State of Mississippi

Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act

Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway

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OVERVIEW

The state of Mississippi has opted to submit a Combined Plan to meet the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This Combined Plan is built around Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant's pledge that every Mississippian who wants a job should be able to find a job. Governor Bryant's pledge calls for a clear understanding of the opportunities and challenges that workers face in an increasingly globalizing and rapidly changing economy that places pressure on the current and prospective workforce to gain more academic credentials and higher levels of skill. His pledge also calls for a clear understanding of the opportunities and challenges businesses face to remain competitive.

Mississippi's Combined Plan includes the six required state programs—the Adult Program, the Dislocated Worker Program, the Youth Program, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, the Wagner-Peyser Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program—along with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Unemployment Insurance (UI), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (JVSG), and Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).

Governor Bryant challenged all workforce and education stakeholders to develop a workforce plan centered on an effective and efficient state workforce development system designed to meet the demands of Mississippi's current and future job seekers and businesses. Mississippi's State Workforce Investment Board was tasked with soliciting input from the public, business community, workforce stakeholders, and educational entities. The process began in July 2014 with the establishment of a task force to conduct a study on workforce development needs in Mississippi. The findings and recommendations of the task force study were used as a common framework in the development of the workforce plan as prescribed by WIOA (see Appendix A). Governor Bryant met with education and workforce stakeholders to explain the importance of their work and encourage their engagement in the process, and a planning document was developed that clearly outlined how each party would be involved (see Appendix A). Working groups were established to seek input for the development of the strategic and operational aspects of the workforce plan. Open meetings were held to encourage wide public participation in the process. A focus group was conducted to gather input from the business community. A website was created to provide regular updates on the process and another opportunity for public participation. These activities resulted in a Combined Plan wherein the scope is to facilitate the integration of state and local resources aimed at reorienting and realigning programs and institutions to support a vibrant economy that offers all Mississippians—especially the most vulnerable—an opportunity for a higher quality of life.

The foundation for Mississippi's Combined Plan was rooted in the economic and workforce analysis prescribed by WIOA. Mississippi has and will continue to have a positive economic outlook. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2015) reveal several encouraging facts. The state has experienced continuous growth in total employment since 2009. Mississippi has also experienced rapid growth in its number of new businesses, with more than 2,100 new establishments in the last three years alone. As a result, the unemployment rate has declined from 10.4 percent in 2010 to 6.7 percent in May 2015. Similarly, underemployment reached a peak of 17.6 percent in 2010 but has been trending downward, reaching 13.4 percent in 2015. The current economic environment is creating opportunities for the establishment of new and better jobs. Advanced manufacturing is emerging as a key sector in the state. In fact, data from the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange show that advanced manufacturing was the biggest job creator in the state, with more than 21,000 job openings in 2014 alone.

Economic and workforce analysis clearly shows that the state is in an excellent position to improve its total workforce participation rate by increasing worker skills that are in demand by employers. Specifically, the state has a workforce participation rate of 55 percent, among the lowest in the country. Analysis reveals that the state's largest skill gap is in middle-skill jobs—those requiring more than a high

school diploma but less than a four-year college degree, often in combination with some level of technical proficiency. Providing Mississippians with training and education opportunities aimed at closing the skill gap will improve their ability to pursue jobs that better match their credentials and full-time employment aspirations. This approach will also provide employers with a workforce that possesses the skills and core competencies required for businesses to remain competitive in a global economy.

The state's strategic vision is to create a workforce system that acts and functions as an ecosystem where all parts are connected and line up to achieve common goals so that every Mississippian has the opportunity to be work- or career-ready and to secure his or her dream job right here at home. Currently, the complexity of Mississippi's workforce system and the sheer number of education, training, and employment support service activities geared to address barriers to employment pose a challenge to the state. Under Mississippi's Combined Plan, from the moment one enters the education and workforce system, he or she will be presented with the necessary tools to choose and pursue a career pathway that is relevant to current and future labor markets. Similarly, from the moment current and prospective businesses enter into a partnership with Mississippi's education and workforce system, resources will be immediately aligned to cultivate the sustainable, high-performance workforce critical for maintaining and expanding businesses' long-term economic viability, in turn creating better and more sustainable employment opportunities for Mississippians.

The state's primary strategy is to create a career pathway model that facilitates the integration of programs and improvement of efficiency in service delivery across partners. This model will be known as the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. The state will reimagine its One-Stop workforce delivery system and create 1) Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, 2) Affiliate One-Stop Centers, 3) Virtual Access One-Stop Centers, 4) Call Center Support, and 5) Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Centers. The policies and regulations will be established for the new WIOA Combined Plan Partners' workforce ecosystem to improve technology integration and capitalize on the state's nation-leading longitudinal data system.

Operationally, the state will undertake the following activities to implement its Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model:

1. Align WIOA Combined Plan Partners in state education, training, and workforce around the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model, a data-driven roadmap designed to guide Mississippians from any state of work-readiness into gainful employment.

2. Build on the state's current information technology infrastructure to coordinate and align the case management activities of all WIOA Combined Plan Partners in education, training, workforce, and supportive services to realize greater efficiency in service delivery, reduce duplication of effort, and ensure that every Mississippian receives the highest level of coordinated assistance in connecting to the labor market.

3. Build on the state's current physical network of WIOA Combined Plan Partners in workforce, education, and supportive service partner offices to ensure that every Mississippian has access to staff members who understand the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model and take a job-focused approach to case management.

4. Develop performance measures and other measures of socioeconomic mobility that give the state workforce system the ability to assess program effectiveness and pursue a data-driven approach to strategic planning.

5. Engage in continuous research to understand the workforce needs of Mississippi's employers in the context of local and regional economic sectors, making the results of this analysis available for economic development and other strategic workforce planning purposes.

6. Provide a common vision for WIOA Combined Plan Partners for state workforce, training, education, and supportive services through coordinating entities such as the State Workforce Investment Board and Mississippi's four local workforce development boards.

Following Governor Bryant's leadership will allow the state to develop and implement the most comprehensive WIOA workforce system in the country. Mississippi's system will serve people from all walks of life with any work experience and skill needs, such as individuals who seek training after being laid off for several years, those who are preparing for their first job or postsecondary education, and people who pursue training during or after work to improve their skills. The system will also serve those in need of help with childcare or transportation, as well as those who need to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills or improve their English language skills.

WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

Mississippi Combined Plan

The state of Mississippi has opted to submit a Combined Plan. The plan includes the six required state programs, along with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Unemployment Insurance (UI), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (JVSG), and Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The main focus of the plan is to improve the economic opportunities of all job seekers, especially those with low skills.

Mississippi is in an excellent position to implement the proposed Combined Plan. Over the last decade or so, the state has created a cultural and political environment that fosters cooperation and integration across education and workforce programs. In 2004, the state passed the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act. The main goal of the act was to reduce fragmentation and duplication of services and to promote performance-based management. The state has developed and implemented one of the country's most integrated technology-based workforce systems, commonly known as Mississippi Works. The system fully integrates UI, TAA, Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Veterans, Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), and SCSEP. Mississippi Works is fully interoperable with other case management systems, such as those for Rehabilitation Services, Adult Basic Education, and TANF. The state has also developed and implemented one of the most comprehensive and advanced integrated data systems in the country: LifeTracks. The development of this system began in 2005, and the system has been fully operational for the last five years. In 2012, the Mississippi Legislature created the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Governing Board for the management and oversight of data sharing and data use. Board members include representatives from each workforce and education sector in the state. The SLDS Governing Board has developed a clear set of rules that define the scope of LifeTracks and ensure data integrity, security, confidentiality, and privacy (see Appendix B).

Mississippi's plan includes two major components: 1) Combined Plan programs and 2) Strategic programs, which will increase the impact of the Combined Plan. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, these various programs are administered by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS),

Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), and Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC).

Table 1: Combined Plan Programs

Agency	Program
MDES	– Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs (WIOA Title I) – Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA Title III) – Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program (authorized under Title II-Chapter 2 of the Trade Act of 1974) – Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code) – Unemployment Insurance Programs (authorized under state unemployment compensation laws) – Senior Community Service Employment Programs (authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965)
MCCB	– Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (WIOA Title II)
MDRS	– Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV)
MDHS	– Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Table 2: Strategic Programs

Agency	Program
MDHS	– Employment and training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008) – Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 – Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act
MDE & MCCB	– Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins and Technical Education Act of 2006
MDA	– Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
MDOC	– Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (authorized under Section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007)

Mississippi Local Workforce Development Areas

Mississippi has four designated local workforce development areas (see Figure 1) that are generally aligned with the planning and development district structure in the state in accordance with the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004. Planning and development districts serve as the fiscal agents to manage funds and to oversee and support local workforce development boards aligned with the areas and local programs and activities as delivered by the One-Stop employment and training system.

In accordance with WIOA requirements (section 106) and Mississippi's Local Workforce Development Area Designation Policy (see Appendix C), Governor Phil Bryant received and approved requests for initial designation from the four local workforce development boards: Delta, Mississippi Partnership, Southcentral Mississippi Works, and Twin Districts. Prior to submitting the initial designation requests to Governor Bryant, the boards posted the requests on their websites for a public comment period. These areas met the three criteria for initial designation: (1) they were designated as local areas for the purposes of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 prior to the two-year period preceding the date of enactment of WIOA; (2) they have performed successfully; and (3) they have sustained fiscal integrity. Subsequent designation of local workforce development areas and the definition of regions will take place according to Mississippi's Local Workforce Development Area Designation Policy in compliance with all relevant sections of WIOA.

Figure 1: Local Workforce Development Areas
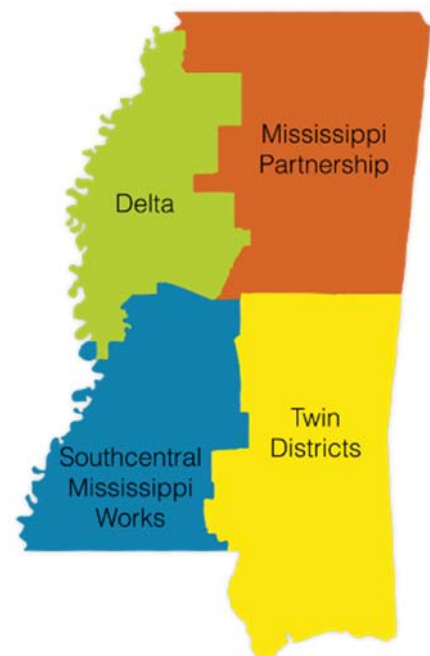
Mississippi's Economic and Demographic Regions

Local Workforce Development Areas as Regions

The four local workforce development areas (LWDAs) in Mississippi were originally defined by the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) by direction of the Governor following the guidelines set forth in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Section 116. These boundaries, however, are not simply jurisdictional; they follow significant demographic and economic boundaries. Each LWDA contributes to Mississippi's economic sector goals, identified by the Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA) target industries (Table 3).

Table 3. Mississippi LWDAs and MDA Target Industries

		MDA Target Industries							
	Industry	Advanced Manufacturing	Agri-business	Aerospace	Automotive	Energy	Healthcare	Ship-building	Tourism and Film
Delta	New and Emerging						Pharm-aceutical Production		Casinos/ Gaming
	Established		Crop Production						
MS Partnership	New and Emerging	Aerospace, Automotive, Furniture		Civilian and Military	Auto & Tire Manufactur-ing		Telehealth		Leisure & Accom-modation
	Established								
Southcentral MS Works	New and Emerging	Automotive							Casinos/ Gaming
	Established		Forestry/ Logging			Oil & Gas	Services & Education		
Twin Districts	New and Emerging	Transportation, Wood Products		Aviation Composites & Unmanned Aerial Vehicles					
	Established					Clean Coal, Oil & Gas	Services	Civilian and Military	Leisure & Accom-modation

New and emerging industries are defined as industries with no presence or a smaller presence in 1990 that grew by more than 200 percent by 2010. Established industries are defined as industries that had a larger presence in 1990 with little or no growth by 2010.

The Delta LWDA is known for its agricultural production. Analyzing jobs in Mississippi by location quotient (the concentration of jobs in a geographical area relative to the national average of jobs in this industry), 12 of the 13 top crop production and food manufacturing counties in Mississippi during 2015 are in the Delta LWDA. While the fertile land of the Delta that supports agribusiness defines the Delta LWDA, the area is also diversifying in healthcare with service providers like Mid-Delta and pharmaceutical manufacturers/preparers such as Baxter and PharMEDium.

The Mississippi Partnership LWDA is known as a manufacturing hub. Seven of the top 10 manufacturing counties in Mississippi are in the Mississippi Partnership LWDA. Industries like plastics and rubber manufacturing, transportation equipment manufacturing, and furniture manufacturing are growing and shifting from low-skill manufacturing to middle-skill, advanced manufacturing operations in this LWDA. Large manufacturing employers such as Cooper Tires, Yokohama, Toyota, Stark Aerospace, Airbus

Helicopters, Aurora Flight Sciences, Ashley Furniture, and Lane Furniture all have locations in the Mississippi Partnership LWDA.

The Southcentral Mississippi Works LWDA includes the state capital and is known for its presence in sectors such as healthcare, energy, and agribusiness. Eleven of the top 20 Mississippi counties for forestry and logging; wood product manufacturing; oil and gas extraction; hospitals, nursing, and residential care facilities; and social assistance fall within the Southcentral Mississippi Works LWDA. Because of a strong hospital system and medical education focus, the Southcentral Mississippi Works LWDA serves as a healthcare hub for the entire state. The presence of oil and natural gas deposits in the southwestern part of Mississippi give Southcentral Mississippi Works its strength in the energy sector. The Southcentral Mississippi Works LWDA is also becoming a key hub for the automotive industry with large manufacturers such as Nissan and Continental Tire.

The Twin Districts LWDA, located in the southeastern part of the state, is successful in several sectors, including manufacturing, healthcare, tourism, and agribusiness. Within manufacturing, top industries in this LWDA include transportation equipment manufacturing and electrical equipment, appliance, and component manufacturing. The top industry within the agribusiness sector in the Twin Districts LWDA is wood product manufacturing. Within the tourism sector, many are employed in the amusement, gambling, and recreation industries in this area. The presence of the Gulf Coast as a tourist attraction and hub of international business and the Pine Belt in southern Mississippi help give the Twin Districts LWDA its unique economic identity.

Sub-Regions within the Four Local Workforce Development Areas

While each of the four WIOA LWDAs has a strong overall economic identity, some economic and demographic variability exists *within* these areas (see Table 4) relevant to any training or supportive efforts.

Within each of the four LWDAs, entities such as economic development councils (EDCs) and public utilities manage target industry regions. With vital information on available sites, buildings, and workforce demographics, EDCs assist companies considering Mississippi as a potential location. The presence of EDCs can be useful in identifying subtle differences of economic or industry focus within an LWDA. In addition, one of Mississippi's utility companies, Mississippi Power, manages a target industry region within a single LWDA, Twin Districts. In areas such as the Delta LWDA, where the economic development councils have a more single-minded mission and cover the entirety of the LWDA as well as parts of other LWDAs, it can be helpful to focus on metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas to understand regional variations.

Table 4. Economic Variability within LWDAs by EDC and Public Utility Industry Focus

		Advanced Manufacturing	Aerospace	Agri-business	Automotive	Energy	Healthcare	Shipbuilding	*Tourism and Film
Delta	Delta Council			X					
	MS Delta Developers Association			X					
MS Partnership	North MS Industrial Development Association		X		X				
	Golden Triangle Development	X	X	X	X	X			
	Innovate Mississippi	X				X			
Southcentral MS Works	Greater Jackson Alliance	X		X			X		
	Southwest MS Partnership	X		X					
Twin Districts	MS Gulf Coast Alliance	X	X			X		X	
	Mississippi Power	X	X						
	Mid-Mississippi Development District	X					X		

* The film industry is served statewide by the Mississippi Film Office of the Mississippi Development Authority.

It is also important to capture social differences, along with economic differences, throughout the regions of the four LWDAs, which is perhaps best measured by the presence or absence of metropolitan and micropolitan areas. A metropolitan statistical area is defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as an urbanized area of 50,000 or higher in population with an adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core. Micropolitan statistical areas are defined by OMB as having at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 in population in addition to an adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core area through commuting. By examining metropolitan and micropolitan areas, regions can be defined by the social and economic importance of a municipality.

Delta Local Workforce Development Area

The Delta LWDA serves as a connection to three of Mississippi's regional neighbors: Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Within the Delta LWDA, Tunica County represents part of the Memphis metropolitan statistical area, which spans the three states of Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas (see Figure 2). Tunica County represents a region of the Delta that has a high connection to Memphis within the Delta LWDA, though nearly 90 percent of its residents remain in the county for work. This implies that the connection to Memphis might be more of a social connection. Within the Delta, there are also five micropolitan areas representing six counties. These areas represent more local importance within the county, with more than 80 percent of residents remaining in their county for work and potentially drawing non-core residents for work, who leave their county for work at a rate of 42.7 percent. Non-core areas are counties with no metropolitan or micropolitan areas. The Delta represents an area of sparse population, as Tunica County, the metropolitan county, reported a population density of 22.2 people per square mile, The micropolitan areas in the Delta have a higher population density (41.7 people per square mile), and the non-core areas have the lowest population density (21.4 people per square mile).

In sum, the Delta LWDA is driven by an economic goal of supporting agriculture and agribusiness in order to support the area, as led by the Delta Council and Mississippi Delta Developers Association. In the northern part is Tunica County, the only metropolitan county in which nearly 90 percent of residents work in the county. In the northern and central portion of this LWDA are five micropolitan areas covering six counties with the highest average population density and more than 80 percent of residents that work in the county. In the northeast (three counties) and southern (four counties) portions of this LWDA are seven counties that fall into a non-core classification, with more than 40 percent of residents commuting outside their county for work.

Mississippi Partnership Local Workforce Development Area

While the North Mississippi Industrial Development Association (NMIDA) provides an overall focus (particularly on advanced manufacturing) to the Mississippi Partnership LWDA, there are two smaller EDCs that highlight a more specific concentration in this LWDA: the

Figure 2. Mississippi's Metropolitan, Micropolitan, and Non-Core Areas

Golden Triangle Development Link (GTR LINK) and Innovate Mississippi. GTR LINK is composed of three counties (Lowndes, Oktibbeha, and Clay Counties) that are home to the three cities that comprise the Golden Triangle area (Columbus, Starkville, and West Point, respectively). This organization's target industries represent the importance of advanced manufacturing within this sub-region. Innovate Mississippi counties – Choctaw, Montgomery, and Webster – have not identified target industries.

The Mississippi Partnership LWDA serves as a connection to three of Mississippi's regional neighbors: Tennessee, Arkansas, and Alabama. The majority of the counties that comprise the Memphis metropolitan statistical area lie in the Mississippi Partnership LWDA, making this LWDA the home of most of Mississippi's Memphis commuters. While Tupelo is a micropolitan area, it displays characteristics similar to a metropolitan area. The Tupelo area has a high economic and social impact, as Itawamba (52.6 percent) and Pontotoc (43.3 percent) Counties have high commuting rates. Both of these counties are part of the Tupelo micropolitan statistical area. Tupelo and the surrounding counties form a manufacturing core area, with a high number of jobs in the rubber products manufacturing, transportation manufacturing, and furniture manufacturing industries. The other micropolitan areas are relatively self-contained within their county in relation to Tupelo, though Columbus and Starkville form two of the vertices of the Golden Triangle in the southern part of the LWDA. The non-core areas rely on the neighboring metropolitan and
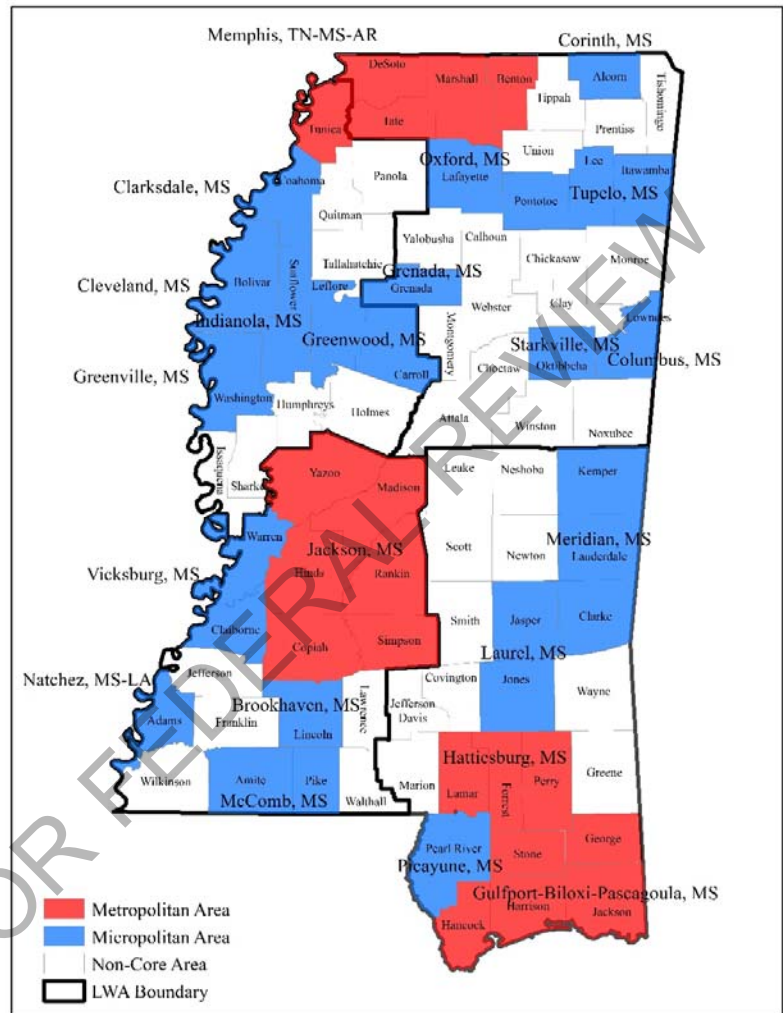
micropolitan areas for work and training opportunities, as 39.6 percent of residents in these non-core areas commute outside their county for work.

In sum, the Mississippi Partnership LWDA is focused on several phases of manufacturing, specifically advanced manufacturing. Within advanced manufacturing, the EDCs have emphasized aerospace and automotive manufacturing among others. The key industry of clean energy indicates that the GTR LINK might be a prime area for the development of ethyl alcohol manufacturing, a new industry in Mississippi. The demographics of the Mississippi Partnership LWDA point to a few clusters in the northwestern, central, and southern parts of the LWDA. There are some non-core areas in the northeastern, western, and central parts of this LWDA as well.

