharing, and high-quality labor market intelligence. Continued investment in technology modernization is necessary to improve customer service, strengthen accountability, and support evidence-based workforce investment decisions.

Continuous Improvement

AccelerateMS embraces a culture of continuous improvement and regularly evaluates programs, investments, partnerships, and operational practices to maximize effectiveness and return on public

investment. Performance measures, workforce outcome data, employer feedback, financial reviews, and program evaluations are used to identify opportunities for improvement, strengthen accountability, and inform future workforce investment decisions.

As economic conditions, workforce needs, technology, and public policy continue to evolve, AccelerateMS will adjust operational strategies, reallocate resources where appropriate, and strengthen partnerships to ensure Mississippi's workforce system remains responsive, efficient, and aligned with the state's long-term economic development priorities.

AccelerateMS recognizes that workforce development is not accomplished by any single program or agency. Sustainable workforce outcomes require coordinated leadership, shared accountability, strategic investment, and continuous alignment across Mississippi's education, workforce, economic development, and employer communities.

6. Entity Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures by Program

AccelerateMS is Mississippi's lead workforce development entity with a mission to align, strengthen, and continuously improve the state's workforce system to support economic growth and connect Mississippians to quality careers. The organization serves as the strategic link between workforce development, education, and economic development, ensuring Federal and State public investments are coordinated to meet the current and future talent needs of Mississippi employers. AccelerateMS prioritizes workforce investments that support both export-driven industries responsible for economic growth and community-serving occupations essential to Mississippi's quality of life.

AccelerateMS provides statewide leadership through workforce strategy, employer engagement, talent development, data and labor market intelligence, workforce investment, and system coordination. Working collaboratively with employers, educational institutions, state agencies, local workforce development areas, economic development organizations, and community partners, the agency develops workforce solutions that expand labor force participation, strengthen talent pipelines, and improve employment outcomes across Mississippi.

Over the next five years, AccelerateMS will focus on building a more coordinated, responsive, and accountable workforce system that prepares Mississippians for high-demand careers while supporting business recruitment, business expansion, and long-term economic competitiveness. Strategic priorities include aligning workforce investments with employer demand, strengthening education-to-employment pathways, modernizing workforce technology and data systems, expanding access to workforce opportunities, and continuously evaluating outcomes to ensure responsible stewardship of public resources.

To accomplish these priorities, AccelerateMS operates three primary strategic program areas:

1. **Talent Solutions & Workforce Investments** – Partnering with employers, education providers, and regional workforce partners to develop customized workforce solutions, expand priority occupation training, invest workforce resources strategically, and support business recruitment and expansion.
2. **Talent Pipeline Development** – Building Mississippi's future workforce by strengthening career awareness, career coaching, work-based learning, postsecondary transitions, industry-recognized credential attainment, and education-to-employment pathways aligned with employer demand.
3. **Statewide Workforce System Leadership** – Providing statewide leadership through workforce strategy, policy coordination, labor market intelligence, technology modernization, performance management, integrated data systems, and cross-agency collaboration to ensure Mississippi's workforce system operates as a unified, outcome-driven enterprise.

The following goals, objectives, strategies, and performance measures establish the framework through which AccelerateMS measures progress toward improving workforce outcomes, supporting employers, and advancing Mississippi's long-term economic competitiveness.

Program 1: Talent Solutions

Goal: Develop and deploy solutions that ensure Mississippi employers have access to the skilled talent necessary to expand, compete, and invest while connecting Mississippians to quality careers aligned with employer demand.

Authority: Statewide Strategic Plan – Workforce Development; Mississippi Code governing the Office of Workforce Development.

Objective 1.1: Increase employer access to qualified workers in Mississippi's priority occupations.

Outcome Measures

- Retain or upskill 2,000 jobs
- 60 percent of participants employed in related fields
- 70% of participants earning wages above State's MIT Living Wage

Strategy 1.1.1

Invest Workforce Enhancement Training funds, MS Works, WIOA, and other workforce resources in priority occupation training aligned with employer demand.

Output:

- Number of high-value training programs supported
- Number of participants trained
- Number of new training seats created

Efficiency:

- Cost per participant
- Cost per successful placement
- Return on Investment to individual and State

Explanatory:

- Employer demand
- Available Federal and State funding
- Regional labor market conditions

Strategy 1.1.2

Provide customized workforce solutions for new and expanding industries.

Output:

- Employers served
- Customized training projects
- Talent Solutions Center engagements

Efficiency:

- Average response time
- Average project launch time

Explanatory:

- Economic development projects
- Industry demand and economic conditions

Strategy 1.1.3

Coordinate workforce investments with economic development priorities.

Output:

- Increased Priority Occupation Training by 250 seats/year
- Increased Industry partnerships leading to satisfaction

Outcome:

- Increased workforce availability in targeted industries

Program 2: Talent Pipeline Development

Goal: Strengthen Mississippi's long-term talent pipeline by increasing career awareness, expanding work-based learning, improving postsecondary transitions, and aligning education with workforce demand.

Objective 2.1

Increase student awareness of Priority Occupations.

Outcome:

- Career awareness
- Postsecondary enrollment in high-value programs improved
- Increased Mississippi workforce participation in priority occupations

Strategy 2.1.1

Effectively operate statewide Career Coach program.

Output:

- Career coaches funded
- Schools served
- Students engaged
- High-value programs expanded capacity

Efficiency:

- Students per coach
- Cost per student served

Strategy 2.1.2

Expand work-based learning opportunities.

Output:

- Students participating
- Employer partners

Outcome:

- Priority sector and occupation work-based learning participation
- Priority sector and occupation employment transition

Strategy 2.1.3

Increase attainment of workforce credentials before graduation.

Output:

- Credentials earned
- Career pathways supported

Outcome:

- Recognized credential attainment
- Employment after graduation

Program 3: Workforce System Operations & Accountability

Goal: Provide statewide leadership, coordination, technology, data, accountability, and performance management necessary to operate a modern, integrated workforce system.

Objective 3.1

Improve statewide coordination across workforce, education, and economic development partners.

Outcome:

- Improved system alignment
- Reduced duplication
- Faster service delivery

Strategy 3.1.1

Develop and maintain integrated workforce technology and data systems.

Output:

- Technology enhancements
- Data integrations
- Workforce dashboards

Efficiency:

- Average reporting time
- Average time to receive services for individuals
- System uptime

Strategy 3.1.2

Produce workforce intelligence supporting policy and investment decisions.

Output:

- Workforce reports
- ROI analyses
- Labor market products

Outcome:

- Data-informed investment decisions

Strategy 3.1.3

Monitor workforce investments and program performance.

Output:

- Monitoring reviews
- Program evaluations
- Performance reports

Efficiency:

- Monitoring completed on schedule
- Corrective actions implemented

Outcome:

- Increased accountability
- Improved return on investment

Strategy 3.1.4

Coordinate statewide workforce initiatives that improve system alignment.

Examples:

- Workforce Pell
- Apprenticeship
- Mississippi Postsecondary Attainment Council
- Talent Solutions Centers
- AI Workforce initiatives
- Interagency partnerships

Output:

- Initiatives implemented
- Partner agencies engaged

Outcome:

- Improved statewide coordination resulting in effective navigation of Mississippians to priority occupations.