Southcentral Mississippi Works Local Workforce Development Area

The Southcentral Mississippi Works LWDA is served by two EDCs that divide the area into two nearly separate regions within southwest Mississippi: the Greater Jackson Alliance (GJA) and Southwest Mississippi Partnership (SWMSP). GJA is a regional alliance organized to develop and implement a marketing strategy to promote Greater Jackson and to enhance cooperation between the various governmental jurisdictions in Greater Jackson. This area is focused on its strongest industry, healthcare, and interested in expanding into new industries. SWMSP unites 10 counties in southwest Mississippi toward a regional economic development vision. SWMSP has targeted metal fabrication, plastics, contact centers, and food processing as key industries. Metal fabrication could help support some new industries in Mississippi, such as semiconductor manufacturing. It is also worth noting the division of the Southcentral Mississippi Works LWDA by metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

The Southcentral Mississippi Works LWDA serves as a major connection point to Louisiana. The Jackson metropolitan statistical area consists of six counties in the northeastern part of this LWDA. The presence and size of this metropolitan area are represented in its population density (118.0 people per square mile), with nearly 75 percent of residents remaining in their county for work. There are also four micropolitan statistical areas that help define this region, with a lower population density (56.4 people per square mile) but a similar percentage of residents who stay in their county for work (74.4 percent). Additionally, there are five non-core counties clustered in the southeastern and southwestern parts of this LWDA. The lack of metropolitan and micropolitan areas in these counties leads to higher percentages of residents leaving their county for work (35.8 percent), with long average commute times (37.8 minutes). Many people in these counties are likely to commute to border metropolitan or micropolitan counties for work or training.

In sum, the Southcentral Mississippi Works LWDA sees a strong regional divide in terms of economic focus, as evidenced by regional boundaries that show minimal overlap, and of demographics, as evidenced by the range between population densities in the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Within the Jackson area, there is a stronger focus on healthcare and technology, while there is a stronger focus on food processing and manufacturing in the more sparsely populated areas of southwest Mississippi.

Twin Districts Local Workforce Development Area

The Twin Districts LDWA differs from the other LDWAs in that there are counties not served by a regional EDC. There are two main EDCs that serve nine counties in the Twin Districts LWDA: the Mississippi Gulf Coast Alliance for Economic Development, which is comprised of the three coastal counties, and the Mid-Mississippi Development District (MMDD), which serves six counties in the central part of the LWDA. The

Mississippi Gulf Coast Alliance for Economic Development has identified target industries that align well with those of MDA. The alliance's target industries are aerospace, defense, advanced materials, and energy. MMDD is focused on advanced manufacturing and healthcare.

The Twin Districts LWDA is also unique from the other LWDAs in that there are two metropolitan statistical areas in this LWDA. The Twin Districts LWDA serves as a connection to Alabama and Louisiana as well as an international port along the Gulf Coast. The two metropolitan statistical areas, Gulfport-Biloxi-Pascagoula and Hattiesburg, have a very high population density (125.4 people per square mile), and only 27.1 percent of residents of these counties leave their county for work. The ability to stay within the same county to work leads to a shorter average commute time (34.8 minutes) compared to the other counties in this LWDA. There are three micropolitan areas in this LWDA (Picayune, Laurel, and Meridian), with a percentage of residents leaving their county for work (27.2 percent) and average commute time (33.7 minutes) similar to those of the LWDA's metropolitan areas. There are also 10 non-core counties spread throughout the Twin Districts LWDA. These non-core areas form a cluster in the southeast and make up the entire western border of the LWDA. Counties in the non-core areas of the Twin Districts LWDA have the lowest population density (37.1 people per square mile), highest percentage of people leaving their county for work (29.1 percent), and the longest average commute time (39.3 minutes). The variation among metropolitan, micropolitan, and non-core areas is relatively small due to some of the longest commuting times.

In sum, the economy of the Twin Districts LWDA relies on several industries, with a strong focus on advanced manufacturing and energy, particularly along the coastal part of the LWDA. The metropolitan, micropolitan, and non-core areas show less variation than those in other LWDAs in terms of commuting times and residents leaving their county for work.

Finally, the state has also classified regions that cross LWDA boundaries in efforts to make larger impacts across Mississippi.

Regions Crossing Local Workforce Development Area Boundaries

Economic Development Councils

While there are a number of regions that fall within the LWDA boundaries, there are some regions that cross these boundaries, sometimes as part of a larger mission to serve Mississippi. Within the Delta and Mississippi Partnership LWDAs, there are three EDCs that serve more than one LWDA and sometimes spill into three LWDAs. Within the Delta LWDA, there are two EDCs that spill beyond the Delta LWDA and cover 20 counties in northwest Mississippi: the Mississippi Delta Developers Association (MDDA) and the Delta Council (DC). These EDCs share a goal of increasing economic development in northwest Mississippi and helping to solve common problems in this area. The MDDA aids the Delta LWDA by assisting with relocation for companies, including listing available buildings and sites, transportation maps, incentives at local, state, and federal levels, financing programs, and labor and training information. The DC serves 18 counties in the Delta region by providing a nexus for collaboration for agricultural, business, and professional leadership and solving common problems experienced in the area by way of several economically focused committees, including committees for aquaculture, ginning and cotton quality improvement, and rice and small grains, among others. All of the committees reflect the Delta LWDA's commitment to agribusiness, which is a target industry of the MDDA.

North Mississippi Industrial Development Association (NMIDA) is the largest of the three EDCs, with an area that surpasses the Mississippi Partnership LWDA boundaries in order to serve the Tennessee Valley

Authority (TVA) territory in Mississippi. NMIDA serves 29 of the 36 counties within the TVA territory. NMIDA helps companies looking to locate businesses in Mississippi through services such as providing information on available sites and buildings, transportation, and incentives, among others. NMIDA mainly targets advanced manufacturing with a few other targets, such as bioenergy and biofuels. Bioenergy and biofuels align somewhat with ethyl alcohol manufacturing, which was identified as a new industry at the national level by NSPARC. Within the automotive sector, synthetic rubber manufacturing could become a larger component of manufacturing in Mississippi. This industry was also identified by NSPARC as a new industry to Mississippi.

Mississippi Community College Consortia

Mississippi's Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) fund derives from employer unemployment insurance taxes and is a state funding source for workforce training. In order to establish wide-ranging consortia to encourage collaboration among community colleges in the areas of workforce education and training, a portion of the WET fund transferred in 2013 was allocated to establish a collaborative consortia grant. In 2013, House Bill 932 created an $8,000,000 transfer to the WET fund, and $1,500,000 of that transfer was allocated to the collaborative consortia grant. For each approved consortium, there would be $500,000 available, funding three consortia. There are several consortia that have been proposed, but the Southern Mississippi Alliance for Workforce Solutions, Mississippi Corridor Consortium, and the Crossroads Consortium are the only ones that have been recommended and approved by workforce directors on the Mississippi Community College Board. These consortia marshal community college resources to provide training and education to Mississippians within the districts of the collaborating community college and, in some cases, to give focus to specific industries important to a consortium's region (see Table 5).

Utilities

Two of Mississippi's utility companies, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and Entergy, manage target industry regions spanning several LWDAs. Entergy spans the Delta and Southcentral Mississippi Works LWDAs. TVA covers the Delta and Mississippi Partnership LWDAs and parts of the Twin Districts LWDA.

Table 5. Economic Regions Spanning Multiple LWDAs

	MDA Target Industries							
	Advanced Manufacturing	Aerospace	Agri-business	Automotive	Energy	Healthcare	Shipbuilding	Tourism and Film
Crossroads Consortium	X					X		
Mississippi Corridor Consortium	X							
South MS Alliance for Workforce Solutions	X					X		
Tennessee Valley Authority	X	X		X				
Entergy			X	X				

The Mississippi Corridor Consortium is led by Itawamba Community College (see Figure 3), with the top priority of training residents of these areas to address the transitional condition of the area's workforce needs as determined through relationships with local businesses. Regionally, workforce opportunities

continue the transition from low-skill manufacturing jobs to middle-skill advanced manufacturing and technology-related occupations.

The Mississippi Crossroads Consortium is led by Holmes Community College and committed to assisting with the development of a population of potential employees for employers who are looking for individuals who can demonstrate skills, keep up with the fast pace of change, and show dedication to lifelong learning. In order to help train job seekers in the area of healthcare, the Mississippi Crossroads Consortium is seeking healthcare-related training aids, which will be identified by East Mississippi Community College. This focus on healthcare as well as advanced manufacturing follows the state trends as well as MDA target industries.

The newly formed South Mississippi Alliance for Workforce Solutions has set a mission of investigating, developing, and delivering education and training for citizens and industries in the five community college service districts through demand-driven, innovative, traditional, and non-traditional formats to advance the South Mississippi workforce. Industries specified by this consortium are manufacturing and healthcare, with the goal of developing credentials in each of these industries specific to this consortium area.

The Southern Automotive Corridor

There is a growing presence of automotive manufacturing throughout southern states, such as Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, with large employers, like Nissan and Honda, employing many Southerners. This corridor speaks to the business-friendly climate of Mississippi and the South in general and to a commitment to middle-skill careers.

SUBMITTED FOR FEDERAL REVIEW

Figure 3. Cross-Area Regions in Mississippi
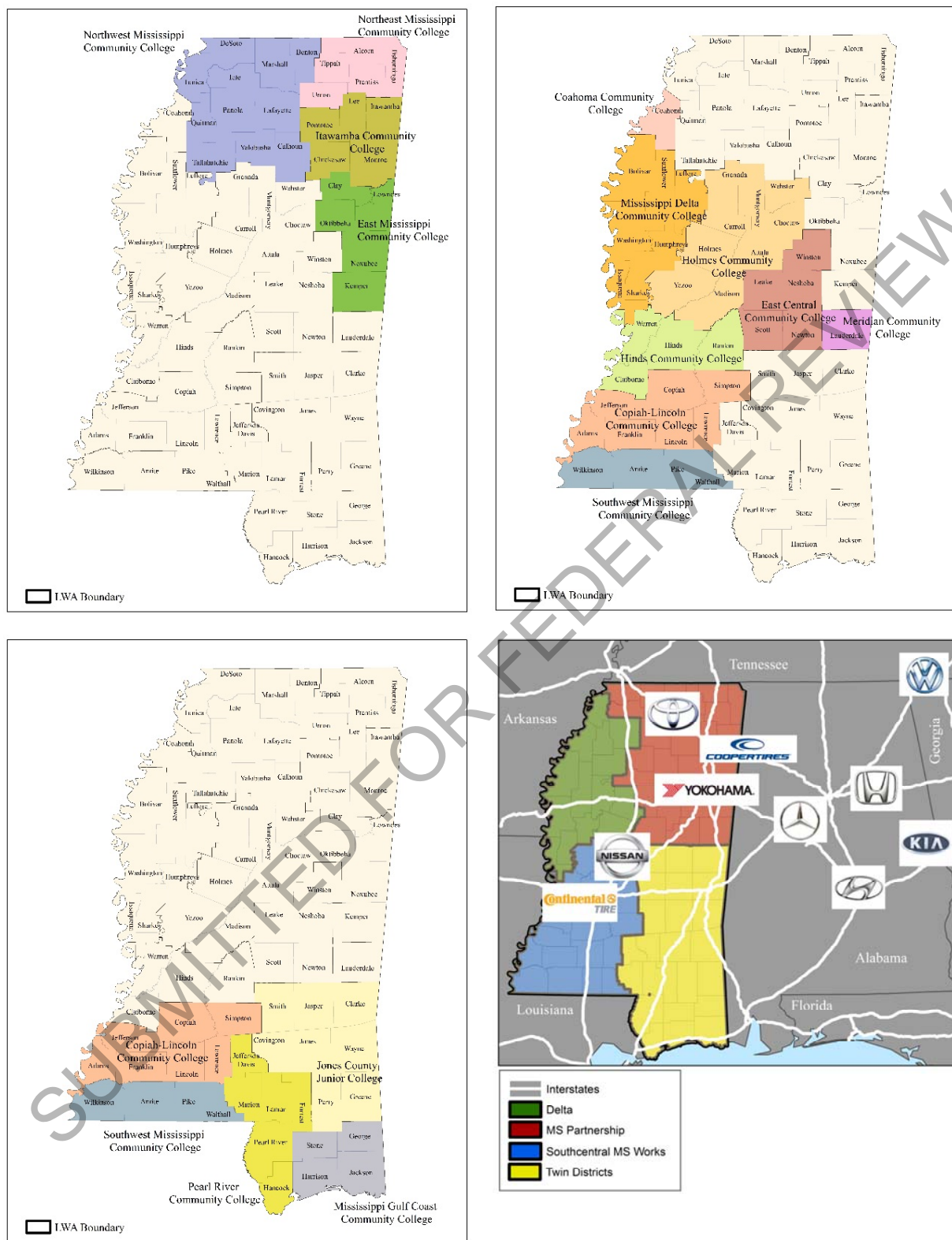
The Mississippi Corridor Consortium is top left, the Crossroads Consortium is top right, and the Southern Mississippi Alliance for Workforce Solutions is lower left. In the lower right is the Southern Automotive Corridor.

STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS

Economic Analysis

Mississippi Population Trends

Mississippi is a state of approximately 3 million people and has experienced an average annual population growth of 0.6 percent since 1950 (see Figure 4). Of the four local workforce development areas, the Delta area is the least populated and, over the last decade, was the only area that experienced significant population decline. In contrast, the Twin Districts is the most populated area with more than 1 million residents. The second most populous area is the Mississippi Partnership with approximately 900,000 residents, followed by Southcentral Mississippi Works with approximately 800,000 residents. In the last decade, the Southcentral Mississippi Works area experienced the fastest population growth at 8.4 percent. The populations of the Twin Districts and Mississippi Partnership areas grew by approximately 5.0 percent over the same period.

According to the American Community Survey, approximately 60 percent of the state population is white, and 37.4 percent and 2.9 percent are African-American and Hispanic, respectively. Asians and American Indians account for the smallest share of the population (1.6 percent collectively). Of the four local workforce development areas, the Delta and Southcentral Mississippi Works areas have the largest representations of African-American residents at 66.9 and 48.6 percent, respectively. In the Twin Districts and Mississippi Partnership areas, African-Americans account for 27.3 percent and 29.2 percent of the population, respectively. The Twin Districts and Mississippi Partnership areas are home to more Hispanics than the other two areas with approximately 3 percent and 4 percent, respectively. Mississippi has become one of the new Hispanic destinations in the country, and its Hispanic population is expected to grow at a much faster rate when compared to counterpart populations in established destination states.

Current Industry Structure

Table 6 reports the employment numbers for Mississippi's current industry structure. Across the state, manufacturing employs 140,000 individuals, accounting for 12.7 percent of total employment. More significantly, Mississippi Works Labor Exchange data show that in 2014 manufacturing was the largest job creator in Mississippi with 21,415 job openings. Manufacturing not only provides the largest number of job opportunities but also offers high-wage opportunities. Since 2012, more than 300 new manufacturing establishments have opened in the state, and 50 of those are advanced manufacturers that pay higher wages than traditional manufacturers. Moreover, recently attracted advanced manufacturing jobs pay even more than existing advanced manufacturing jobs in the state — about $5,000 more, or an annual average of $51,000.

Table D2 (Appendix D) reports a detailed description of subsectors in manufacturing. Transportation equipment is the largest subsector with more than 25,000 people employed, accounting for 18 percent of total employment in manufacturing. This subsector includes major employers such as Toyota, Nissan, and Ingalls. The next largest subsector is food manufacturing with approximately 23,000 people employed. Furniture is the third largest subsector with more than 18,000 people employed. Machinery, fabricated metal, and wood products each account for more than five percent of total employment in manufacturing. Combined, these six manufacturing subsectors account for approximately 70 percent of total employment in manufacturing. Of the four local workforce development areas, Mississippi Partnership and Twin Districts have the largest numbers of manufacturers in the state, with 40 percent and 35 percent of total employment in manufacturing, respectively.

As a sector, wholesale and retail trade employs the highest number of people in Mississippi at 170,000, which accounts for 15.4 percent of total state employment (see Table 6). Within this sector, more than 37,000 are employed in general merchandise stores, followed by approximately 18,000 in food and beverage stores. Table D1 (Appendix D) reports subsector details for this industry.

Healthcare and accommodation/leisure are two of the largest sectors in the state, accounting for approximately 15 and 12 percent of total state employment, respectively (see Table 6). Combined, these two sectors provide economic opportunities to more than 299,000 people in the state. Healthcare opportunities are most prevalent in the Southcentral Mississippi Works area, which accounts for 36 percent of the sector's employment in the state. The Mississippi Partnership and Twin Districts areas each account for 28 percent of healthcare employment in the state; the remaining 8 percent of state healthcare jobs are in the Delta area. The largest number of opportunities for accommodation/leisure is in the Twin Districts area, which accounts for almost 38 percent of all jobs in this sector, followed by the Southcentral Mississippi Works (26 percent), Mississippi Partnership (23 percent), and Delta (13 percent) areas.

Natural resources, though not a large sector in the state, was the second largest job creator according to Mississippi Works Labor Exchange statistics, with more than 21,000 job openings in 2014. This sector is most prevalent in the Twin Districts area, which accounts for 35 percent of all natural resources jobs in the state. The Southcentral Mississippi Works and Delta areas account for 30 percent and 23 percent of all natural resources jobs in the state, respectively. The Mississippi Partnership area accounts for 12 percent of state employment in this sector. Detailed descriptions of the healthcare, accommodation/leisure, and natural resources subsectors are reported in Tables D3-D5 (Appendix D).

Figure 4: Mississippi Population Trends

Mississippi

	Population
1950	2,176,000
1960	2,182,000
1970	2,217,000
1980	2,521,000
1990	2,579,000
2000	2,848,000
2010	2,970,036
2014	2,994,079

Delta

Mississippi Partnership

Southcentral Mississippi Works

Twin Districts
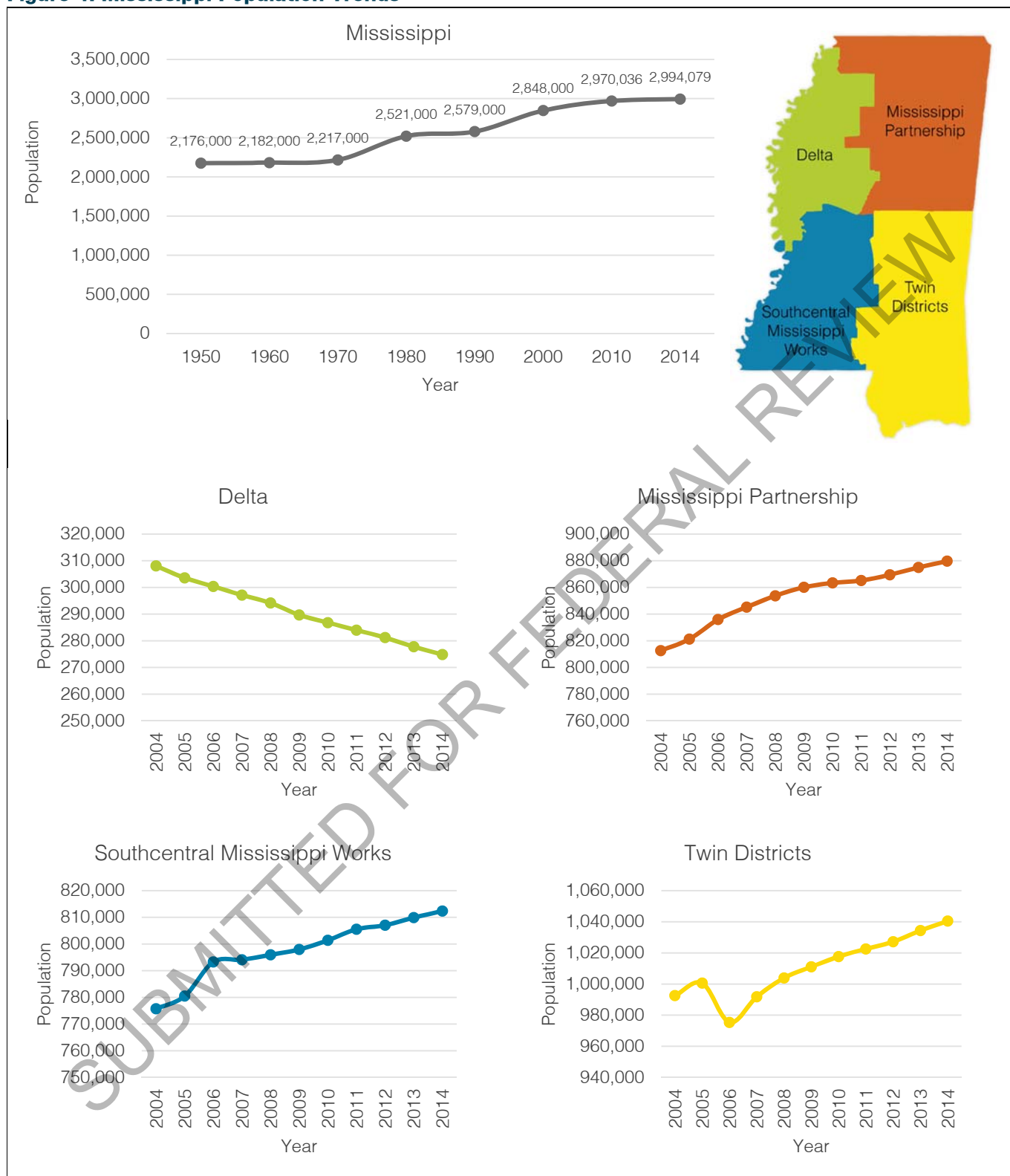
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Intercensal Population Estimates, 2015.

Table 6: Employment by Industry

Industry	Total	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
Wholesale/Retail Trade	170,290	15.4	$32,025	15,969
Healthcare and Social Assistance	169,838	15.4	$39,269	6,880
Manufacturing	139,989	12.7	$45,211	2,442
Accommodation/Leisure	129,193	11.7	$25,033	6,054
Educational Services	111,410	10.1	$34,905	1,355
Public Administration	69,068	6.3	$38,996	1,544
Administrative and Waste Services	60,636	5.5	$26,317	3,948
Construction	52,751	4.8	$46,631	5,900
Transportation and Warehousing	45,498	4.1	$40,575	2,906
Financial Activities	43,625	4.0	$58,891	7,829
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	34,160	3.1	$54,213	6,904
Other Services (except Public Administration)	22,025	2.0	$30,745	4,765
Natural Resources	19,407	1.8	$49,690	2,291
Information	14,581	1.3	$45,802	1,285
Management of Companies and Enterprises	10,621	1.0	$80,173	578
Utilities	9,202	0.8	$69,640	588
Totals	*1,102,294*	*100.0*	*$36,792*	*71,238*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Current Occupations

The top 10 occupations in wholesale and retail trade account for approximately 66 percent of all jobs in this industry (see Table D6, Appendix D). Retail salespersons is the occupation with the largest demand in the sector. Currently, more than 36,000 individuals are employed in this occupation. Cashiers represent the next largest occupation in the manufacturing sector with more than 28,000 employed. More than 12,000 individuals are currently employed as stock clerks and order fillers.

The top 10 occupations in manufacturing account for more than 37 percent of all jobs—more than 52,000—in this industry (see Table D7, Appendix D). Team assemblers is the occupation with the largest demand in the sector. Currently, more than 14,000 individuals are employed in this occupation. Meat processing represents the next largest occupation in the manufacturing sector with almost 8,000 employed. Approximately 10,000 individuals are currently employed as first-line supervisors or welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers.

The top 10 occupations in accommodation/leisure account for approximately 60 percent of all jobs in this industry (see Table D8, Appendix D). The typical occupations in this sector are waiters and waitresses, food preparers and servers, and fast food and restaurant cooks.

The top 10 occupations in healthcare account for almost 35 percent of all jobs in this industry (see Table D9, Appendix D). The vast majority of the top jobs are in nursing, including Registered Nurse (RN), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). An appreciable number of jobs in the sector are also in home care and childcare.

The top 10 occupations in natural resources account for 58 percent of all jobs in this industry (see Table D10, Appendix D). The top occupation in this sector is farmworkers and laborers.

New and Emerging Sectors

There are three major sectors that are clearly emerging in the state: advanced manufacturing, healthcare support, and tourism (the full analysis is reported in Tables D11-13, Appendix D). Advanced manufacturing accounts for approximately 83,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector as a whole. Of those, more than 25,000 are in transportation, including automotive, and are concentrated in the northeastern and central areas of the state. Other top subsectors in advanced manufacturing include furniture, machinery, electrical, and chemical. These subsectors are primarily concentrated in the eastern part of the state.

The healthcare support sector accounts for approximately 13,000 jobs that are primarily concentrated in the western half of the state. There are more than 400 establishments in the state that support this industry, including facilities for general warehousing and storage, medical equipment and supply wholesale, pharmaceutical preparation manufacturing, and surgical appliance and medical instrument manufacturing.

The tourism sector provides economic opportunities to more than 187,000 people in the state. This industry covers the entire state and is supported by approximately 10,000 establishments. Mississippi has truly become a tourist attraction and is providing economic opportunities in areas such as the Delta, one of the richest historical regions in the country.

Occupations in Emerging Industries

The top 10 occupations within advancing manufacturing account for approximately 39 percent of all jobs in the industry (see Table D14, Appendix D). Of all occupations, team assemblers are at the top with more than 11,000 employed, followed by welders, upholsterers, and first line supervisors that, combined, employ almost 10,000 people.

The top 10 occupations within healthcare support account for almost 55 percent of all jobs in the industry (see Table D15, Appendix D). Of these, laborers and industrial truck and tractor operators account for approximately 28 percent of the industry's occupations.

The top 10 occupations within tourism account for approximately 45 percent of all jobs in the industry (see Table D16, Appendix D). Waiters and waitresses are the largest occupation, accounting for approximately 10 percent of all occupations in the industry, followed by food preparers and cooks that, combined, account for 19 percent of the sector's occupations.

Employers' Employment Needs

Information on employers' employment needs was derived from three sources of data. First, as part of the effort to acquire input from the business community, a focus group was conducted with representatives from established and emerging industries. More than 20 employers participated in the focus group. Second, information was gathered from the state's Priority One project, which is administered by the Mississippi Development Authority. Monthly, more than 100 employers are contacted to identify pressing workforce needs. The third source of data was the state's most recent wage and benefits survey. This survey asks relevant questions about the skills and knowledge required for the business to succeed.

Across these three sources of data, a general consensus is that businesses are expecting to grow and that recruitment and retention of qualified workforce is a critical issue for sustainability, viability, and growth. On the whole, businesses reported needing workers with labor and trade skills and those with basic work skills (e.g., reading, writing, appropriate workplace conduct). The general consensus among businesses is that employees, across the board, lack core competency skills such as:

- **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving** – Exercise sound reasoning and analytical thinking; obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data; demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

- **Oral/Written Communication** – Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively; demonstrate public speaking skills; communicate new ideas to others through writing and editing.

- **Teamwork/Collaboration** – Build collaborative relationships; work in team structure; negotiate and manage conflicts.

- **Information Technology Application** – Select and use appropriate technology; apply computing skills to problem solving.

- **Leadership** – Leverage the strengths of others; use interpersonal skills and emotions effectively; organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

- **Professionalism/Work Ethic** – Demonstrate personal accountability, effective work habits, integrity, and ethical behavior; act responsibly; learn from mistakes.

- **Career Management** – Identify and articulate skills, strengths, and experiences; identify areas for professional growth and self-advocacy; explore job options and pursue opportunities.

Specifically, when asked about the competencies desired in a potential employee at low-, middle-, and high-skill levels, 93 percent rated dependability and reliability as the most important qualities for low-skill employees, 77.6 percent reported that initiative and a willingness to learn were the most important qualities for middle-skill employees, and 72 percent of participants specified leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills as the most important qualities for high-skill employees.

Employers also indicated that they are not fully aware of the resources and services available to them. Thirty-nine percent of employers stated that their employees receive training from community colleges, technical schools, or vocational schools; 37 percent reported that their employees receive training from universities; and the remainder indicated that their employees receive external training from other federal programs. Mississippi employers would like to expand their use of community colleges and universities in the delivery of training for basic trades and skills along with fundamental competency skills for low-, middle-, and high-skill workers.

Workforce Analysis

Employment

During the Great Recession, the state, like the nation, experienced a dramatic loss of jobs. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for the 2009-2014 period, the number of employed Mississippians hit a low in 2010 but increased slightly in 2011 before starting a consistent upward trend (see Figure 5). Unlike the state, the Delta area experienced a decline in the number of persons employed

over the six-year period, while the remaining local workforce development areas followed the state trend in employment.

Unemployment

After struggling with a high unemployment rate, Mississippi is now experiencing a recovery that offers new economic opportunities for workers and job seekers. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Mississippi's unemployment rate has dropped from 10.4 percent in 2010 to 6.7 percent in May 2015 (see Figure 6). Similar unemployment rate trends can be found in Mississippi's local workforce development areas. The unemployment rate in the Southcentral Mississippi Works area was the lowest in the state in May 2015 at 6.2 percent. The Mississippi Partnership and Twin Districts areas had unemployment rates similar to the state-level statistic at 6.8 percent and 6.9 percent, respectively. Clearly, these three areas represent a stronger economic climate.

Underemployment

Following a trend similar to that of the unemployment rate, Mississippi's underemployment rate reached a peak of 17.6 percent in 2010 but has been trending downward, reaching a low of 13.4 percent in May 2015. The declining underemployment rate indicates that more Mississippians are finding employment, moving out of low-wage jobs into gainful employment, finding jobs that match their skill level, and/or benefiting from workforce training services. A decreasing share of underemployed workers also potentially indicates that employers are showing confidence in Mississippi's workforce, establishing new jobs and looking for qualified employees.

Workforce Participation Rate

Despite an improved economic outlook, Mississippi faces some vulnerabilities that provide challenges for its progress. As is the case in other states, the long-term unemployed in Mississippi become discouraged and drop out of the workforce, contributing to the decline of workforce availability in the state (see Figure 7). In the Twin Districts area, the workforce participation rate has remained fairly constant at 59 percent. The Mississippi Partnership and Southcentral Mississippi Works areas have workforce participation rates of 59.6 percent and 59.3 percent, respectively. The Delta area has the lowest workforce participation rate at 52.3 percent.

Upon further analysis, data show that those with less than a high school education are the most vulnerable and most likely to become discouraged workers. Those with any credentials beyond high school in Mississippi, as in the rest of the country, are more likely to be attached to the labor market (see Figure 8).

Additionally, the workforce participation rate varies by age group. In Mississippi, youth (ages 16 to 19) have one of the lowest workforce participation rates at 24.6 percent, while young adults (ages 20 to 24) have a 58.8 percent workforce participation rate (see Figure 9). These findings likely reflect the barriers that young people face in finding employment, even among those who are enrolled in education or training programs.

Figure 5: Number Employed

Mississippi

Delta

Mississippi Partnership

Southcentral Mississippi Works

Twin Districts
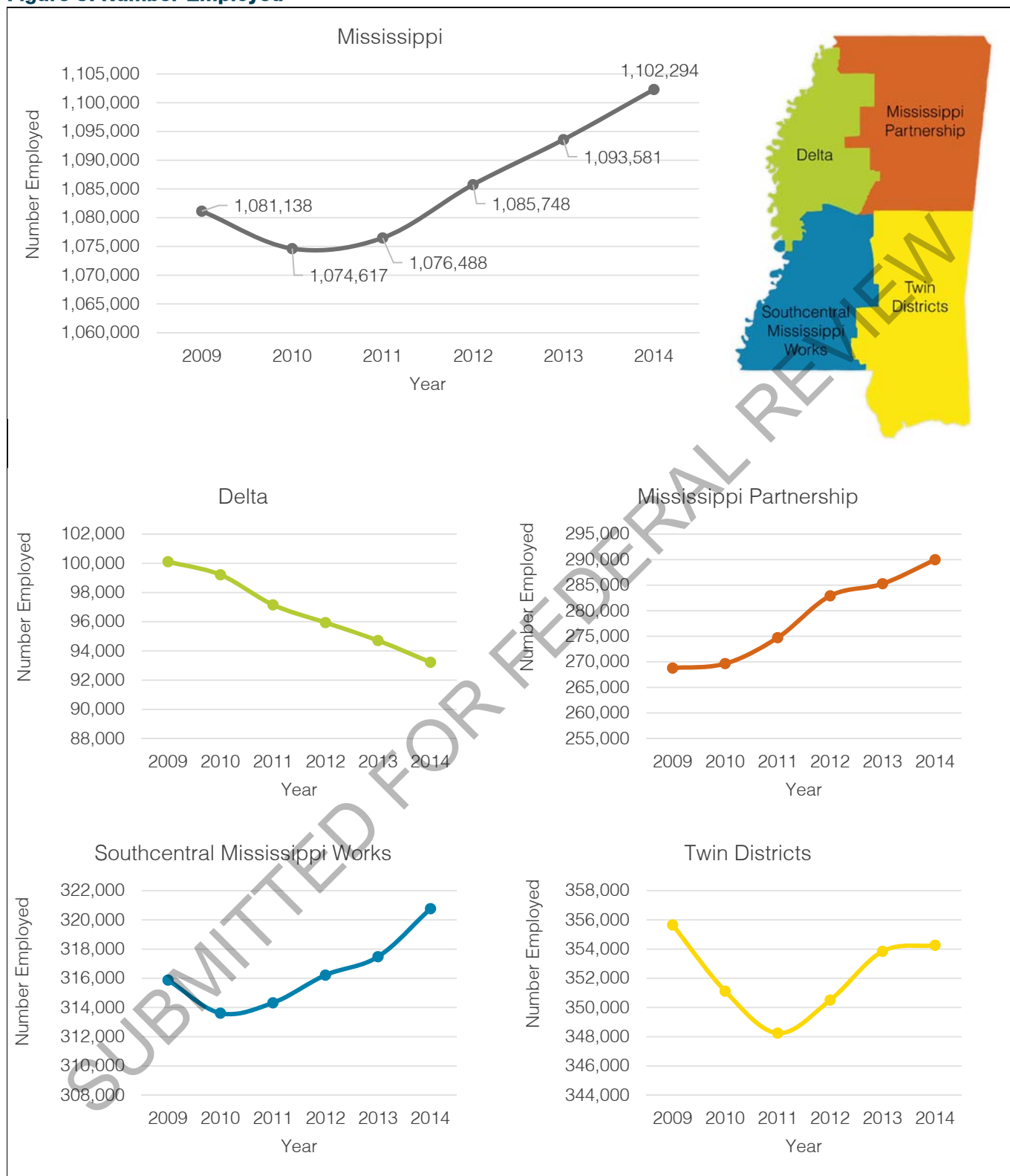
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Figure 6: Unemployment Rate
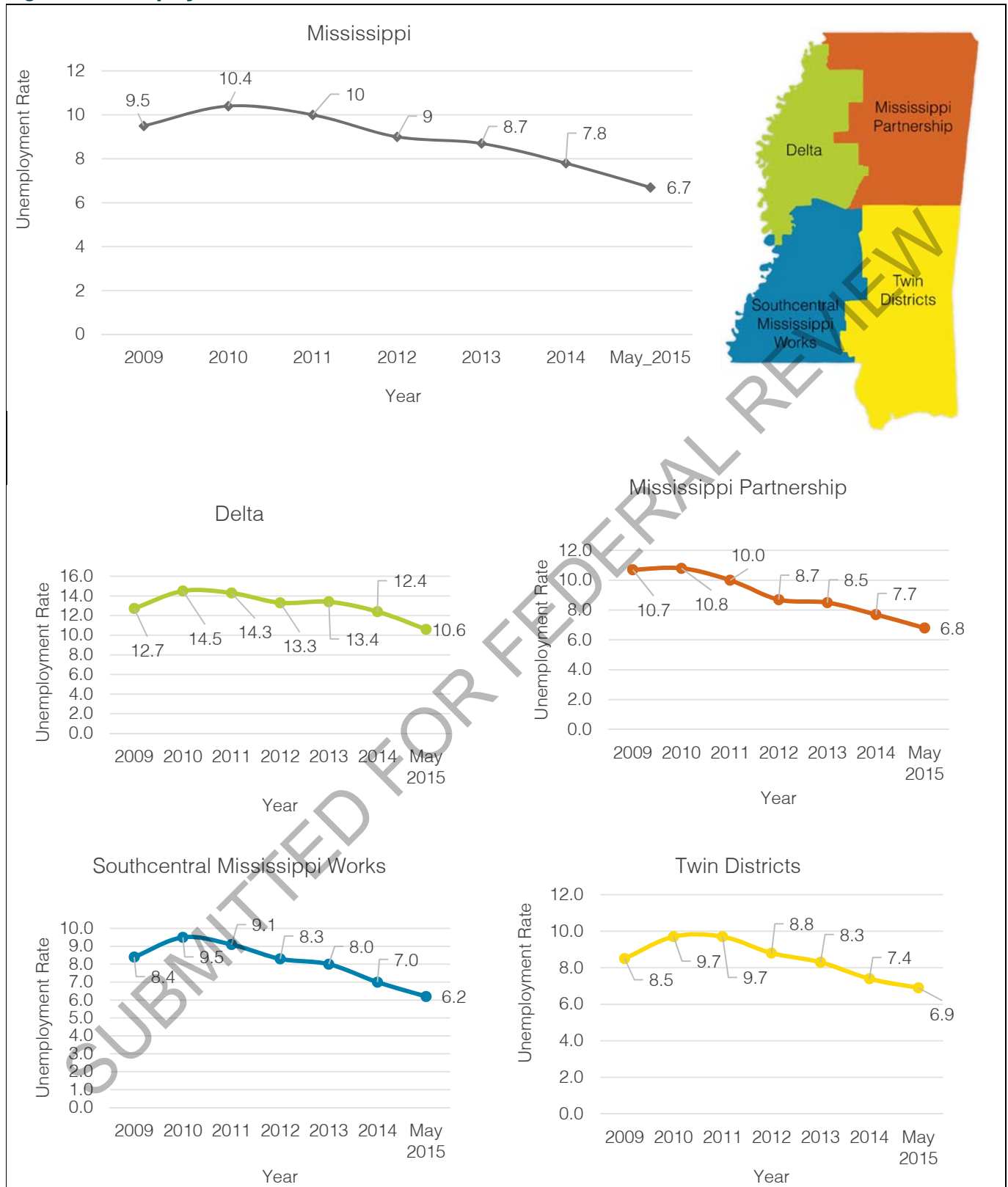
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Figure 7: Workforce Participation Rate
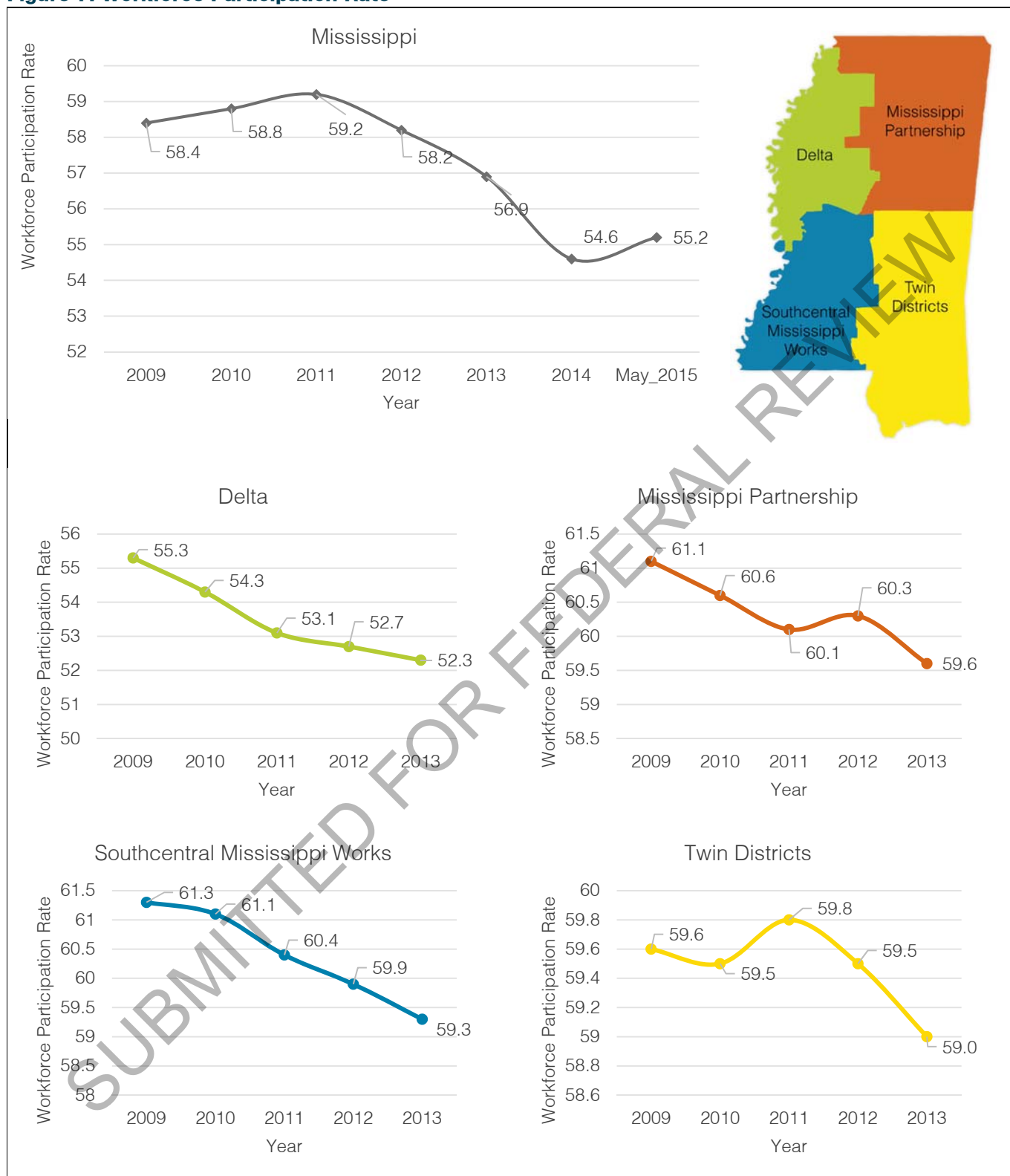
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Figure 8: Workforce Participation Rate by Education
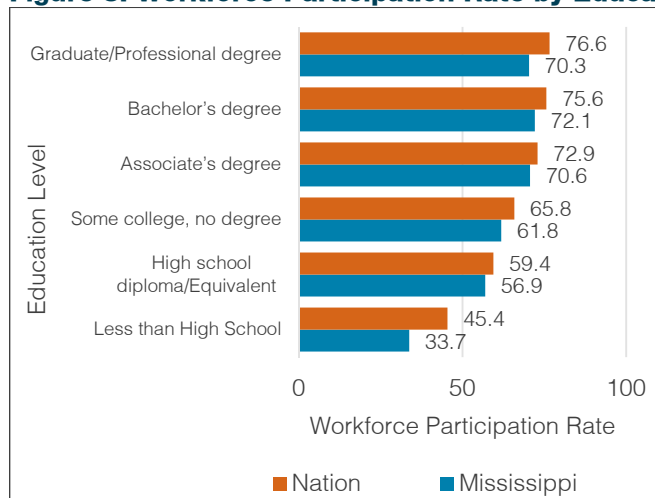
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2015.

Figure 9: Workforce Participation Rate by Age
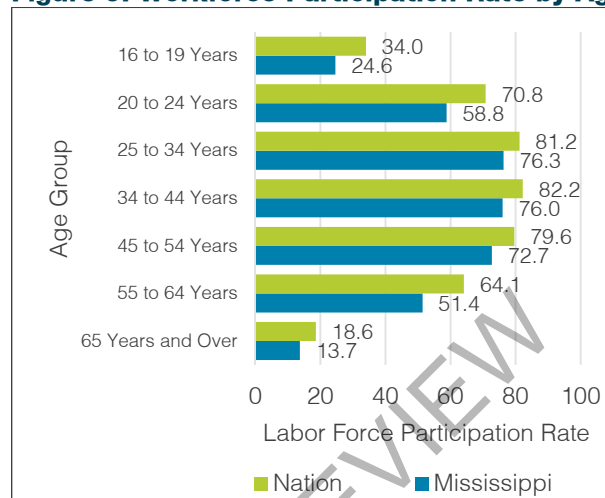
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2015.

Tables 7 and 8 provide figures on individuals with barriers, as defined by WIOA, who are at risk of being unemployed or underutilized. Tables E1-E4 in Appendix E report more details on individuals who face different employment barriers, including those with disabilities, those receiving TANF, those receiving SNAP, and ex-offenders. Individuals with disabilities have an 80-percent employment rate and face the reality of earning inadequate incomes. Currently, there are more than 37,000 individuals on TANF. Of those, almost 8,000 are work eligible, and their employment rate is about 65 percent. TANF recipients who transition into the workforce have median annual earnings of less than $10,000. There are almost 350,000 work-eligible SNAP recipients. Their employment rate is approximately 46 percent, and their median earnings are approximately $14,000 annually. There were almost 10,000 individuals released from the correctional system in 2014. Almost 40 percent of ex-offenders were able to find employment within one year of their release. Their median annual earnings were approximately $16,000. Further analysis (results not shown) also shows that ex-offenders who fail to find employment within one year are likely to reenter the correctional system within three years.

Table 7: Populations with Barriers to Employment[1]

Group	Number
Low-Income Individuals (18-64)	361,802
American Indians/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians	13,304
Individuals with Disabilities (18-64)	266,622
Older Individuals (≥ 65)	392,947
Older individuals, Low-Income	53,182
Ex-Offenders (18-64)	17,855
Homeless Children and Youth[2]	12,120
Children In Foster Care[3]	3,778
English Language Learners with Low Level of Literacy[4]	241
Migrant or Seasonal Farmworkers[5]	1,238
Individuals within 2 Years of Exhausting TANF Eligibility	2,095
Single Parent Households	251,789
Single Mother Households	198,979
Single Fathers Households	52,810
Disconnected Youth[6]	22,000

Source: American Community Survey, 2015 (unless otherwise noted).

Table 8: Unemployment & Workforce Participation Rates of Vulnerable Populations

Group	Rate
Veterans	
Unemployment Rate	7.7
Workforce Participation Rate	46.6
Disabled	
Unemployment Rate	8.5
Workforce Participation Rate	14.6
Low Income	
Unemployment Rate	29.0
Workforce Participation Rate	33.2
Native American/Hawaiian	
Unemployment Rate	18.5
Workforce Participation Rate	63.6
Age 16-19 (Overall)	
Unemployment Rate	23.8
Workforce Participation Rate	26.8
Age 16-19 Not Enrolled in School	
Unemployment Rate	22.4
Workforce Participation Rate	26.6
Age 16-19 with a Disability	
Unemployment Rate	43.1
Workforce Participation Rate	10.8

Source: Current Population Survey, 2015.

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[1] As defined in section 3 of WIOA; source is ACS unless otherwise noted.

[2] Source: Mississippi Department of Education, 2015.

[3] Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Children's Bureau, 2014.

[4] Source: Adult Basic Education, 2015.

[5] Source: Current Population Survey, 2015.

[6] Source: National Kids Count Data, 2013. Disconnected youth = teenagers between age 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and not employed.

Labor Market Trends

A comprehensive labor market analysis identified three groups of industries: established in decline, established growing, and new and emerging. This analysis was primarily focused on high-demand and high-growth areas in growing and new and emerging industries. This analysis used Bureau of Labor Statistics data and Mississippi Works Labor Exchange administrative data. The former was used to produce 10-year projections and the latter to produce current yearly openings. Results of this analysis are reported in Tables F1-F5, Appendix F.

Advanced manufacturing is expected to generate almost 5,000 new jobs, mostly for team assemblers. In 2014, 3,018 new advanced manufacturing jobs were opened. Some of the major employers in advanced manufacturing are Nissan, Toyota, Yokohama, Ashley Furniture, and Howard Industries.

More than 2,000 jobs are expected to be created in the next 10 years in the healthcare support industry. Most of these are related to transporting medical supplies. In 2014, 1,808 new healthcare support jobs were opened. Some of the major employers in healthcare support are Versant, Teleflex, and Anda Pharmaceuticals.

Tourism is expected to have more than 12,000 new jobs over the next 10 years, with the largest demand in food preparation, cooks, and line supervisors. In 2014, 18,934 new tourism jobs were opened. Some of the major employers in tourism are Beau Rivage Resorts, Gold Strike Casino Resort, and Horseshoe Casino and Hotel.

Over the next 10 years, well-established industries in the state are projected to see job growth approaching 57,000 new jobs. Of those, more than 26,000 will be filled by the top 20 occupations, including nursing and elementary and postsecondary teachers.

The analysis shows that approximately 90 percent of the jobs created in advanced manufacturing will be middle-skill jobs (see Figure 10). The analysis also shows that approximately 80 percent of the jobs in healthcare support will be middle-skill jobs. Even the established industries will create jobs that will tend to require middle skills (71 percent). In contrast, the vast majority of tourism jobs created are projected to require low skills.

Education and Skill Levels

According to the American Community Survey, for the Mississippi population ages 25 and older, 18.5 percent have less than a high school education, 30.5 percent have completed high school, and 22.7 percent have some college. Those with associate and bachelor's degrees account for 8.1 percent and 12.8 percent of the population, respectively. The remaining 7.3 percent have a graduate or professional degree. Of the four local workforce development areas, the Delta area has the largest segment of the population with less than a high school education (26.7 percent).

Data from the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange reveal that more than 150,000 individuals sought employment assistance in 2015 (see Table 9). Of those, more than 61 percent were low-skill job seekers with high school education or less. Another 19 percent had some college education. An appreciable number of job seekers, in the magnitude of more than 10,000, had a two-year associate degree, and approximately 12,000 had a four-year degree. Almost 7,000 had an occupational skills certificate. These data clearly show that a large segment of Mississippi's workforce has low skills and could benefit from skill upgrades.

Figure 10: Mississippi Middle-Skill Demand

Advanced Manufacturing

High	6.1
Middle	88.7
Low	5.1

(axis: 0.0 20.0 40.0 60.0 80.0 100.0)

Tourism

High	2.3
Middle	44.0
Low	53.7

(axis: 0.0 20.0 40.0 60.0)

Healthcare Support

High	12.2
Middle	78.5
Low	9.2

(axis: 0.0 20.0 40.0 60.0 80.0 100.0)

Established Sectors

High	16.9
Medium	70.8
Low	12.3

(axis: 0.0 20.0 40.0 60.0 80.0)
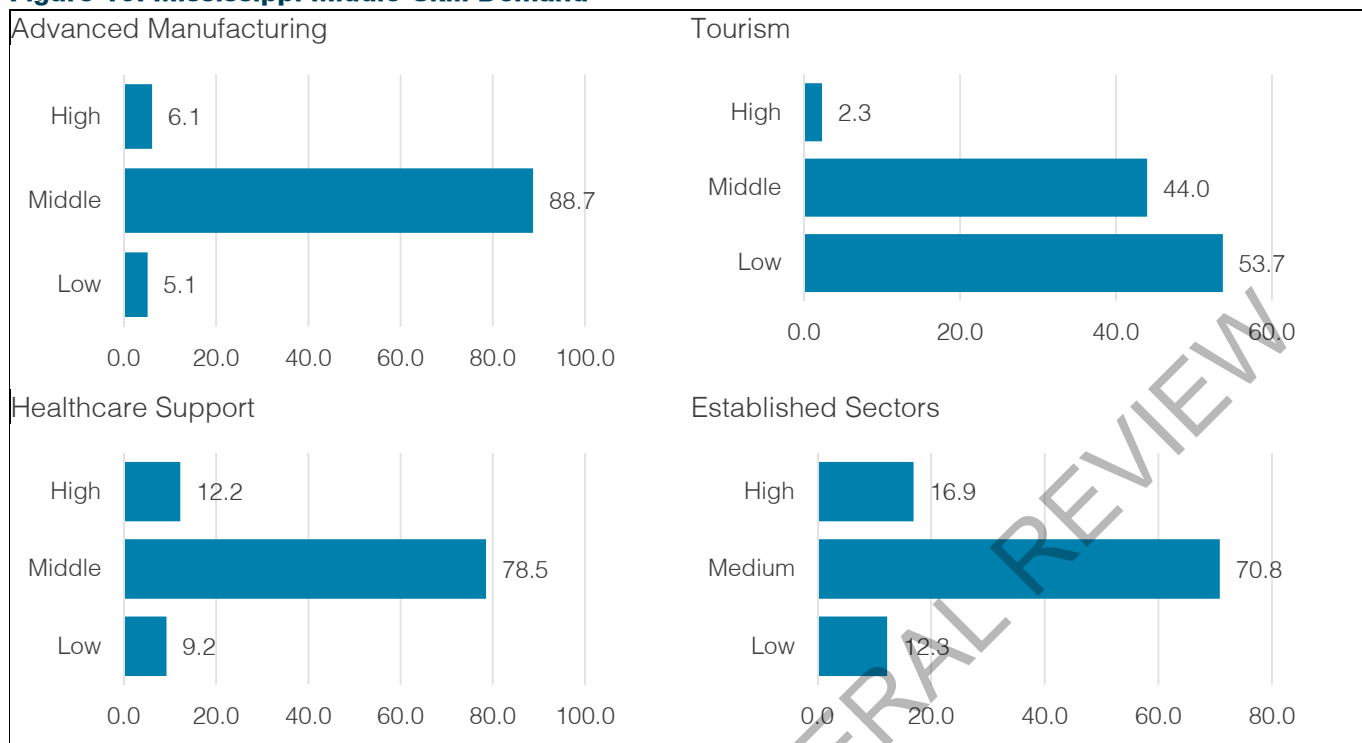
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Table 9: Education and Skill Levels of Current Job Seekers

Education Level	Number	%
High School or Less	18,298	12.1%
High School Diploma/Equivalent	74,304	49.2%
Some College	28,715	19.0%
Associate's Degree	10,655	7.1%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	12,056	8.0%
Occupational Skills Certificate	6,956	4.6%
Total	*150,984*	*100.0%*

Source: Mississippi Works, 2015.

Skill Gaps

Current data show that 66.3 percent of jobs in Mississippi fall within the definition of middle-skill, but only 37.1 percent of the state's workforce has the requirements to fill a middle-skill job (see Figure 11). In contrast, Mississippi has more workers than available jobs in the low-skill category. This oversupply of labor also exists for high-skill jobs that require college credentials and beyond. Given that there is a middle-skill gap, the availability of such jobs indicates that many Mississippians could attain gainful employment by seeking additional education and training.

A supply and demand analysis reveals that Mississippi has an appreciable skill gap (see Table 10). In fiscal year 2015, there was a demand of almost 29,000 jobs in new and emerging sectors and established high-growth, high-demand sectors. During the same time period, approximately 3,000 individuals were prepared for these middle-skill jobs through the community college system. In fiscal year 2015, the overall skill gap was approximately 26,000.

Figure 11: Mississippi Middle-Skill Jobs
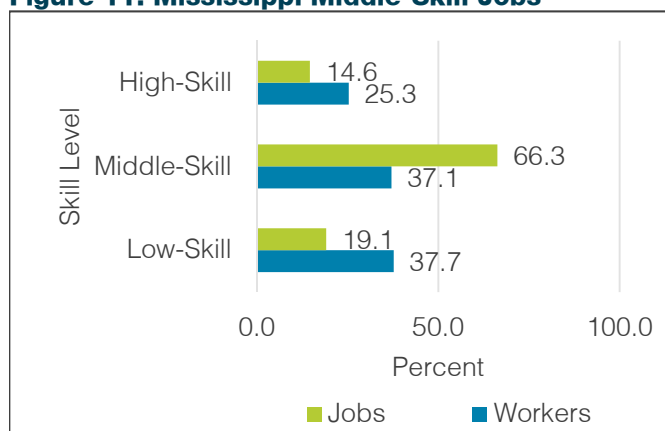
Source: American Community Survey, 2015; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Table 10: Gap Between Current Supply and Demand for Middle-Skill Occupations in New and Established Sectors

Sector	Supply	Demand	Gap
Advanced Manufacturing	898	2,529	1,631
Healthcare Support	601	751	150
Tourism	350	11,479	11,129
Established Sectors	1,126	14,016	12,890
Total	*2,975*	*28,775*	*25,800*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015; Mississippi Works, 2015; Mississippi Community Colleges, 2015.

Implications of Economic and Workforce Analysis

The preceding economic and workforce analysis provides a solid direction for developing strategies to improve the economic opportunities for those who have become discouraged from entering into the labor force and for those who have entered the workforce but struggle to cross over the poverty line. The analysis suggests that discouraged workers must overcome two challenges to lessen the likelihood of dropping out of the workforce. First, they have to obtain the credentials to regain the confidence needed to secure a good job. Second, they have to be able to develop necessary (soft) skills along with their competencies to meet employer expectations of a workforce willing to learn.

To meet these challenges, learning about life skills and work environment expectations is the first step to moving successfully into the workforce. In this regard, the state has developed mechanisms to assess when it is appropriate for job seekers to enroll in an eight-week intensive Smart Class (this class is fully described below under step three of "Goal 2: Strengthen Interagency Partnerships"). Next, the job seeker will have the opportunity to be prepared to earn educational credentials or skills necessary to align his or her aspirations with labor market expectations. The analysis also suggests that many will be required to have work experience before they are fully work-ready. A proven strategy for gaining experience is to provide subsidized employment opportunities such as apprenticeships and internships. Similarly, the working poor must be able to upgrade their credentials and improve their skills in order to improve their socioeconomic conditions. A suggested strategy is to engage the working poor in on-the-job training and opportunities for occupational education (e.g., MI-BEST) that are sensitive to the need to balance work schedules with upgrading education and skills.

The analysis also suggests that many of these individuals rely on public assistance in terms of SNAP and TANF and barrier mitigation such as childcare and transportation vouchers. Leveraging public assistance to meet workforce needs requires a great deal of coordination, as many of these services are administered by agencies disconnected from the workforce system. To overcome these barriers, the state developed an overall strategy to engage in common case management aimed at real-time referral. This case management strategy is fully described below under "Goal 2: Strengthen Interagency Partnerships," and the information technology that makes this strategy possible is described in the section titled "State Operating Systems and Policies."

To maximize the effectiveness of any strategy aimed at improving the quality of life for low-income individuals, the state recognizes it must engage in systemic change. This change calls for the creation of an ecosystem that aligns resources and services across agencies to achieve system (or statewide) outcomes. The analysis suggests the two most important system outcomes are improving workforce participation rates and increasing the number of people with more than a high school credential. The

importance of these system outcomes is shown in Figure 12. This figure provides a national context, showing that states with higher rates of individuals with more than high school credentials also have higher labor force participation rates.

Figure 12: U.S. Education and Labor Force Participation Rate by State
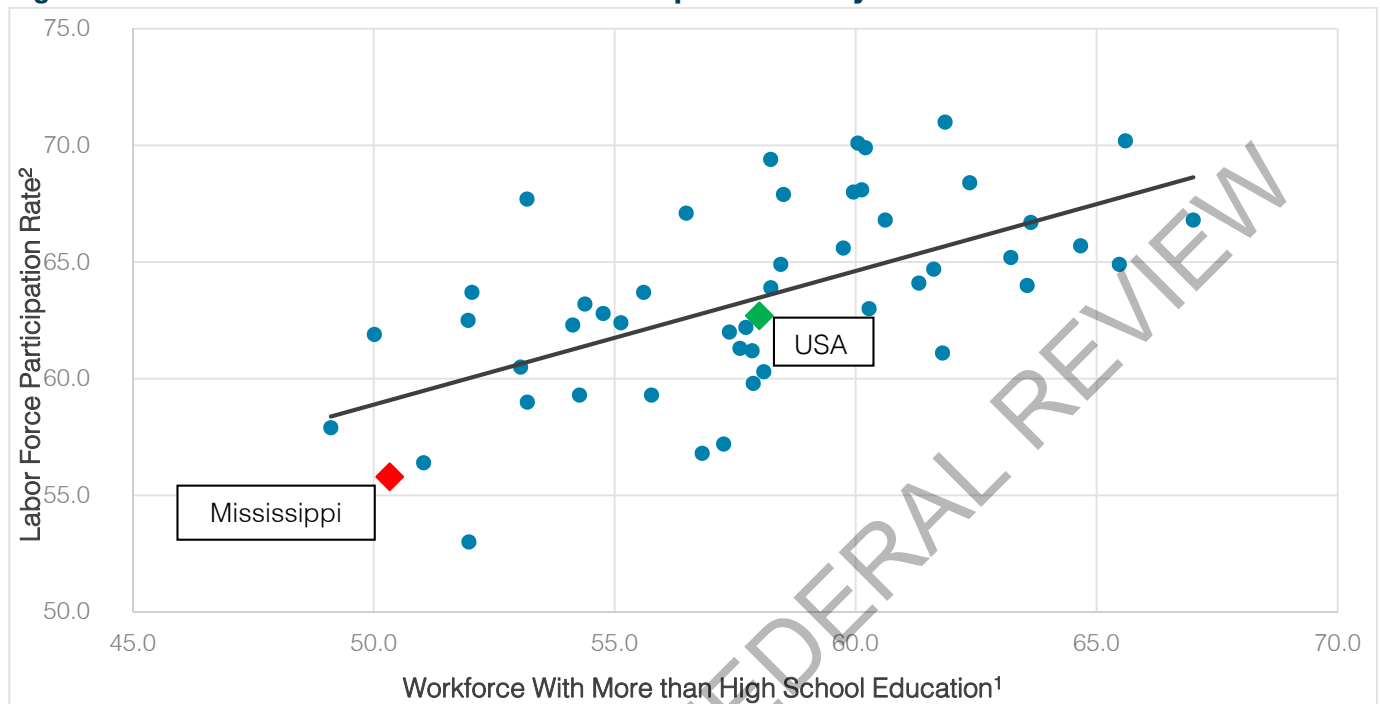
Sources: [1] *Current Population Survey, 2015;* [2] *Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.*

For Mississippi to move from the bottom, the state must meet the challenge of an economy that puts, more than ever, an emphasis on attaining more than high school credentials. Our state's low labor force participation rate is not necessarily due to a lack of job opportunities. On the contrary, there are more than 329,000 middle-skill jobs not filled by our current workforce. In order to fill those middle-skill jobs, the state needs to be able to increase the number of people in the workforce who possess middle-skill credentials. Mississippi has a considerably large low-skill workforce that, if adequately educated, could close that gap. Of the state's 432,000 workers ages 16-64 with low skills, only about 197,000 have jobs. This means that Mississippi has more than 235,000 low-skill individuals who need to be able to enter the workforce. If Mississippi is to close the gap between its current labor force participation rate (55.8 percent) and the national average (62.7 percent), the state needs to close its skill gap by half (add roughly 155,000 people into the workforce) in the next four years.

The key strategy outlined in the Mississippi Combined WIOA Plan is to go beyond program-specific performance metrics and use tools that will allow the state to gauge how a change in one program impacts the change of another program. The state will engage in an ongoing evaluation process using specific data tools such as dashboards, pathway evaluators, and supply-demand models. This is fully described under "Goal 4: Develop Cross-Program Performance Metrics."

Workforce Development, Education, and Training Activities Analysis

Mississippi Workforce Development Activities

WIA System

When examining Workforce Investment Act system activities in Mississippi, it becomes evident that the majority of education and training provided by the core programs are for jobs in the healthcare sector. Specifically, 937 individuals in 2014 received education and training in the areas of nursing (RN, LPN, and CNA), radiography, pharmacy technicians, phlebotomy, dental hygiene, physical therapy, and respiratory care. The second largest education and training activity was for truck driving, with 436 receiving training. Another 190 received training in manufacturing-related skills. Almost 1,700 individuals received on-the-job training (OJT). The vast majority of WIA system activities are geared toward staff-assisted services such as labor market information, job search, and job referral rather than education and training activities.

Internships

In addition to the workforce education and training activities delivered within community college classrooms, transitional programs such as internships and apprenticeships are essential components of the workforce education and training system in the state.

Internships have been identified as one of the most important types of non-credit training that Mississippi job seekers can use to attain the skills for gainful employment. Many of the internship opportunities offered by employers in fiscal year 2014 required middle skills. The number of middle-skill internships could increase in the future with growing relationships between community colleges and employers in Mississippi.

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) provides a Veterans Internship Program (VIP) to help veterans transition to the civilian workplace. The program is designed to connect businesses seeking qualified job candidates with military veterans seeking transition to the civilian workplace. The Twin Districts area designed the pilot program with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor. Through the program, eligible veterans receive resume preparation assistance, interpersonal skills training, and paid work experience in high-demand occupations. Worksites are chosen based on current hiring opportunities, appropriate compensation rates, and available occupations. Employers' willingness to train and mentor veterans through planned, structured, and meaningful learning experiences was critical to their participation. The pilot VIP program began at the Columbia Workforce Investment Network (WIN) Job Center, providing 10 veterans with enhanced job skills and new skills to help them compete in the current job market. Businesses were given an opportunity to learn how valuable military skills translate to civilian jobs. The 12-week internship included between 20 and 40 hours per week of paid experience. Eight (two of whom were disabled veterans) of the 10 veterans in the pilot program were hired permanently. The Twin Districts area is currently recruiting for the next VIP training session.

One-Stop Center operators offer an Adult Internship Program in the Mississippi Partnership area that provides interns with practical work experience and leadership skills while they seek full-time employment. The program provides businesses an opportunity to try out potential applicants in real work settings. The program responds to the need of individuals to acquire relevant work experience and

interpersonal skills. In addition, some community colleges partner with local businesses to provide specialized training programs that may include a two-year associate degree, a cutting-edge curriculum, and paid work experience. Each of these community college and business partners will vary on the hours per week and the wage provided. However, the paid work experience is at a minimum of three days or 16 hours per week, with wages starting at $14 per hour and potentially increasing to $20 per hour. When possible, some community colleges provide interns an eight-hour shift for the purpose of experiencing a full day's work. At the end of the corresponding academic semesters, participating industries are reimbursed approximately $2,500 per intern to help offset wages. Reimbursement to companies is administered through the corresponding local workforce development area.

The Make It in Mississippi project is an initiative to increase the reshoring of overseas jobs back to Mississippi. Funded through the federal Make It in America challenge, Make It in Mississippi is helping the state make great strides in creating and sustaining new and existing jobs. Through strategic partnerships among government agencies, institutes of higher education, and the state's manufacturing extension partnership, Mississippi is currently in the process of establishing a statewide initiative focused on helping Mississippi workers acquire advanced manufacturing skills and strengthening supply chains in Mississippi manufacturing.

One of the major strengths of the Make It in Mississippi project is the involvement of four community colleges to establish a six-week internship program with cooperating advanced manufacturers. These community colleges (Itawamba Community College, East Mississippi Community College, Mississippi Delta Community College, and Holmes Community College) have developed a unified regional strategy for technical training in advanced manufacturing to increase the skill level and earnings of Mississippi workers. Titled the Career Accelerated Pathway (CAP), this strategy has been successfully developed and tested with major employers in the advanced manufacturing sector, gaining the attention of other community colleges eager to expand the concept into other regions and other business sectors. In its current iteration, the CAP project will fund 276 internships over the next three years. The internships will last six weeks and will be located within participating original equipment manufacturers. The program targets an 85-percent placement rate of interns into employment with participating advanced manufacturers.

Special Programs for SNAP Recipients, Seniors, and People with Disabilities

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized funds for 10 pilot Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) projects designed to reduce dependency on public assistance and increase work efforts. As a grantee, the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) partnered with the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), employers, and community colleges to develop and implement the state's first SNAP E&T pilot program.

The Mississippi Works Career Assessment Program (Smart Class) is a four-week course that prepares participants for future employment or postsecondary education. The course includes career planning, job skills training, education, wraparound services, and life skills. At the end of the course, the participant is provided with a voucher to implement a career plan through one of three pathways: 1) an academic pathway focused on high school equivalency attainment or career-technical education, 2) a life skills pathway, or 3) a work pathway in which students can participate in subsidized or unsubsidized employment or additional career training. The goal is to connect or reconnect SNAP participants to a middle-skill job pathway. Participants will be selected from counties within five community college districts (Itawamba Community College, Mississippi Delta Community College, East Mississippi Community College, Jones County Junior College, and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College). These five community colleges are representative of the socioeconomic context of the state and include both

metropolitan and rural areas. The target population for the pilot includes approximately 80,000 work-eligible SNAP recipients residing in the five community college districts.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based, job-training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors. Participants also have access to employment assistance through American Job Centers. SCSEP participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at nonprofit and public facilities, including schools, hospitals, childcare centers, and senior centers. SCSEP is administered in 81 counties in Mississippi. Nationally, this program has provided more than 40 million community service hours to public and nonprofit agencies, allowing them to enhance and provide needed services. Participants work an average of 20 hours per week and receive the federal minimum wage, which is currently $7.25. Also, limited fringe benefits are provided. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants. Participants must be at least 55 and unemployed with a family income of no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are older than 65, have a disability, have low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services through the American Job Center system.

Mississippi Goodworks, of Goodwill Industries, collaborates with the government and industry to provide jobs for people with disabilities or other disadvantages. These services give participants a chance for practical, paid work experience while giving local businesses and government agencies valuable high-quality production services. Additionally, Goodwill Industries has a contract with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services to provide job evaluation and training. Through its contracted services, Goodworks has generated approximately $2.5 million in salaries and payroll taxes annually. It employs 135 people who have barriers to employment, such as those with physical and emotional disabilities, individuals in 12-step programs, and ex-offenders.

Dropout Prevention and Recovery

A special focus of workforce activities is in dropout prevention and dropout recovery, especially in relation to youth. Mississippi is committed to providing comprehensive services to eligible youth, especially individuals with significant barriers to employment or individuals at risk of falling out of the education pipeline. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) provides comprehensive services to youth through an integrated system of education, workforce training, skills development, and job-readiness services. These services are designed to assist eligible youth to receive the educational and employment skills, training, and support needed to achieve academic and employment success as they transition into the workforce and/or postsecondary education.

Dropout prevention activities are also part of youth program efforts in the state. Services to eligible youth are delivered through a network of youth providers. Independent contractors may competitively bid for youth funds and deliver local workforce development area Youth Program services that include counseling, occupational skills training, leadership development, guidance, follow-up work-readiness training, internships, job placement, pre-employment training, work experience, high school equivalency preparation and achievement, employment referral to on-the-job training, and individual training accounts.

Innovative approaches used by youth providers include the Counseling to Career (C2C) youth programs, the Senior Transition Program, and Career Connections. The C2C program provides one-on-one counseling that helps youth develop a personalized individual service strategy that leads to short- and

long-term academic and/or career goals. C2C counselors provide tutoring services to youth in need of basic skill development through reading, math, and language education and develop educational workshops, mock interviews, mentoring, and community service projects. Counselors will also assist youth with finding jobs with local employers and, if applicable, make referrals to additional services.

Building off the C2C program, the Senior Transition Program enhances work readiness and college preparedness by developing the transition-to-work skills of eligible high school seniors on track to graduate during the program year. Through this program, youth are able to transition more smoothly into work or postsecondary education and gain valuable career information and guidance. Senior transition coordinators in Workforce Investment Network Job Centers coordinate the program, using local community resources and business leaders to provide real-world perspectives and workshop experiences.

The primary goal of the Career Connections program is to equip youth with the education and skills needed to take advantage of new job opportunities in high-growth labor markets. Educators partner directly with industries to expand career-specific learning for Career Connections participants in areas such as professional development, mock interviews, resume writing, dual enrollment options, and postsecondary education options.

In addition to the services provided to eligible youth through MDES, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) offers several dropout prevention strategies. MDE-approved dropout prevention programs include the following:

- **Career academies** incorporate academic and technical skills, small-size classes, and collaboration among teachers. Currently utilized in nine school districts across the state, these programs allow students to receive industry-recognized credentials at no cost. In some districts, these programs are open to all high school students, while others have been implemented as pocket academies, which accommodate a cohort of students. Key characteristics of the career academy include: 1) a smaller learning community of students linked to a common set of teachers; 2) cohort scheduling and common planning; 3) physical space shared by one academy; 4) integrated curricula focused on the selected academy concept; 5) advisory groups; 6) strong community and industry connections; and 7) dual credit/dual enrollment options.

- **Dual credit/dual enrollment** allows high school students to simultaneously earn college academic or career/technical credit and credit toward a high school diploma. Mississippi Works dual credit/dual enrollment policy—a key element of Governor Phil Bryant's 2012 legislative agenda—provides high school students at risk of dropping out with the opportunity to complete their education while learning a skill or trade. Additionally, Mississippi Code 37-15-38, Section 19, allows the local school districts to work with local community colleges to connect successful students to college-level coursework.

- The **Mississippi Occupational Diploma** program is a graduation option for high school students with disabilities. This program consists of a functional academics- and community-based employment curriculum.

- **Jobs for Mississippi Graduates** is a program designed to keep young people in school through graduation and to provide work-based learning experiences that will lead to career advancement opportunities or enrollment in a postsecondary institution. Students receive follow-up services for 12 months after graduation. Students are targeted for services based on a number of barriers to staying in school through graduation and/or transitioning from school to a career. The program has had approximately 22,000 participants since 1990. Governor Phil Bryant is a strong advocate of

Jobs for Mississippi Graduates and has championed the program's expansion into a significant number of additional schools under his administration.

Community-based organizations are also heavily engaged in dropout prevention and recovery. Jobs for Mississippi Graduates (JMG) is a Mississippi affiliate of the Jobs for America's Graduates Program. For 22 years, JMG has worked in partnership with community colleges and local high schools to support recent graduates, students at risk of dropout, and students who need assistance in the transition from school to work. JMG operates 52 program sites in Mississippi and serves about 1,849 individuals per year. Students receiving services from JMG graduate at a rate of 90.6 percent, and to date the program has supported these graduates with $6.7 million in scholarships.

The Mississippi Scholars program is managed by the Public Education Forum of Mississippi and partners with local business leaders to prepare high school students for a successful transition to college, university coursework, or technical training necessary to compete in the 21st century job market. Since its inception in 2003, the Mississippi Scholars program has recognized more than 25,000 graduating seniors from more than 160 high schools for completing the program. Additionally, the Mississippi Scholars Tech Master program was designed to encourage high school students to pursue a career and technical coursework.

Another dropout prevention strategy focuses on improving college completion rates. In 2014, at Governor Phil Bryant's urging, the Mississippi Legislature passed SB 2563, requiring community colleges and universities to develop plans to address teen pregnancy on their campuses and its associated barriers to education, such as childcare, transportation, and financial aid. Because Mississippi's teen pregnancy rate is highest among girls ages 17 to 19, and because teen pregnancy affects a woman's ability to complete her education, obtain a good job, and earn sufficient family wages, the passage of SB 2563 is a significant step toward increasing college completion rates and the skill level of Mississippi workers.

Dropout recovery is another element of the strategy to improve economic opportunities for low-skill job seekers. For individuals who became disconnected from the education pipeline and are unable to attach themselves to the workforce, basic skill remediation is often necessary before job placement. It is nearly impossible for individuals lacking proper math, reading, writing, communication, teamwork, and computer skills to be competitive in today's labor market. Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs provide adults with the education needed for functional literacy before they move on to employment or additional education and training. ABE programs administered through the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) are designed to offer opportunities that will enhance the skills and abilities of individuals preparing for the workforce or additional educational activities.

ABE serves 16,738 people across the state. ABE remediation is offered at 15 community colleges, nine public schools, one community-based organization, one university, and all correctional facilities. In addition to assessing an individual's educational needs in reading, math, and writing, ABE serves as the foundation on which workforce education is fundamentally based. The Office of Adult Education will conduct competitions for eligible providers upon receiving guidance from the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). Awards will be distributed annually based on funding received from OCTAE. Institutions compete for $6.1 million annually through a standardized application process.

Building off of the dropout recovery strategies of ABE programs, the Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skill Training (MI-BEST) initiative led by the Mississippi Community College Board seeks to incorporate a career pathway model within the delivery of basic education. MI-BEST primarily targets high school dropouts, low-income individuals, and other students by accelerating their transition from basic skills education to postsecondary programs of study. MI-BEST incorporates contextualized learning by concurrently delivering ABE and career and technical education (CTE) classes using a team-teaching

approach. In addition, MI-BEST provides low-skill, undereducated, and low-wage workers opportunities to enter career pathways with the appropriate level of instruction, leading to postsecondary degrees and/or credentials and, ultimately, self-sufficiency.

Through MI-BEST, Mississippi joins a growing number of states implementing best practices designed to recover and accelerate postsecondary credential attainment among high school dropouts and other nontraditional students. Participants in the MI-BEST program must earn a Career Readiness Credential at any level, complete at least 20 hours of employable skills training, and continue on-the-job training. Upon completion of this program, students have the skills and credentials to enter the workforce at the middle-skill level.

Employment Services

In addition to the core services administered by Combined Plan Partners, Mississippi's workforce system offers a variety of employment services to ensure all job seekers have the resources and tools to secure gainful employment.

All Job Seekers

Job search, job referral, and provision of labor market information are the key supportive services offered to all job seekers by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security through the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange, which connects job seekers to employers through both web and mobile applications. Job seekers can 1) build a profile using a wizard-style intake form; 2) automatically generate a resume; 3) search for and apply online to openings; 4) receive emails or text messages when new openings match the job seeker's criteria; 5) receive real-time feedback through an innovative gap analysis that helps a job seeker determine how well matched he or she is for a particular position; and 6) access easy-to-understand labor market analysis. For job seekers who lack computer skills, One-Stop Center staff can also log into the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to assist job seekers in applying for positions through a "staff-assisted referral" or other Wagner-Peyser services.

Postsecondary Students

Mississippi's higher learning institutions offer career center support on all eight public university campuses: Alcorn State University, Delta State University, Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, Mississippi University for Women, Mississippi Valley State University, The University of Mississippi, and The University of Southern Mississippi. These centers provide students with information about career development, coordinate career fairs, develop partnerships with employers that lead to internships and cooperative education possibilities, and provide instruction in resume creation and interview techniques.

As an extension of campus career centers, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security offers MSGradJobs.com, an online job search application allowing students in all Mississippi postsecondary institutions (public and private universities and community colleges) to receive weekly email messages containing job matches that correlate with the students' academic majors. Students may sign up individually for this service, or they may be connected directly with the system through a growing list of direct university and community college partners. Since the system launch in mid-2013, 601,661 emails have been sent to 15,232 registered students representing 41 Mississippi institutions (four-year and community colleges) and 148 out-of-state institutions in the United States and abroad.

A sister site, MSTechJobs.com is currently in development. MSTechJobs.com will focus especially on ensuring that students in Mississippi's community colleges are notified about openings in high-demand, middle-skill occupations.

Another example of coordinated outreach to postsecondary students is Get On The Grid, an initiative led by the Mississippi Energy Institute and made possible by numerous public and private partners. The initiative's purpose is to promote educational and occupational opportunities in the energy and advanced manufacturing sectors. Through its website GetOntheGridMS.com, students can explore careers through videos and connect with training providers via a searchable database.

Ex-Offenders

To address barriers to employment faced by ex-offenders, the Mississippi Department of Corrections and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) partnered to create the "Employment Connections" system that enables an offender to create a pending workforce profile in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange prior to release. Upon release, this profile goes live, and the offender is given an information sheet containing credentials to log into the system and the address of the nearest job center. MDES operates an innovative, automated Work Opportunity Tax Credit processing system that enables Mississippi employers to quickly apply for and receive tax credits that encourage the hiring of persons from several at-risk groups, including ex-offenders. In fiscal year 2014, more than 45,000 Mississippi employers took advantage of the tax credit program and hired more than 16,000 Mississippians within targeted populations. MDES also administers the Federal Bonding Program that allows employers to hire, with limited liability, at-risk job applicants such as ex-offenders. Employers are insured for theft, forgery, larceny, or embezzlement by the bonded employee, thus reducing the barriers many employers face in hiring ex-offenders.

Supportive Services

In addition to employment services, Mississippi's workforce system offers a variety of supportive services to ensure that job seekers who face a wide variety of challenges have the resources and tools to secure gainful employment.

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A sister site, MSTechJobs.com is currently in development and is scheduled to launch in the fourth quarter of 2015. MSTechJobs.com will focus especially on ensuring that students in Mississippi's community colleges are notified about openings in high-demand, middle-skill occupations.

Job Seekers Who Face Barriers to Employment

In order to assist job seekers who face the greatest barriers to employment, Mississippi's workforce system offers services to mitigate childcare needs, transportation needs, and needs arising from disability.

- Childcare services are provided by the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) in connection with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Work Program, and the Child Care Certificate Program. For participants who lose TANF eligibility due to earned income, MDHS also administers the Transitional Child Care Program to mitigate childcare barriers that may otherwise prevent these new workers from succeeding in their attempts to become self-sufficient. MDHS administers an additional federally funded program, the Child Care Certificate Program, which assists parents who meet income and work requirements in paying for preschool tuition. As of 2014, there are 7,646 Transitional Child Care participants receiving childcare assistance. Additionally, in 2014 TANF transferred $17,353,516 to the MDHS Division of Early Childhood Care and Development for assistance with childcare needs.

- Transportation services are provided by MDHS, the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS), and the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT). To participants in the TANF Work Program, MDHS provides transportation in the form of a bus pass or monthly work allowance. For participants who lose TANF eligibility due to earned income, MDHS also administers the Transitional Transportation Program. From October 2013 to September 2014, MDHS provided a total of $12,840,420 to 4,345 participants in these programs. MDOT's transit programs provide capital assistance, operating assistance, and administration for four Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs: 1) the Rural Area Formal Grants Program; 2) the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program; 3) the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program; and 4) the New Freedom Program. These programs address transportation needs for low-income individuals, those living in rural areas, seniors, those needing transportation for work opportunities, and those with disabilities.

- Services to address the needs of those with disabilities are coordinated by MDRS. MDRS's Assistive Technology program assists workers and employers in applying technological solutions that enable MDRS clients to succeed vocationally. Through the Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology (START) program, MDRS operates a device training and loan program and works with the T.K. Martin Center for Technology and Disability at Mississippi State University to apply a

multidisciplinary approach to removing barriers that affect individuals with disabilities vocationally. MDRS also assists MDES in ensuring the accessibility of its One-Stop Centers.

Pilots

In addition to the supportive services described above, several state agencies are currently studying innovative models of barrier mitigation through pilot programs.

MDHS will launch an innovative Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education and Training (SNAP E&T) pilot program in March of 2016 that enrolls study participants in intensive, wraparound services while they pursue training for middle-skill employment in five community college districts. This wraparound model for supportive services features navigators, counselors who regularly meet with the participant to assist in career planning, and the use of a four-week intensive Career Assessment Program (CAP). CAP integrates basic skills and work-readiness activities with assessments designed to discover barriers and connect at-risk persons with the labor market prior to training. As part of the wraparound services, study participants will have access to childcare and transportation vouchers as well as vouchers for equipment such as steel-toed boots or personal safety equipment required for transitional employment.

MDRS currently operates a transportation pilot project in Leflore County to study ways to provide transportation for employment to individuals with disabilities in areas without public transportation. This project involves a partnership with the Mississippi Transportation Coalition, the Mississippi State Department of Mental Health, and a private transportation company that provides rides associated with the pilot.

Employer-Focused Activities

The Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) fund, established by the Mississippi Legislature in 2004, provides financial support for community colleges to work collaboratively with state businesses to design and implement specialized short-term training programs to teach the skills that employees need to be productive and up-to-date in their jobs. There are approximately 100,000 participants (who can be enrolled in more than one program), with the Safety and Medical/Healthcare programs each accounting for the greatest share of participants at roughly 40,000 each. The Industrial Production and Quality Control Management programs also have a large number of participants at approximately 18,000 each. These job-training programs include the following:

- **Pre-employment training** allows local community colleges to deliver basic instruction to applicants. During the course of instruction, businesses evaluate the applicants to identify and hire trainees that best meet their needs.

- **Train the trainer** reimburses (limited) travel costs to businesses that send employees for specialty training not currently offered by the state's community college system. Once trained, the employees train other business employees on the learned specialty skills.

- **Applicant assessment** allows community colleges to assist local businesses in evaluating the basic skills of applicants.

- **Customized training** offers the development and delivery of training that meets a specific business need via a community college trainer.

- **Customized industry-based training** allows the community college to assist businesses in identifying and securing a training provider when the training is not provided by a local college.

- **Career readiness certification** confirms to employers than an individual has the basic workplace skills and abilities required for 21st century jobs.

Public-Private Partnerships

In recent years, partnerships between public and private entities have resulted in many successful career awareness programs. Get On The Grid and Mississippi Scholars are two recent examples.

Get On The Grid, an initiative led by the Mississippi Energy Institute and made possible by numerous public and private partners, promotes educational and occupational opportunities in the energy and advanced manufacturing sectors. Through its website GetOnTheGridMS.com, students can explore careers through videos and connect with training providers and companies via a real-time database. Get On The Grid also offers educator resources to encourage interactive career exploration in the classroom.

Sponsored by the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) and the State Chamber of Commerce, Mississippi Scholars is a program that encourages high school students to take a more rigorous course of study, including STEM-focused coursework, to prepare for success in university coursework or technical training necessary to compete in the 21st century job market. Mississippi Scholars is managed by an MEC affiliate, the Public Education Forum of Mississippi, and benefits from partnerships with local business leaders working through local chambers of commerce and other community, business, and economic development organizations. Since its inception in 2003, the Mississippi Scholars program has recognized more than 30,000 graduating seniors, representing high schools in 90 school districts statewide, for completing the program. Last year, Mississippi Scholars recognized more than 4,000 graduating seniors—about 15 percent of the statewide graduating class.

Two years ago, MEC added a second track, Mississippi Scholars Tech Master, which recognizes high school students who take a specific course of study aimed at more immediate career-readiness. In addition to coursework, Mississippi Scholars Tech Master students must meet attendance and performance standards aimed to prepare them for either direct entry into careers or further study and certification not necessarily requiring a four-year college approach. Mississippi Scholars Tech Master is now offered in 75 school districts and has recognized more than 1,000 high school graduates in its pilot phase and its first full-year ramp-up. Projections indicate that by the end of the first five full years of operation, the Mississippi Scholars Tech Master program will recognize 7,500 graduating seniors a year—about 25 percent of the annual statewide graduating class.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

After a series of meetings and input from all parties, a consensus was formed that the current workforce system is structured to:

- Deliver education and training to prepare individuals for jobs and careers.
- Upgrade, maintain, and fine-tune the skills of the incumbent workforce.
- Connect individuals to jobs and offer supportive services.
- Support business retention, expansion, and recruitment.
- Maintain and improve integration of education and workforce data in order to produce high-quality labor market information.

There was also clear agreement on the opportunities and challenges facing Mississippi's current workforce development system.

General Strengths

- Contains all of the necessary elements of a future-ready workforce ecosystem: education delivery services, job placement services, supportive services, and a robust system to collect and disseminate labor market information.
- Recognizes that workforce development is shared responsibility with roles for educational partners, including K-12 schools, two-year colleges, and four-year universities; workforce support services; and public and privately administered programs by employers, business and industry associations, communities, and faith-based partners.
- Provides cross-agency support services that promote education, professional development, and training, especially through the services provided by the Mississippi Department of Education, community colleges, and Institutions of Higher Learning.
- Connects people to jobs through agency services and innovative use of technology.
- Leverages the system of Planning and Development Districts (PDDs) across the state to ensure that projects and programs are developed in line with regional long-range plans.
- Integrates community-based organizations (CBOs) into the slate of statewide services.

Program-Specific Strengths

- Title I, Title, III, UI, TAA, and SCSEP: The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) administers training funds for Youth, Adult, and Dislocated workers in partnership with community colleges and other training providers managed by an eligible training provider list (ETPL). These services are accessible throughout the state's four local workforce development areas through a network of local WIN Job Centers operated by local partners or by MDES on behalf of local partners. All case-management activities for the administration of workforce training and employment services are recorded in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange system, bringing consistency to data collection and performance tracking. MDES currently provides essential labor market support services through connecting and reconnecting people with jobs. MDES provides the technological platform and expertise to bridge job seekers effectively with employers and other workforce stakeholders. Technologically, MDES leverages the strength of a web-services connection between its Unemployment Insurance case management system, Access MS, and its Employment Services system, the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange. The efficiencies realized by this connection between UI and Employment Services has informed the development of the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module that will enable all Combined Plan Partners to realize the benefits of electronic referrals and electronically coordinated case management according to a common career pathway model. Another key strength of the MDES technology portfolio is its robust self-service capability that allows participants to access employment and unemployment services through web and mobile applications from any location.
- Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs (AEFLA): The Mississippi Community College Board delivers adult education services through a large, statewide network of contractors providing literacy, equivalency, and other training to adults in need of a high school education. ABE providers work closely with community groups and local job centers to ensure that workforce area residents are aware of class availability. Key to meeting the training needs of Mississippi's workforce, ABE programs have the ability to reach into rural communities and provide training toward high school equivalency prerequisites supportive of further training for middle-skill

occupations. In addition, ABE classes serve as an effective intake for MI-BEST training that combines equivalency training with community college workforce training.

- Title IV, Vocational Rehabilitation Services: The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitative Services (MDRS) assists Mississippians who face barriers to access the labor market through specialized training and workforce supports. MDRS professional staff provide expertise in assisting those with disabilities to enter in-demand occupations, and MDRS already assists other Combined Plan Partners in assessing the accessibility of their respective service delivery systems.

- TANF: The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) implements programs to assist individuals and families to become self-sufficient. MDHS administration of TANF cash assistance and the TANF work program helps meet the financial needs of vulnerable individuals and families while providing funds for workforce training activities and supportive services such as transportation and childcare. In addition, MDHS administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a program serving about 20 percent of Mississippi's population. SNAP Education and Training funds provide support for community college training and will provide a key source of additional allocated and matching funds to assist the most vulnerable Mississippians in accessing training for in-demand occupations while providing funds to assist with food security and to overcome barriers such as childcare and transportation.

- Other Supportive Programs: The Mississippi Department of Transportation coordinates a network of public and specialized transportation agencies that help provide access to jobs, education, and training opportunities.

General Weaknesses

- Ineffective matching of incumbent workers and job seekers to career pathways.
- Ineffective matching of college students with career-strengthening opportunities, such as experiential education and co-ops.
- Suboptimal system coordination to inform training and education programs to keep them on the leading edge of workforce expectations.
- Competing visions and interests across sectors, programs, and agencies.

Program Specific Weaknesses

- Title I, Title, III, UI, TAA, and SCSEP: These programs, administered by MDES, are currently administered without the benefit of technology that allows MDES to directly refer individuals to training providers. Currently the system requires the use of paper forms to coordinate training between MDES and its training provider partners. In addition, MDES staff must manually assist participants to access supportive services provided by Combined Plan Partners. There is currently no automated way to ensure that participants in workforce-related training programs are able to move from a local job center to training providers or to other Combined Plan Partners. This limitation may result in discontinuities and jeopardize the clarity required for career pathways to be navigated from multiple entry and exit points. Further, while certain Title I programs require an individual employment plan, such a plan is not currently held in common with other state partners, limiting the capacity of the entire workforce and training system to serve participants comprehensively with an overall career goal in mind.

- Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs (AEFLA): Current ABE resources, administered by the Mississippi Community College Board's network of providers, are focused predominately on training by regulation. In order to provide career counseling and other supportive services, MCCB must connect its participants with services from other Combined Plan Partner programs, such as Wagner-Peyser for job search assistance; TANF for assistance with childcare, transportation, and cash assistance; and SNAP for food assistance. ABE case management data

are accessed by staff only; participants have no self-service option for accessing career plans. In addition, there is no formal, automated technology that organizes and tracks referrals from ABE providers to other Combined Plan Partners.

- Title III, Wagner Peyser Services: Despite the great strengths of the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange in fostering connections between job center staff, participants, and employers, the system currently interfaces directly only to the MDES Unemployment Insurance management system. Referrals to other Combined Plan Partner services are currently based on paper forms, meaning that system-wide analysis of effectiveness in meeting the needs of vulnerable job seekers is difficult to automate.
- Title IV, Vocational Rehabilitation Services: As with other Combined Plan programs, Vocational Rehabilitation case management is conducted in an agency-specific system that does not interface directly with other Combined Plan Partner systems. While MDRS provides a nearly complete combination of supportive, training, and labor market services to a certain subset of workforce participants, there is currently no technology to support the connection of MDRS participants to TANF, Unemployment Insurance services, or even to the extensive labor market services provided by local WIN job centers.
- TANF: Currently there is no way for TANF case workers to create a formalized, electronic referral to a local WIN job center. TANF work requirements are sometimes met without providing candidates with career counseling that takes into account labor market needs. In previous years, TANF had no resources designed to improve participant soft/necessary skills, but WIOA will provide access to the "Smart Class" to address these barriers to employment. Further, the computer systems used to manage TANF cases do not provide participants with a self-service interface to access career planning documentation.

Opportunities

- To develop a responsive and proactive workforce ecosystem built on collaboration between statewide leaders, regional experts, and local developers.
- To dynamically support state and local efforts with regard to business retention, expansion, and recruitment.
- To adapt education and training programs to meet current needs and emerging opportunities.
- To develop cross-program performance metrics to enable improved monitoring of workforce development programs to gauge progress in achieving performance benchmarks.
- To expand technology to meet the unified technology requirements of WIOA and other federal initiatives.

Threats

- Too complex and hard to navigate.
- Insufficient feedback mechanism to inform education and workforce partners so that they can adapt to changes in the workforce ecosystem.
- Not nimble enough to adapt to changing federal regulations regarding the development of cross-program, cross-agency performance metrics.

Development Capacity

The state's capacity rests in the supportive nature of its cultural and political environment, the strength of its technology and data systems, its programmatic capacity to support the success of vulnerable individuals, and the distribution of its physical infrastructure.

Political and Cultural Capacity

For more than a decade, the state has worked to create a cultural and political environment to foster cooperation and integration across education and workforce programs. In 2004, the state passed the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act. The main goal of the act was to reduce fragmentation and duplication of services and to promote performance-based management.

Technology and Data Capacity

To date, the state has developed and implemented one of the most integrated technology-based workforce systems in the country, commonly known as Mississippi Works. The system fully integrates Unemployment Insurance, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Veterans, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, and Senior Community Service Employment Program. Mississippi Works is fully interoperable with other case management systems such as those in use for Rehabilitation Services, Adult Basic Education, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The state has also developed and implemented one of the country's most comprehensive and advanced integrated data systems, commonly known as LifeTracks, to advance performance-based management. The development of this system began in 2005, and the system has been fully operational for the last five years. In 2012, the Mississippi Legislature created the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Governing Board for the management and oversight of data sharing and data use. Board members include representatives from each workforce and education sector in the state. The SLDS Governing Board has developed a clear set of rules that define the scope of the system along with those ensuring data integrity, security, confidentiality, and privacy (see Appendix B).

Capacity to Support the Success of Vulnerable Populations

Mississippi's capacity to support those with barriers to employment will greatly expand under the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. In cooperation with the Mississippi Community College Board, all Combined Plan Partners will be able to refer participants with the greatest barriers to employment to a "Smart Class" designed to fully assess a participant's work skills and assist the participant to overcome attitudinal or other soft-skills challenges. Further, all partners will collect a basic set of diagnostic information from WIOA participants allowing for an automated assessment of participant needs. No longer will participants be left to navigate the workforce or social services system alone, responsible to follow up with word-of-mouth referrals to supportive or workforce training programs. No matter which Combined Plan Partner the participant visits first, he or she will be fully assessed and connected with supportive services that will enable the participant to have the best possible opportunity to succeed in training for or entering in-demand occupations.

Physical Infrastructure Capacity

The workforce system also relies on infrastructure with multiple points of access provided by WIOA Combined Plan Partners.

WIN Job Centers. Job centers in Mississippi have been branded under the Workforce Investment Network (WIN) and are known as WIN Job Centers. There are 42 centers across the state, and most Mississippi residents are within 30 miles of a center. These centers provide easy access to employment services, such as education and training for workers, human resource assistance for businesses, and information for economic developers. In support of Mississippi businesses, WIN Job Centers offer a vast array of services, including providing E-Verify, hosting job fairs, posting jobs, screening potential workers, communicating meaningful data about Mississippi's labor market, and providing training services — all

at no cost to businesses and workers. The "WIN in Mississippi" system gathers and produces meaningful information to identify business needs and employee skill levels.

Beyond its own physical job centers, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security serves workforce customers via e-WIN Access Points. e-WIN Access Points bring workforce services to more people in areas not served by a full-time WIN Job Center. Each location provides at least one public computer with Internet access and a trained e-WIN Access Point Ambassador to assist job candidates. These ambassadors have a personal connection to the nearest WIN Job Center management, staff, and key partners. e-WIN Access Points are available in all Mississippi Department of Human Services county offices, in some correctional facilities, and in other locations such as public libraries.

Rehabilitation Services Local Offices. The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) provides vocational rehabilitation services through a variety of local offices, affiliates, and itinerant teachers. MDRS operates 10 district offices and provides services through 42 physical locations throughout Mississippi. The AbilityWorks division of MDRS is a network of 17 community rehabilitation programs that provide vocational assessment, job training, and work experience for individuals with disabilities. Three MDRS work locations are WIN Job Centers.

Human Services County Offices. The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) maintains offices in all 82 counties of the state and employs roughly 3,800 Mississippians. The 82 county offices are divided among 13 regions. A regional director is responsible for oversight of the counties within each region. At the state office, staff provide support for policy, procedures, training, and technical assistance needed for program administration.

In addition to county offices, the field division of MDHS is responsible for programs that ensure nutrition and other basic needs are met for low- and medium-income individuals and families in Mississippi. The field division has offices in each county of the state under the guidance of a county director. Staff development and training within MDHS county offices are focused on supporting professional growth by providing training programs and workshops based on the specific needs of the agency office.

MDHS also supports Mississippi Access to Care (MAC) centers. MAC centers are accessible places located throughout the state where older individuals and individuals with disabilities, as well as their families and representatives, can obtain unbiased information and assistance for locating long-term care services and applying for benefits. The centers provide a central source of reliable, objective information about a broad range of programs and services. MAC centers also help people understand and evaluate the various options available, regardless of income or eligibility, for publically funded long-term care.

Adult Basic Education Access Points. The Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) offers Adult Basic Education (ABE) through a variety of physical locations, including 15 community colleges, nine public schools, one community-based organization (Greater Columbus Learning Center), one university (Jackson State University), and all correctional facilities. As of August 2015, there are 371 active ABE classes throughout Mississippi. MCCB operates a toll-free information line that allows prospective students to find the location of the nearest class.

State Strategic Vision, Goals, and Strategies

Vision

The state's strategic vision is to create a workforce system that acts and functions as an ecosystem where all parts are connected and line up to achieve common goals and wherein every Mississippian has the

opportunity to be work- or career-ready and to secure his or her dream job right here at home. From the moment one enters the education and workforce system, he or she will be presented with the necessary tools to choose and pursue a career pathway that is relevant to current and future labor markets. Similarly, from the moment current and prospective businesses enter into a partnership with Mississippi's education and workforce system, resources will be immediately aligned to cultivate the sustainable, high-performance workforce critical for maintaining and expanding businesses' long-term economic viability, in turn creating better and more sustainable employment opportunities for Mississippians.

Goals

WIOA Combined Plan Partners will realize this vision by achieving seven goals:

1. Work together to develop policies that will coordinate service delivery with all WIOA Combined Plan Partners.

2. Strengthen interagency partnerships.

3. Develop defined, articulated pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for the workforce.

4. Develop cross-program performance metrics.

5. Continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other federal initiatives.

6. Engage partners to establish the plan to remain abreast of changing industry needs and the metrics to measure outcomes to realize the potential of the state's workforce programs and delivery systems.

7. Draft and communicate a unified vision/message.

Strategies

Goal 1: Work Together to Develop Policies That Will Coordinate Service Delivery with WIOA Combined Plan Partners.

Policies will be developed to determine functionality of the entire ecosystem. These policies will determine the allocation of funding toward shared service delivery and infrastructure costs.

The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), through the SWIB WIOA Board Committee, will work with a planning and communications group comprised of executive directors from each of the WIOA Combined Plan Partners identified in this plan and other representatives from the SWIB.

Local workforce development boards will be responsible for certification, operation, and oversight of the One-Stop Centers. Memorandums of understanding (MOUs) will be established detailing each partner's role, the resources partners will provide, and their expectations for the One-Stop Center.

Goal 2: Strengthen Interagency Partnerships.

There will be two main strategies to address this goal. The first strategy is to create career pathways that provide different on- and off-ramps for job seekers with different needs. The second is to reimagine the state's One-Stop Center delivery system.

Figure 13 presents the flow of the career pathway model that will strengthen interagency partnerships. This model will be known as the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. This model includes six steps designed to synchronize activities within and between Combined Plan Partners. While operationalizing the model requires the use of a unifying technology infrastructure that allows all agencies to make and receive inter-agency referrals and manage common case data (see "State Operating Systems and Policies" below), the model may be described procedurally as follows:

Figure 13: Proposed Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model

1. **Point of Entry** - Combined Plan Partner intake and enrollment.

2. **Workforce Assessment** – Intake Partner or Local Provider coordinates pathway determination.

3. **Pathway Activities** - either Smart Class, Career Tech, or Work-Ready Pathway activities.

4. **Workforce Reassessment** – One-Stop Operator or Youth Provider assesses and sends participant to additional pathways or determines exit strategy.

5. **Exit Strategy** - either postsecondary degree program or transitional employment (OJT, Internship, Apprenticeship, or Work Experience).

6. **Unsubsidized Employment** - the end goal of the model, gainful employment.

Step 1: Point of Entry - All participants will enter the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model through a Combined Plan Partner's intake. For example, a participant may visit a local Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) office and begin speaking with a staff member about the TANF program. Combined Plan Partners perform intake procedures to collect two types of information: (1) basic registration information used to determine program-specific eligibility and support WIOA reporting and (2) answers to a diagnostic instrument composed of questions submitted by each Combined Plan Partner. Next, the partner performs an agency-specific assessment of the participant's immediate needs and works with the participant to create an initial Individualized Success Plan. This initial Individualized Success Plan outlines the Combined Plan Partner services, describes supportive services, and tentatively identifies the subsequent pathway that will bring the participant from his or her current state of work-readiness to unsubsidized employment. The Individualized Success Plan may contain referrals to other Combined Plan Partner programs or Strategic Partner programs.

A participant becomes part of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model when a Combined Plan Partner enrolls the eligible participant into a Combined Plan Partner program such as UI benefits or TANF. From that point forward, all the resources of Mississippi's workforce system will be aligned to efficiently support the participant in a process designed to bring the participant through a pathway that leads to a career.

After a participant receives Combined Plan Partner services and is ready to consider work and pathway options, the partner will ensure that the participant receives a workforce assessment that helps the participant align his or her occupational goals to labor market realities. For some partners such as Unemployment Insurance or TANF, enrollment in and referral to workforce assessment will occur in rapid succession. For other partners, such as the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, agency services may require an extended period of time to bring the participant into a state of readiness for workforce assessments. The Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model accommodates the differences between partner agencies necessitated by each partner's mission.

Step 2: Workforce Assessment – Once he or she is ready for a workforce assessment, the participant may be referred to a local One-Stop Operator or Youth Provider, or if the intake agency has the internal capacity to provide workforce assessment services, he or she may immediately receive these services from the intake agency. Assessment will include registration into the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange, system generation of a Career-Ready Report Card, and revisiting the participant's Individualized Success Plan in order to specify entry into one of three defined career pathways. This assessment may also include an approved work-readiness assessment instrument as needed.

Step 3: Pathway Activities - The Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model includes three main pathways:

- **Smart Class Pathway** - Participants requiring the most intensive assistance to become job-ready will be referred to the Smart Class Pathway. The Smart Class Pathway is a 120-hour course of study focusing on essential skills needed to become work- or career-ready in middle-skill jobs by addressing the needs identified by employers. The goal of the Smart Class is to further identify participant barriers to self-sufficiency. Participation in the Smart Class will require individuals to commit to an assessment process that models a typical work environment and includes an opportunity to develop good workplace habits. Failure to meet program requirements as a result of extenuating circumstances (e.g., drug and alcohol abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, etc.) that emerge during the class could cause the participant to exit the Smart Class by referral to specific treatment resources. The participant may then reenter the Smart Class after treatment. The Smart Class Pathway is also designed to train and educate individuals in need of basic education and job-readiness skills. Literacy challenges are one key indicator that the Smart Class Pathway may be preferred for a given participant. Pathway activities indicated by the participant's Individualized Success Plan may include Adult Basic Education classes or enrollment in a high school equivalency program. Exit criteria for the Smart Class Pathway will include certain scores on approved assessment instruments.

- **Career Tech Pathway** - The Career Tech Pathway is designed to provide technical and career training and education in high-demand job skills or specific job skills that fit the current or future needs of local labor markets. Entry into this pathway is determined by a work-readiness assessment. Based on the assessment, recommended workforce preparation activities for an individual may include enrollment in the Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skill Training (MI-BEST) program or in a community college to work toward a postsecondary degree or credential. Necessary skill attainment activities may also be recommended for individuals in this pathway. Exit criteria for the Career Tech Pathway may include the attainment of certain industry-recognized

credentials approved by the State Workforce Investment Board, Mississippi Community College Board, or the Mississippi Department of Education or certain scores on approved assessment instruments.

- **Work-Ready Pathway -** The Work-Ready Pathway is designed for individuals who possess both basic skills and a level of academic and/or technical skill that place them in a position to enter directly into the workforce. These individuals will begin interactive work search immediately after generating an Individualized Success Plan. Other activities available to individuals in this pathway include job referrals, resume preparation, interview techniques, and other professional development training activities.

Step 4: Workforce Reassessment - Upon completion of activities in any pathway and meeting the pathway's exit criteria, participants will meet again with either the intake agency or the coordinating One-Stop Center or Youth Provider to reassess the current Individualized Success Plan and determine the participant's next step. Assessment may be conducted using a work-readiness test or by other criteria. Pathway completers will then be directed to another pathway (e.g., a participant who completes the Smart Class Pathway will often be referred to the Career Technical Pathway) or to an exit strategy that will transition the participant from the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model into unsubsidized work.

Step 5: Exit Strategy - Participants who have satisfactorily exited from any pathway, in consultation with the intake partner or the coordinating One-Stop Center or Youth Provider, may then be directed to an exit strategy such as transitional employment programs or postsecondary degree programs. Transitional employment programs such as subsidized work experience, internships, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training give participants the work experience that is vital for entering or reentering the labor market. Because the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model aims to be a true K-16 pathway, the model also accommodates exit strategies for participants who emerge as capable of either two- or four-year postsecondary degree work to prepare for in-demand occupations. For example, a youth participant may reconnect with the education and training system via the Smart Class Pathway and become ready for further degree work at one of Mississippi's community colleges. Some participants (e.g., those on the Work-Ready Pathway) may be ready to directly enter unsubsidized employment and may not require a transitional exit strategy.

Step 6: Unsubsidized Employment - Participants who successfully complete an exit strategy will have been supported throughout their journey with the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. They will have marketable specialized skills and basic and necessary skills and will be ready to work. Their Individualized Success Plans may be revisited at any time, but they will have been reconnected with the incentives and benefits that come through gainful employment.

The Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model sets forth the general shape of the coordination of Combined Plan Partner programs and Strategic Partner programs under Mississippi's WIOA implementation. To make this model a concrete reality, the operational section of this Combined Plan details how Mississippi will commit technological, physical, administrative, and financial resources to ensure that partners have a workable operational framework.

One-Stop Center Delivery System. The One-Stop Center delivery system is one key to the success of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. Mississippi One-Stop Centers are managed by local workforce development boards according to policies set by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security.

The unified intake process of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model will allow for more organized enrollment, formalized referrals to partner programs, and co-delivery of services. The procedures and physical environment of a restructured One-Stop Center model will support the goals of the pathway system and the needs of each local area and will be a physical manifestation of the procedures established for intake and referral in the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module.

Three types of caseworkers will assist job seekers in the revised One-Stop Center model: cross-trained counselors, walk-around counselors, and partner counselors. Cross-trained counselors have received training designed by the State Workforce Investment Board that provides an understanding of the full portfolio of support and training services administered by all Combined Plan and Strategic Partners. Walk-around counselors receive specialized training in how to assist job seekers to use the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange and will staff One-Stop resource rooms, monitor participant use of the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange, and offer assistance and guidance as needed. Other Combined Plan Partner counselors correspond to current single-agency counselors who are specially trained to understand the intricacies of individual agency programs.

When a job seeker enters a One-Stop Center, he or she will be greeted and directed to an appropriate starting point:

- New customers will be assigned to a computer workstation in the center's resource room. Staff will assist the customer with accessing the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange online system, and the customer will begin the process of registration and profile creation.
- Existing customers seeking caseworker assistance will be directed to a cross-trained counselor who will access the customer's account to assess the customer's current status, update the customer's career plan, and collaborate with the customer to help redirect the customer toward reemployment activities or create referrals to partner counselors from other WIOA Combined Plan Partners.
- Existing customers seeking to use the resource room will be assigned a workstation, and walk-around counselors will ensure that customer activities are likely to result in effective work search.

New customers who have registered, received a Work-Ready Report Card, and created an Individualized Success Plan may then be referred back to a cross-trained counselor who will access the participant's newly created profile in Mississippi Works and determine next steps based on the participant's Individualized Success Plan.

If the participant's Individualized Success Plan indicates a need for referral to other Combined Plan Partner programs, the cross-trained counselor may assist the participant in connecting directly with relevant partner counselors. Combined Plan Partner counselors will receive these referrals via staff dashboards and may act upon referrals by contacting the participant and starting processes that may result in enrolling the participant in additional programs based on agency-specific eligibility determination. Referrals will be assigned the status of "pending" upon creation, and all WIOA Combined Plan Partners will have the ability to create a referral to another partner. Referrals generated in a One-Stop Center will be visible to that center's counselors, and referrals generated automatically through self-service will be addressed by the One-Stop Center or Combined Plan Partner office nearest to the participant's address.

After referrals are made, the client will meet with case managers from all relevant programs to determine the supportive services necessary to lead the client to gainful employment. Ideally, all meetings with Combined Plan Partners will take place in a single visit that begins with registration and ends with a clear sense of how to take the next steps included in the Individualized Success Plan. If meetings must be

scheduled on subsequent days, the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange system will send automated reminders to participants about upcoming meetings.

Under Mississippi's WIOA implementation, the One-Stop Center system will include five models of service delivery: 1) Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, 2) Affiliate One-Stop Centers, 3) Virtual Access One-Stop Centers, 4) Call Center Support, and 5) Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Centers.

- **Comprehensive One-Stop Centers -** Comprehensive One-Stop Centers will physically house the consortium of Combined Plan Partners designated by the State Workforce Investment Board and local workforce development boards (LWDBs). One staff member from each of the Combined Plan Partners will be co-located in each of the comprehensive centers. Each of the four local workforce development areas will house at least one Comprehensive One-Stop Center that provides access to the services of the Combined Plan programs and other partners. Decisions to create additional Comprehensive One-Stop Centers beyond the required four centers will be made by all Combined Plan Partners. Each Comprehensive One-Stop Center will be strategically designed to meet the workforce needs of the job seekers and employers based on the geography, population, and industry requirements of the area. Comprehensive One-Stop Center staff will be expected to have a working knowledge of all programs and services offered through the One-Stop Center and be able to provide clients with the information necessary to make informed decisions.

  Within a Comprehensive One-Stop Center, cross-trained staff will provide fully assisted service to all participants, including but not limited to assisting clients in Mississippi Works Labor Exchange profile development, providing knowledge about individual programs, and referring clients to the appropriate resources. Comprehensive One-Stop Center will also include computer stations that provide virtual, self-service access to workforce and education resources. Additionally, all Comprehensive One-Stop Centers will provide career services and access to training services. All One-Stop Center clients, regardless of core service eligibility, will have access to general career services. These services include eligibility of services, outreach, intake and orientation, initial assessment, labor exchange services, referrals to programs, labor market information, performance information, training cost information, supportive service information, unemployment insurance information and assistance, financial aid information, and follow-up services.

  Comprehensive One-Stop Centers are also required to provide access to training services aligned with regional sector strategies. These services may include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training programs that combine workforce training with related instruction, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, transitional jobs training, job-readiness training provided in combination with other training, Adult Basic Education and literacy activities, and customized training.

  Additional services may be provided to clients if cross-trained staff determine the services to be appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment. These services include comprehensive assessment, individualized career plan, career planning and counseling, short-term prevocational services, internships and work experience, workforce preparation activities, financial literacy training, out-of-area job search, and English language acquisition.

- **Affiliate One-Stop Centers -** Unlike the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, Affiliate One-Stop Centers do not require a staff representative from all of the WIOA Combined Plan Partners. However, each Affiliate One-Stop Center must include staff from at least two Combined Plan Partner programs. The primary purpose of Affiliate One-Stop Centers is to provide the core services that will meet the needs of local areas while maintaining a direct lifeline to the larger comprehensive centers.

The flexibility of the Affiliate One-Stop Center structure allows for the unique, customized inclusion of multiple access points. Access to services within affiliate centers may include fully assisted service, partially assisted service, self-service, or a combination of all three. Fully assisted service describes one-on-one assistance with a qualified, cross-trained counselor. Partially assisted service involves the presence of a trained counselor who may provide assistance if necessary but who is not required to provide one-on-one support. Affiliate centers may also include computer stations to facilitate self-service access. Self-service access simply requires Internet access and does not include the assistance of trained counselors or staff.

- **Virtual Access One-Stop Centers -** A key mode of service delivery is virtual access. In line with the concept of a universally accessible workforce system, virtual access provides participants with self-service access to services of the core programs and partners via the Internet. As long as an individual has Internet access through a computer or mobile phone, he or she can connect directly to the services provided through One-Stop Centers.

- **Call Center Support** – For participants who lack computer access, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security operates a call center staffed to assist with most One-Stop services.

- **Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Centers -** One aspiration of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model is the development of Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Centers throughout the state that cater especially to sector-related training needs. These Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Centers will provide access to all of the services represented in the comprehensive centers as well as sector-focused workforce training. These centers will be strategically placed according to sector needs across the state, as industry sector laborsheds often overlap the boundaries of workforce areas.

Mississippi's revised One-Stop Center model, and especially the Comprehensive One-Stop Center, will serve as a physical expression of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model, but participants who first encounter the system via self-service, Combined Plan Partner offices, or even through informal referrals from Strategic Partners will still receive a consistently high level of service that is coordinated to produce outcomes with efficiency and without duplication of effort.

One-Stop Center Staff Training. Within the reimagined One-Stop Center, employees and staff will be required to know essential characteristics of the services offered by all Combined Plan Partner and Strategic Partner programs. Cross-program professional development will provide working knowledge about individual programs, specific contact information for area experts (communication plan), and the relationships among programs. To accomplish this task, all Combined Plan Partners will develop easy-to-reference fact sheets to be compiled into a resource page accessible in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange system. A strategic plan to distribute resources and provide training to One-Stop Center staff will be developed and implemented by curriculum experts. Training resources will be made available through the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange system to facilitate training at local offices. As programs and policies change, this adaptable online training program will provide ongoing training opportunities to staff. This continuing education model, Mississippi Works University, will help to maintain an individual staff member's understanding of the Mississippi workforce ecosystem and support his or her growth within the system.

Additional Physical Access Points. In order to reach more Mississippians and improve access, Mississippi Department of Human Services county offices and community colleges will be used along with existing job centers to provide access to counselors who are familiar with the Mississippi Works

Smart Start Career Pathway Model. With the combined network of MDHS county offices, One-Stop Centers, community colleges, and correctional facility access points, no Mississippian will be more than 30 miles from a physical location where they may get help in securing gainful employment.

Goal 3: Develop Defined, Articulated Pathways across Educational Sectors (K-16+) to Create a Pipeline for the Workforce.

To effectively define career pathways, Mississippi will pursue sector strategies. The state will identify sectors that fall naturally within geographic regions. All employers in the regions will be enrolled in Mississippi Works so that job postings will be made available in real time to education and training providers. The state economic development agency—the Mississippi Development Authority—and the Mississippi Economic Development Council (MEDC) have existing partnerships that bridge employers and education and training providers across the state. Community colleges will function as an intermediary to coordinate the alignment of K-16 with employer needs in the region, state, and beyond.

Another strategy is to align sector strategies with secondary career technical education initiatives to advance career pathways for high school graduates. Following recommendations from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) has adopted a framework to enhance its career technical education programs to prepare high school graduates for post-secondary credentialing and, ultimately, for high-skill, high-demand jobs in the state. The focus of this framework is to line up workforce needs with secondary and postsecondary student preparation. As a result, a seamless system of career education and labor market opportunities for high school students can be developed in line with sector strategy goals of the state.

An additional strategy is to identify internship opportunities with employers across the state. The Institutions of Higher Learning board has already developed a central office to coordinate these efforts and has contacted several businesses to identify critical areas for which employers would like to have interns. The state has also modified its technology to allow employers to post internships on the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange. Currently, in the high-growth, high-demand sectors, the typical areas that employers identify as critical for internships include engineering and management.

Goal 4: Develop Cross-Program Performance Metrics.

In addition to existing eligible training provider required reports, three data tools will be developed to fully assess overall performance of the state workforce system: dashboards, pathway evaluators, and supply and demand analysis.

Dashboards. Dashboards will help answer questions such as the following: do participants complete skill training? Do they get jobs? How much do they earn? Creating these dashboards will help identify programs that have strong outcomes and warrant expansions as well as those that have weak outcomes and are in need of improvement or reevaluation.

Pathway Evaluator Tools. Pathway evaluator tools help answer two important questions. First, do people with different needs have sufficient access to appropriate programs? Second, what pathways achieve the best employment and earnings outcomes for job seekers with different training and educational needs and varying life and work experiences? For example, some individuals who might seek training might have been laid off after several years in the workforce, whereas others might be preparing for their first job or postsecondary education. Still others might be pursuing training during or after work to improve their skills.

Creating these pathway evaluator tools will help identify strategies that will best align supporting services, education, and training to prepare individuals with different needs for middle-skill jobs. Ultimately, this will help determine the extent to which the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model allows programs to work together to help people with different needs.

Supply and Demand Analysis. Supply and demand analyses will help address questions about skill gaps and provide information to direct resources so that they better meet employer demand. This type of analysis will assess the extent to which education and training systems are aligned with economic strategies and growth of economic opportunities in the state.

Goal 5: Continue to Invest in Integrated Technology to Meet the Unified Technology Requirements of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Other Federal Initiatives.

The strategy will be to build on and leverage current technology, such as Mississippi Works, to create a common intake and catalog of services, interagency case management dashboards, and an integrated physical data model for performance measures. In doing so, the state will be better able to align programs and services and improve the efficiency of the system as a whole. The ultimate goal is to create a fully integrated state system that will be able to respond in real time. Until real-time reporting is possible, the State Workforce Investment Board will create a schedule that designates the frequency that Combined Plan Partners must submit data to the State Longitudinal Data System (LifeTracks) for WIOA reporting.

Goal 6: Engage Partners to Establish the Plan to Remain Abreast of Changing Industry Needs and the Metrics to Measure Outcomes to Realize the Potential of the State's Workforce Programs and Delivery Systems.

The strategy is to capitalize on the State Longitudinal Data System infrastructure where research questions and policy can be developed. The state has already created the scientific capacity that creates basic knowledge to inform continuous system improvement. This capacity will be expanded by identifying critical research areas important to the economic development of the state.

Goal 7: Draft and Communicate a Unified Vision/Message.

This strategy will include three components. One component is to further develop the "Mississippi Works" branding of the state workforce system as a marketing tool for economic development. The second component is to improve awareness of the opportunities and resources the system provides to job seekers and employers to increase confidence in the value proposition of the system. The third component consists of creating awareness of career opportunities early in the K-16 pipeline. Combined, these components will create a holistic image of the system through a unified message.

Performance Goals

In order to assess performance a full four quarters after program exit, projected baseline figures for WIOA core programs were based on program year 2012 (July 2012-June 2013) data. WIOA mandates six performance measures, as identified in Appendix G, for its core programs. Performance numbers were calculated using the following methodology:

Employment, Quarter 2. This employment measure is the percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program in question; the measure for youth also includes the percentage who were in education or training activities during the second quarter after exit.

Employment, Quarter 4. This employment measure is the percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program in question; the measure for youth also includes the percentage who were in education or training activities during the fourth quarter after exit.

Median Earnings, Quarter 2. This measure identifies the median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

Credential Attainment Rate (except Wagner-Peyser). The credential attainment rate is expressed as the percentage of participants who obtained a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year of exit from the program. A participant who has obtained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is only included in this measure if the participant is also employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after program exit.

Measurable Skill Gains (except Wagner-Peyser). Measurable skill gains are expressed as the percentage of participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, which are defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress toward such a credential or employment.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers (Retention Rate). The Department of Labor has not determined a measurement to be used for effectiveness in serving employers. In consultation with WIOA Combined Plan Partners, Mississippi will tentatively use employment retention rate as a measure of effectiveness in serving employers. This metric assumes logically that retaining an employee is an indicator of employer satisfaction with the quality of the worker and, thus, of the effects of a given workforce development service on the worker's ability to remain employed.

Retention rate is calculated as the percentage of participants who were employed in the second quarter after exit and have the same employer during the fourth quarter after exit.

Agencies administering the WIOA core programs will be required to provide data for WIOA federal reporting, and the State Workforce Investment Board may establish other metrics to be used internally for strategic planning.

Most performance indicators rely on the concept of the "exit" that, under current DOL regulations, occurs when an active participant goes 90 days without receiving a service under a relevant program. In order to calculate the cross-agency participation periods necessary to determine when an exit occurs for co-enrolled participants, the State Workforce Investment Board will work to establish a procedure for maintaining a list of standardized services provided by each agency that impact participation periods. This list of standardized services will enable the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to receive service delivery data from each agency, determine whether a given service is relevant to WIOA reporting, and calculate a revised expected exit date in real time.

Assessment

The WIOA system will be assessed in terms of system processes, system outcomes, and long-term individual outcomes. To assess system processes, an evaluation tool will be developed that will address the efficiency of the model and its implementation. System outcomes will be assessed using the proposed data tools: dashboards, pathway evaluators, and supply and demand analyses. This approach will be augmented with other common performance metrics. Long-term individual outcomes will be assessed in terms of socioeconomic mobility within five years of receiving training or other services from the system. The State Longitudinal Data System will be used to assess long-term individual outcomes.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

State Board Functions

In accordance with section 101(d) of WIOA, the Mississippi State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) will establish and operate through a SWIB WIOA Board Committee, whose membership will meet WIOA state board composition requirements, to perform the following services for the Governor:

1. Development, implementation, and modification of the state plan.

2. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers to review statewide policies, statewide programs, and recommendations on actions that should be taken by the state to align workforce development programs in a manner that supports a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system, including the review and provision of comments on state plans.

3. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers in the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system in the state, including:

   a. Identification of barriers and means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among the programs and activities carried out through the system.
   b. Development of strategies to support the use of career pathways for the purpose of providing individuals, including low-skill adults, youth, and individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities), with workforce investment activities, education, and supportive services to enter or retain employment.
   c. Development of strategies for providing effective outreach to and improved access for individuals and employers who could benefit from services provided through the workforce development system.
   d. Development and expansion of strategies for meeting the needs of employers, workers, and job seekers, particularly through industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
   e. Identification of regions, including planning regions, for the purposes of section 106(a), and the designation of local areas under section 106 after consultation with local boards and chief elected officials.

f. Development and continuous improvement of the One-Stop Center delivery system in local areas, including providing assistance to local boards, One-Stop operators, One-Stop partners, and providers for planning and delivering services, including training services and supportive services, to support effective delivery of services to workers, job seekers, and employers.

g. Development of strategies to support staff training and awareness across programs supported under the workforce development system.

4. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers for the development and updating of comprehensive state performance accountability measures, including state-adjusted levels of performance, to assess the effectiveness of the core programs in the state as required under section 116(b).

5. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers for the identification and dissemination of information on best practices, including best practices for:

a. Effective operation of One-Stop Centers, relating to the use of business outreach, partnerships, and service delivery strategies, including strategies for serving individuals with barriers to employment.

b. Development of effective local boards, which may include information on factors that contribute to enabling local boards to exceed negotiated local levels of performance, sustain fiscal integrity, and achieve other measures of effectiveness.

c. Effective training programs that respond to real-time labor market analysis.

d. Utilize direct assessment and/or prior learning assessment to assess competencies for efficient placement into employment or education pathways.

6. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers for the development and review of statewide policies affecting the coordinated provision of services through the state's One-Stop delivery system described in section 121(e), including the development of:

a. Objective criteria and procedures for use by local boards in assessing the effectiveness and continuous improvement of One-Stop Centers.

b. Guidance for the allocation of One-Stop Center infrastructure funds under section 121(h).

c. Policies relating to the appropriate roles and contributions of entities carrying out One-Stop partner programs within the One-Stop delivery system, including approaches to facilitating equitable and efficient cost allocation in the system.

7. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers for the development of strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to, and improve the quality of, services and activities provided through the One-Stop delivery system, including such improvements to:

a. Enhance digital literacy skills (as defined in section 202 of the Museum and Library Services Act (20 U.S.C. 9101); referred to in this Act as "digital literacy skills").

b. Accelerate the acquisition of skills and recognized postsecondary credentials by participants.

c. Strengthen the professional development of providers and workforce professionals.

d. Ensure such technology is accessible to individuals with disabilities and individuals residing in remote areas.

8. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers for the development of strategies for aligning technology and data systems across One-Stop partner programs to enhance service delivery and improve efficiencies in reporting on performance accountability measures (including the design and implementation of common intake, data collection, case management information, performance accountability measurement and reporting processes, and the incorporation of local input into such design and implementation to improve coordination of services across One-Stop partner programs).

9. Development of allocation formulas for the distribution of WIOA Combined Plan program funds to local areas for employment and training activities for adults and youth workforce investment activities as permitted under sections 128(b)(3) and 133(b)(3).

10. Preparation of the annual reports described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 116(d).

11. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers for the development of the statewide workforce and labor market information system described in section 15(e) of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49l–2(e)).

12. Collaboration with educational boards (MBE, MCCB, IHL), partners, and service providers for the development of other policies that may promote statewide objectives for, and enhance the performance of, the workforce development system in the state.

Mississippi's State Workforce Investment Board president is appointed by the Governor, and the board works through a committee structure. Committees include an executive committee (appointed by the board president), several standing committees, and *ad hoc* committees created to address specific needs. The board conducts three in-person meetings per year and makes use of electronic communication between meetings. Meeting notes are posted on the State Workforce Investment Board website (swib.ms.gov).

The following sections contain a description of how each Combined Plan Partner will implement Mississippi's seven WIOA strategies.

State Strategy Implementation

Mississippi Department of Employment Security – Title I, Title III, UI, TAA, Veterans, SCSEP

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) administers core programs and services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth (WIOA Title I) and core programs and services covered in the Wagner-Peyser Act (WIOA Title III). MDES also administers four additional Mississippi Combined Plan programs: Trade Adjustment Assistance (Title II-Chapter 2 of the Trade Act of 1974), services for veterans (Chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code), programs authorized under state unemployment compensation law (Title 71 of the Mississippi Code of 1972), and Senior Community Service Employment Programs (Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1956).

MDES: Core Program Activities to Implement State Strategy

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security will undertake the following activities to implement the state's seven strategies:

1. To work together to develop policies that will coordinate service delivery with WIOA Combined Plan Partners, MDES will participate in shared governance, with regard to WIOA Combined Plan programs, through the State Workforce Investment Board.

2. To strengthen interagency partnerships, MDES will:

   a. Adopt the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model in its approach to case management.
   b. Support the co-enrollment of any Combined Plan Partner participant into Wagner-Peyser once the participant has received partner services and is referred for work or training-related services.
   c. Design and implement the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module, in consultation with the State Workforce Investment Board, to coordinate case management data across WIOA partners.
   d. Set policies to govern the structure and service delivery model of One-Stop Center operations, as well as create policies to govern the creation and operation of Comprehensive, Sector Training Plus, and Affiliate One-Stop Centers.
   e. Conduct staff training to ensure that One-Stop Center staff receive cross training in Combined Plan programs and fully understand the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model.
   f. Modify the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to enable participants to access their Individualized Success Plans, including any partner agency-specific addenda to their plans.
   g. Modify the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to allow staff to edit Individualized Success Plans and create/view formalized referrals to/from other Combined Plan Partner programs.
   h. Support integration efforts to enable other Combined Plan Partners to interface with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to share data related to the intake of WIOA participants, delivery of services to WIOA participants, WIOA participant Individualized Success Plans, and electronic referrals to Combined Plan Partners.
   i. Staff Comprehensive One-Stop Centers with at least one Rapid Response staff member.
   j. Staff Comprehensive One-Stop Centers with at least one staff member from Youth Services.
   k. Modify the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to receive referrals sent by other Combined Plan Partners.
   l. Share system infrastructure costs.
   m. Continue outreach efforts to assist long-term unemployed and newly unemployed individuals.
   n. Include engagement with activities of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway as an aspect of any Combined Plan program's participation compliance requirements, where applicable.

3. To develop defined, articulated pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for workforce, MDES will:

   a. Modify the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to be able to generate a Work-Ready Report Card on the basis of workforce profile information, labor market information, and sector analysis data.

The Work-Ready Report Card will enable direction of participants toward training aligned with employer labor market needs.

    b. Continue to support, develop, and promote MSGradJobs.com and MSTechJobs.com to connect four-year college and technical students with work opportunities, respectively.

4. To develop cross-program performance metrics, MDES will:

    a. Work closely with the Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Governing Board to provide data necessary for workforce analysis.

    b. Ensure that all participants receiving services from MDES will create a profile through the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange.

5. To continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other federal initiatives, MDES will support maintenance and ongoing development of the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange, the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module, MSGradJobs.com, MSTechJobs.com, and the GrantTrak financial tracking system.

6. To engage partners to establish the plan to remain abreast of changing industry needs and the metrics to measure outcomes to realize the potential of the state's workforce programs and delivery systems, MDES will continue to participate in the Mississippi LifeTracks system, contributing workforce data and unemployment insurance wage data necessary to address issues related to the production and valuation of human capital.

7. To draft and communicate a unified vision/message, MDES will:

    a. Participate in system-wide efforts to increase awareness of the Mississippi workforce system among employers and job seekers.

    b. Participate in activities designed to market the state to prospect businesses.

    c. Participate in efforts designed to make students in K-16 aware of occupations and Mississippi career pathways.

    d. Participate in efforts to increase employer awareness of One-Stop Center employer services.

MDES: Alignment with Activities Outside of the Plan

Mississippi Combined Plan Partners include workforce, education, and human services partners linked by a common data system. One-Stop Center and Youth operators in Mississippi make use of the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to coordinate programs not explicitly included in the Combined Plan. With regard to the few state partners who operate outside of the unifying case management information technology system that links together Combined Plan Partners, MDES will coordinate at the local level through participation in local workforce development boards and at the state level through participation in the State Workforce Investment Board and in the Mississippi SLDS Governing Board. The SLDS Governing Board brings together all data-contributing workforce, human services, and educational entities throughout the state to enable data-driven strategic planning.

In addition to coordinated alignment through boards, MDES will continue fruitful point-to-point alliances. For example, MDES has partnered with Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) to address prisoner recidivism. MDOC operates pre-release and post-release occupational skills training programs

to transition ex-offenders to the workforce. The MDOC/MDES partnership created the Employment Connections project designed to allow offenders who are nearing release to create a workforce profile in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange that "goes live" upon release. As part of reentry activities, offenders are given a print-out with information for logging into the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange and finding the nearest One-Stop Center.

MDES has also formed relationships with individual educational institutions, such as community colleges and both public and private universities in Mississippi, to connect campus career centers with the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange through MSGradJobs.com, and the agency is currently executing a plan to create MSTechJobs.com, which will focus even more specifically on the needs of community college graduates with specialized, in-demand technical skills.

MDES: Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals

The Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model (described above in "State Strategic Vision, Goals, and Strategies") provides the blueprint for Combined Plan Partner coordination, and the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module provides the information technology infrastructure required to ensure that all provided services are aligned to the blueprint.

MDES plays a key role in the creation of this coordinated system, taking the lead in developing the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module and in training One-Stop Center and Youth Providers to use the MDES case management system, the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange.

Within the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model itself, MDES-affiliated One-Stop Centers or Youth Providers are the key coordinating entities that receive a referral for workforce assessment. These coordinating entities will contact each participant and set up an appointment so that each participant will execute a full workforce system registration in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange, generate a Work-Ready Report Card that aligns the participant's expectations to the local labor market, and finalize his or her Individualized Success Plan to choose an initial pathway. If the initial pathway is the Smart Class Pathway or the Career Tech Pathway, the One-Stop Center or Youth Provider staff member will create a referral to the partner responsible for the pathway. If the initial pathway is the Work-Ready Pathway, the staff member will coordinate the activities that will be delivered by the designated MDES-affiliated One-Stop Center or Youth Provider responsible for the Work-Ready Pathway in that local area.

Once a participant meets the exit criteria of a given pathway, he or she will be referred back to the MDES-affiliated One-Stop Center or Youth Provider for further evaluation. Staff will reevaluate the participant's Individualized Success Plan, administer any relevant assessments, and either refer the participant to another pathway or designate an exit strategy such as transitional employment or enrollment in an educational institution.

In addition to referrals to pathway programs and exit strategies, MDES-affiliated staff may create referrals to other partners to coordinate supportive services as needed. Because each service enrollment comes from a Common Service Catalog, staff will know whether the participant is already receiving supportive services in a particular category such as childcare or transportation. The Individualized Success Plan itself contains a living list of participant barriers to employment along with prescribed remedies for these barriers through supportive services.

The WIOA services that MDES administers will address the workforce and training needs of every eligible individual. Through Wagner-Peyser services, MDES provides job search, referral, and placement services

to all eligible Mississippi workers. MDES funds *adult* training programs administered by local workforce development boards based on the needs of each local workforce development area. To serve *dislocated workers*, MDES coordinates Rapid Response services that assist employers and employees affected by layoffs or plant closures. MDES serves *youth* through specially trained Youth Providers who connect youth to targeted youth programs, other eligible core programs, and education and training opportunities based on the specific needs of the individual. In addition, there are two employment outreach groups: Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialists (DVOP). To fill job openings, LVER staff work directly with businesses, and DVOP staff work directly with unemployed or underemployed *veterans*.

MDES: Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Employers

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security will coordinate and align its services to employers through the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange technology. The Mississippi Works Labor Exchange system empowers employers to explore labor matches through the candidate search function. Employers can find candidates who seem promising and target passive job seekers who may be interested in a career change. The interactive search allows employers to search for candidates by keyword, highest level of education, occupational experience, and proximity. Clicking on a search result brings the employer to a candidate's detail page.

A candidate's detail page maintains the job seeker's anonymity but contains information about the candidate's education, experience, and skills. If an employer is sufficiently interested in a candidate, he or she can issue a "Job-Vite" to the candidate. A Job-Vite is an invitation to apply for a particular position sent by an employer to a promising candidate. Job seekers are notified about Job-Vites by email or text message (SMS) and can decline a Job-Vite or respond positively by simply applying to the position.

The Mississippi Works Labor Exchange also provides convenient tools for employers to manage the application process, including the ability to set interview times and the status of applications. Providing good tools to employers is a way to attract them to enter job orders into the system. Employers who list jobs provide an indication of what skills are in demand; this information, in turn, informs data-driven prioritization of training and workforce development activities. Workforce data of this type provide the hub around which the whole state's economic success rotates because they become a primary source of actionable, strategic data. To encourage the entry of job orders into the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange, MDES has developed a business relations team charged with recruiting businesses to post job listings through MDES and Mississippi Works.

MDES: Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

MDES aligns with community colleges in the provision of training services to youth and adults under WIOA Title I. Often this alignment occurs through One-Stop Affiliate Centers organized and administered by community colleges. These Affiliate One-Stop Centers use the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to administer individual training accounts and record WIOA services into which trainees are enrolled.

MDES: Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers

MDES supports the work of local workforce development areas by maintaining an electronic Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) that establishes an approved list of service providers that may receive Title I (Youth, Adult, Dislocated), TAA, SCSEP, and other training funds to serve customers enrolled in MDES programs. All local One-Stop centers use MDES technology, the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange, to

administer training accounts and record training services provided to participants by eligible training providers. In addition, the MDES Mississippi Works Labor Exchange, through a Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grant, will soon provide self-services to customers, with links to training information for all occupations allowing a participant to see, in the context of viewing a job order, what kind of training courses will be appropriate for the given job. The database supporting this self-service feature will contain all relevant providers, including community colleges, private training institutions (e.g., commercial truck driving training programs), and institutions of higher learning.

MDES: Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

MDES's community college Affiliate One-Stop Centers will leverage WIOA training funds with Pell Grants and other supportive services provided by Combined Plan Partners as indicated on the participant's Individualized Success Plan.

MDES: Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

WIOA training services often lead to recognized credentials such as high school equivalency, Career Readiness Certificates, and certificates from partner community colleges. Local workforce development boards will determine strategies for credential attainment based upon area employer requirements.

MDES: Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

MDES will coordinate with economic development strategies by supporting the Mississippi Development Authority's efforts to market the state workforce system to prospect businesses. This support may take the form of live demonstrations of the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange or of responding to *ad hoc* data analysis requests designed to demonstrate the regional availability of workers with specialized skills.

MDES will also continue to provide workforce and unemployment insurance data to the Mississippi LifeTracks data clearinghouse to enable sector and pathway analysis that will guide the activities of local workforce development boards to align training goals with regional needs.

Mississippi Community College Board – Title II ABE

The Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) administers core programs and services listed in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIOA Title II). In addition, MCCB provides advisory oversight to Mississippi's 15 community colleges.

MCCB: Activities to Implement State Strategy

The MCCB will undertake the following activities to implement the state's seven WIOA strategies:

1. To work together to develop policies that will coordinate service delivery with WIOA Combined Plan Partners, MCCB will participate in shared governance, with regard to WIOA Combined Plan programs, through the State Workforce Investment Board.

2. To strengthen interagency partnerships, MCCB will:

   a. Provide a cross-trained ABE (Title II) representative in four Comprehensive One-Stop Centers.

b. Monitor and act upon referrals from One-Stop Centers or Youth Providers to the Smart Class Pathway.

c. Refer Smart Class Pathway completers back to the referring One-Stop Center or Youth Provider for further workforce assessment and pathway or exit strategy direction.

d. Share system infrastructure costs.

e. Include engagement with activities of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model as an aspect of any Combined Plan program's participation compliance requirements, where applicable.

3. To develop defined, articulated pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for workforce, MCCB will:

a. Align Smart Class curriculum with employer/labor market needs.

b. Partner with K-12 providers to enroll dropouts in high school equivalency classes.

4. To develop cross-program performance metrics, MCCB will:

a. Partner with the Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Governing Board to provide data necessary for workforce analysis.

b. Interface with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to transmit all assessment outcome scores and service enrollments, thus enabling the calculation of skill gains and cross-program participation periods.

5. To continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other federal initiatives, MCCB will invest so that the Adult Education system can easily exchange data with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to share service enrollments, assessment outcomes, modifications to participants' common profiles, and modifications to participants' Individualized Success Plans in compliance with WIOA requirements.

6. To engage partners to establish the plan to remain abreast of changing industry needs and the metrics to measure outcomes to realize the potential of the state's workforce programs and delivery systems, MCCB will continue to leverage the Mississippi LifeTracks system to determine priorities for training and align the Smart Class with labor market needs.

7. To draft and communicate a unified vision/message, MCCB will participate in system-wide efforts to increase awareness of the Mississippi workforce system among employers and job seekers.

MCCB: Alignment with Activities Outside of the Plan

Mississippi Combined Plan Partners include workforce, education, and human services partners linked by a common data system. Even One-Stop Center and Youth operators in Mississippi make use of the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to coordinate programs not explicitly included in the Combined Plan. With regard to the few state partners who operate outside of the unifying information technology system that links together Combined Plan Partners, MCCB will collaborate and participate in the State Workforce Investment Board, local workforce development boards, and Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Governing Board.

MCCB: Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals

MCCB's Adult Basic Education (ABE) services play the key role in establishing and conducting the Smart Class Pathway in the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. This class will consist of 120 hours of intensive career development, assessment, and basic skills development. Career enrichment activities will be oriented toward in-demand, middle-skill occupations. MCCB will work with the State Workforce Investment Board to establish the Smart Class Pathway curriculum and establish pathway exit criteria that may include certain assessment score levels. After participants meet exit criteria from ABE classes or complete the Smart Class Pathway, MCCB's ABE providers will refer participants to a One-Stop Center or Youth Provider to perform workforce evaluation or workforce reevaluation.

As the administrative/fiscal agent for WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) services, MCCB will solicit service providers to provide services to eligible individuals who are 16 years old, are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under the MS Compulsory School Attendance Law, are basic skills deficient, do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or are English language learners. ABE courses will likely serve as the Combined Plan Partner entry point for individuals who lack basic skills such as literacy. ABE remediation is offered at 15 community college campuses, nine public schools, one community-based organization, one university, and all correctional facilities. ABE providers will go through a determination process prior to enrollment in classes to identify the most appropriate starting point for the participant. Once a participant has enrolled in ABE services, ABE provider staff will refer participants to a One-Stop Center or Youth Provider to conduct a workforce assessment and develop the participant's Individualized Success Plan.

MCCB: Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Employers

MCCB coordinates ABE courses through a variety of local providers. Some courses are sponsored by employers and conducted at employer worksites. Local employers also often serve as a source of initial referral of an employee to adult education classes.

MCCB: Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

In conducting the Smart Class Pathway, MCCB will be able to align local ABE providers with services provided by its 15 member community colleges. These community colleges provide career and technical training and administer ABE, high school equivalency, and Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) programs.

MCCB: Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers

In addition to the provision of Adult Basic Education training courses, MCCB member colleges provide training to customers with Individual Training Accounts through Title I, TANF recipients, SNAP E&T participants, and participants receiving rehabilitative services. All MCCB member colleges and ABE contractors are listed in the MDES Eligible Training Provider List. MCCB members also assist the training efforts of some larger employers who operate specialized training programs.

MCCB: Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

Funding for ABE courses is distributed according to the targeted needs of an area and how many instructors are needed. Funding for ABE programs is provided through a competitive grant award and is based on the annual appropriation from the Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and

Adult Education. Grantees will be aligned with system-wide goals and labor market needs of local program areas and will have the capability to provide Smart Class Pathway services throughout the state.

MCCB member community colleges also provide training through the state's Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) fund, a state funding source derived from employer unemployment insurance taxes that also may be used to administer approved workforce-readiness assessment instruments.

MCCB: Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

ABE courses lead directly to several recognized postsecondary credentials, including the high school equivalency and the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC).

Two MCCB member community colleges operate Affiliate One-Stop Centers that coordinate with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security through the use of the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to provide Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker training.

MCCB: Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

MCCB and its member community colleges participate directly in efforts by the Mississippi Development Authority to recruit prospect businesses to Mississippi by developing specialized work training programs leading to credentials that meet the needs of targeted sectors. Institutions then coordinate with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security to ensure that applicants receive credit for these credentials within the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange when applying to partner employers.

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services – Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) administers core programs and provides services to Mississippians with disabilities under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (WIOA Title IV).

MDRS: Activities to Implement State Strategy

MDRS will undertake the following activities to implement the state's seven strategies:

1. To work together to develop policies that will coordinate service delivery with WIOA Combined Plan Partners, MDRS will participate in shared governance, with regard to WIOA Combined Plan programs, through the State Workforce Investment Board.

2. To strengthen interagency partnerships, MDRS will:

   a. Adopt the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model in its approach to case management.
   b. Interface the AwareVR case management system with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to coordinate case management data across WIOA partners.
   c. Provide a Vocational Rehabilitation services staff representative in the four Comprehensive One-Stop Centers to ensure that Vocational Rehabilitation services are aligned with other Combined Plan programs.

d. Assist One-Stop Center providers with accessibility assessments and train One-Stop Center staff in the use of assistive technologies as needed.

e. Refer work-ready participants for workforce assessment and pathway determination by One-Stop Center operators or Youth Providers.

f. Share system infrastructure costs.

g. Include engagement with activities of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway as an aspect of any Combined Plan program's participation compliance requirements, where applicable.

3. To develop defined, articulated pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for workforce, MDRS will:

a. Assist eligible students with disabilities to secure assistive technologies or services needed to enable classroom access, as appropriate.

b. Assist graduating secondary students with disabilities to access job transition services.

c. Continue employer outreach activities.

4. To develop cross-program performance metrics, MDRS will:

a. Work closely with the Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Governing Board to provide data necessary for workforce analysis.

b. Interface with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to transmit all assessment outcome scores and service enrollments to enable the calculation of skill gains and cross-program participation periods.

5. To continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other federal initiatives, MDRS will interface AwareVR with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to share service enrollments, assessment outcomes, modifications to participants' common profiles, and modifications to participants' Individualized Success Plans.

6. To engage partners to establish the plan to remain abreast of changing industry needs and the metrics to measure outcomes to realize the potential of the state's workforce programs and delivery systems, MDRS will continue to participate in the Mississippi LifeTracks system, contributing data necessary to address issues related to the production and valuation of human capital.

7. To draft and communicate a unified vision/message, MDRS will participate in system-wide efforts to increase awareness of the Mississippi workforce system among employers and job seekers.

MDRS: Alignment with Activities Outside of the Plan

Mississippi Combined Plan Partners include workforce, education, and human services partners linked by a common data system. Even One-Stop Center and Youth operators in Mississippi make use of the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to coordinate programs not explicitly included in the Combined Plan. With regard to the few state partners who operate outside of the unifying information technology system that links together Combined Plan Partners, MDRS will coordinate activities through its participation in the

State Workforce Investment Board and local workforce development boards and through the Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Governing Board.

MDRS: Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals

MDRS works with the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) and Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) to serve clients with disabilities and leverage resources to serve more clients. MDRS does not operate a specific career pathway, but its local offices will often be the entry point for Mississippi workers who require vocational rehabilitation services to access the labor market. As appropriate in the rehabilitation process, MDRS will refer the participant to a One-Stop Center or Youth Provider to perform a workforce assessment and direct the participant to an appropriate career pathway.

MDRS provides supportive services that will be included explicitly in Individualized Success Plans and coordinated with supportive services offered by other partners to avoid duplication.

MDRS: Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Employers

MDRS works with employers to determine needs for open positions. MDRS uses this information to put together a mix of training and assistive technologies that enable clients to meet job demands. In addition, MDRS coordinates on-the-job training with employers and provides the training that enables an existing worker or trainee to use assistive technologies or other accommodations to fulfill job requirements.

MDRS: Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

MDRS engages eligible students through transition counselors and special education teachers. This outreach helps create pathways from education to work by arranging internships and other transitional employment for students with special needs prior to graduation.

MDRS: Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers

MDRS works directly with community colleges and other specialized training providers to provide occupational training for participants enrolled in rehabilitative services. MDRS participants enrolled in WIOA Title I training will receive training through courses listed in the MDES Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) based on labor market needs in each local area. Training funded by PELL, TANF, or other partner funds may come from any provider meeting MDRS policies.

MDRS: Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

MDRS leverages a variety of funds to better serve the training and education needs of clients. Sources of leveraged funds include client health insurance, Medicaid waiver programs, Pell Grants, WIOA Title I individual training accounts (ITA), Social Security insurance, Social Security disability insurance, and WIOA partner funds through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

MDRS: Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

For participants who require a postsecondary credential to attain a career goal, MDRS will develop an Individualized Success Plan that captures the supportive services, partner referrals, and any MDRS-

specific addenda required to achieve the goal. In line with informed client choice, MDRS will then refer the participant for workforce evaluation at a One-Stop Center or Youth Provider that will help to develop the participant's Individualized Success Plan further and create a pathway referral to move the participant closer to attaining the credential.

MDRS: Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

MDRS will coordinate with economic development strategies by assisting Mississippi Development Authority projects and providing technical assistance in accessibility assessments to prospective employers of workers with disabilities.

Mississippi Department of Human Services – TANF

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) administers the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, a Combined Plan Program in Mississippi's WIOA strategy.

MDHS: Activities to Implement State Strategy

MDHS will undertake the following activities to implement the state's seven strategies:

1. To work together to develop policies that will coordinate service delivery with WIOA Combined Plan Partners, MDHS will participate in shared governance, with regard to WIOA Combined Plan programs, through the State Workforce Investment Board.

2. To strengthen interagency partnerships, MDHS will:

   a. Adopt the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model in its approach to case management.
   b. Interface relevant legacy data systems (e.g., MAVERICS) with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to coordinate case management data across WIOA partners.
   c. Provide a TANF-trained MDHS staff representative in the four Comprehensive One-Stop Centers to ensure that TANF is aligned with other Combined Plan programs.
   d. Refer work-eligible TANF participants to MDES affiliates (e.g., One-Stop operators and some Youth Providers) for Wagner-Peyser services through the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module.
   e. Participate in strategies to leverage TANF transportation and childcare supportive services to enable participation in pathway activities and exit strategy training or transitional work.
   f. Include engagement with activities of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway as an aspect of any Combined Plan program's participation compliance requirements, where applicable.

3. To develop defined, articulated pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for workforce, MDHS will:

   a. Refer TANF recipients to a One-Stop Center or Youth Provider who will assist TANF recipients in connecting with training that meets employer labor market needs.

b. Ensure that job matches between area employers and work-eligible TANF or SNAP recipients occur within the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange.

4. To develop cross-program performance metrics, MDHS will:

   a. Work closely with the Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Governing Board to provide participant data necessary for workforce analysis.
   b. Interface with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to transmit all assessment outcome scores and service enrollments, thus enabling the calculation of skill gains and cross-program participation periods.

5. To continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other federal initiatives, MDHS will interface MAVERICS and other TANF-relevant case management systems with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to share service enrollments, assessment outcomes, modifications to participants' common profiles, and modifications to participants' Individualized Success Plans.

6. To engage partners to establish the plan to remain abreast of changing industry needs and the metrics to measure outcomes to realize the potential of the state's workforce programs and delivery systems, MDHS will continue to participate in the Mississippi LifeTracks system, contributing data necessary to address issues related to the production and valuation of human capital.

7. To draft and communicate a unified vision/message, MDHS will participate in system-wide efforts to increase awareness of the Mississippi workforce system among employers and job seekers.

MDHS: Alignment with Activities Outside of the Plan

Mississippi Combined Plan Partners include workforce, education, and human services partners linked by a common data system. Even One-Stop Center and Youth operators in Mississippi make use of the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to coordinate programs not explicitly included in the Combined Plan. With regard to the few state partners who operate outside of the unifying information technology system that links together Combined Plan Partners, MDRS will coordinate activities through its participation in the State Workforce Investment Board and local workforce development boards and through the Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Governing Board.

MDHS: Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals

MDHS serves individuals and families through several economic assistance programs that address barriers to work such as food security, transportation, and childcare.

The TANF program, a Combined Plan Partner program, provides benefits for families with needy children under age 18. The TANF program is designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency through employment and training activities provided by the TANF Work Program (TWP). TANF supportive services, such as assistance with childcare and transportation expenses, are available to help adults in the family prepare for employment and to promote self-sufficiency. These supportive service enrollments will be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to ensure that no other Combined Plan Partners provide overlapping services.

The SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program, a Strategic Partner program, was created to provide access to the necessary skills, training, or experience to increase an eligible recipient's ability to obtain gainful employment. The services provided by the SNAP E&T program include a career assessment by a career and technical advisor, assistance with grant and scholarship applications, enrollment in career education and training programs, assistance with eligible tuition expenses not covered by federal or state grants or scholarships, and other education, training, work, and employment services.

MDHS also administers the Community Service Block Grant that provides core funding to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and empower low-income families to become self-sufficient.

MDHS: Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Employers

Beyond the alignment with employers made possible by the data analysis and sector strategies of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model, MDHS staff engage employers directly. This engagement takes the form of direct contact with employers to check on job openings and the efforts of county directors to form relationships with community employers who are able to hire TANF or SNAP recipients with work requirements. MDHS will work with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security to enter local job openings into the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange and refer work-eligible SNAP or TANF recipients to these openings via the system to ensure that records of these labor matches are captured by the system and thus available to inform ongoing labor market research.

Under the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model, all TANF or SNAP recipients will be referred to One-Stop Centers or Youth Providers to perform workforce assessment and begin an appropriate pathway strategy.

MDHS: Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

Through the SNAP E&T pilot program, MDHS will work directly with five community college providers responsible for Career Assessment Program (CAP) courses that reconnect SNAP recipients with the labor market. In non-pilot community college districts, MDHS will coordinate the use of SNAP E&T funds to support approved training activities designed to connect participants with work. MDHS will refer TANF and SNAP recipients with work eligibility to One-Stop Centers or Youth Providers for assessment and to connect them with pathways that may lead to training through Adult Basic Education partners, community colleges, public universities, or other training providers.

MDHS: Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers

MDHS works directly with community colleges and other training providers, including MCCB/ABE, to provide occupational training for participants enrolled in TANF. TANF participants enrolled in WIOA Title I training will receive training through courses listed in the MDES Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) based on labor market needs in each local area. Through a SNAP E&T pilot program, some SNAP recipients will receive training through five participating community colleges that includes necessary (soft skills) training and occupational training. Training funded by PELL, TANF, or other partner funds may come from any provider meeting MDHS's policies.

MDHS: Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

MDHS will assist work-eligible SNAP or TANF recipients who enroll in approved training programs to leverage WIOA Title I, Pell, E&T Matching Funds, and other training resources to support training.

MDHS: Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

Supportive services provided under TANF will enable work-eligible TANF recipients to overcome barriers to training, and will help recipients earn high school equivalency, Career Readiness Certificates, or other Adult Basic Education credentials. Supportive services provided under SNAP will enable work-eligible SNAP recipients to overcome barriers to training and help recipients earn high school equivalency, Career Readiness Certificates, or other Adult Basic Education credentials.

MDHS: Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

MDHS will coordinate with economic development strategies by supporting training and education pathways for TANF and SNAP recipients that meet State Workforce Investment Board sector priorities.

State Operating Systems and Policies

In order to execute the data collection, strategic planning, administration, and coordinated implementation of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model, Mississippi Combined Plan partners will interface with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security's "Mississippi Works" technology system.

Coordinated Implementation

Mississippi Works technology consists of several systems with complementary roles. Figure 14 depicts the five main sub-systems.

Figure 14: Mississippi Works Technology System
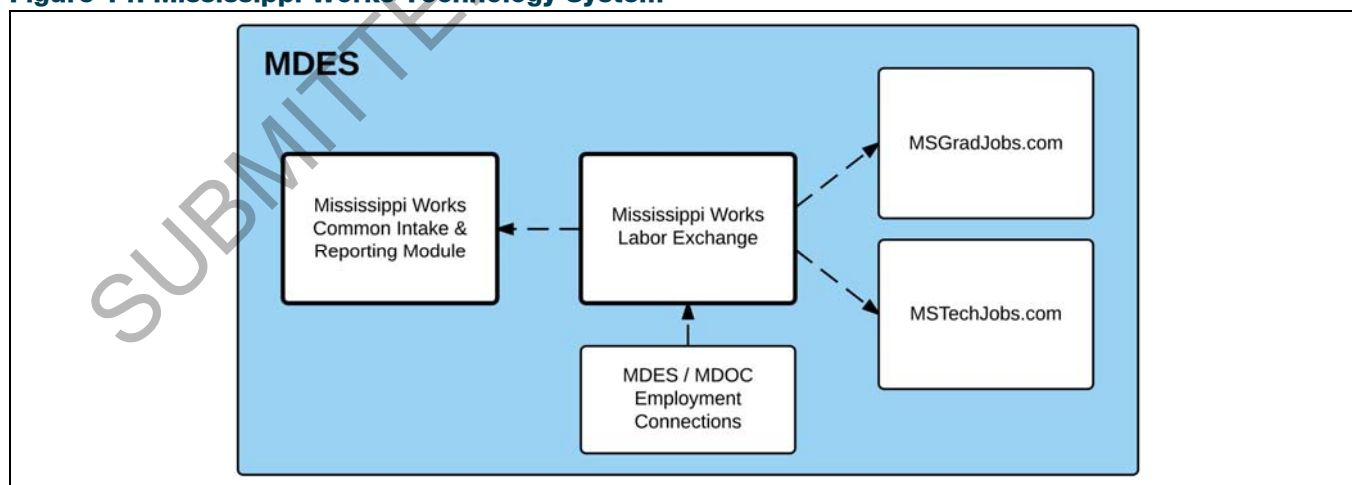
The five sub-systems of Mississippi Works are:

- **Mississippi Works Labor Exchange -** The Mississippi Works Labor Exchange is an award-winning web and mobile system used by Mississippi Department of Employment Security agency staff, job seekers, and employers to coordinate all Department of Labor programs such as Wagner-Peyser, Youth Services, Adult and Dislocated Worker Services, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and others. In Mississippi's WIOA implementation, the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange will serve as the web and mobile interface that participants themselves will use to access any documents or plans generated during case management under the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. The system was developed in Mississippi through a partnership between the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (NSPARC) at Mississippi State University. Mississippi Works Labor Exchange already supports the calculation of common participation periods across what have become WIOA Title I, WIOA Title III, and Trade-related programs. The system also disseminates labor market information.

- **MSGradJobs.com -** MSGradJobs.com connects four-year college students who seek career assistance in Mississippi's university career centers with employers who post jobs in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange.

- **MSTechJobs.com -** MSTechJobs.com will connect community college students who seek career assistance in Mississippi's community college career centers with employers who post jobs in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange.

- **MDES/MDOC Employment Connections -** The Employment Connections system allows offenders nearing release from Mississippi Department of Corrections facilities to create a pending workforce profile in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange that "goes live" when the offender is released. As part of exit activities, the offender's profile will be injected into the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange, and the offender will be given a flyer detailing his or her Mississippi Works Labor Exchange username and password along with the address of the nearest One-Stop Center.

- **Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module -** Under development to meet the needs of Mississippi's WIOA implementation, a new component of Mississippi Works, the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module, will be responsible for storing cross-agency data related to:

  o WIOA participant registration.
  o Services rendered to WIOA participants.
  o Referrals created for a participant from one WIOA partner to another.
  o Work search activity records from the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange.
  o WIOA participant Individualized Success Plans.

Of the five sub-systems, the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module serves as the data system required to operate Mississippi's pathway model. The system is currently under development and is expected to be available for Combined Plan Partner integration by the third quarter of 2016.

Data Collection and Reporting

Ultimately, data collection for all programs and activities will be accomplished through the integration of partner systems with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. The State Workforce Investment Board will create a phased transition plan under which Combined Plan Partners will agree to a scheduled sharing of case management data with the Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System clearinghouse. This process will enable data analysis and reporting during the creation of the Mississippi

Works Common Intake and Reporting Module and during integration efforts to make all partner systems interoperable. After a period of transition, real-time data sharing from partner systems to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module will automate the sharing of case management data and allow for real-time labor market analysis. Data sharing will be conducted according to the clear set of rules developed by the SLDS Governing Board that ensure data integrity, security, confidentiality, and privacy (see Appendix B).

State Policies to Support Implementation

To guide the establishment, implementation, and maintenance of quality workforce development services, the state has developed a number of policies that outline legislative, regulatory, and service quality requirements within Mississippi's workforce system. Core agency policies and systems will comply with data collection, reporting processes, information management, integrated service delivery, and performance management requirements outlined by WIOA and respective federal and state legislation. As the primary developer of WIOA-related state policies, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) will develop state policies and their adjoining communication plans. These documents will be disseminated to local workforce development boards and used to provide guidance for the implementation process at the local workforce development area level. The state will continue to encourage coordination among WIOA Combined Plan and Strategic Partner agencies to strengthen the alignment between the Governor's vision and the strategies needed to meet that vision.

To establish funding guidelines for partner contributions to the One-Stop delivery system, partners will be developing a unified business plan, in coordination with local workforce development boards, that will specify formulae or procedures for funding coordinated delivery of services to participants. This document will specify how an individualized business plan will be developed to accompany each participant's individual WIOA Success Plan when such a plan involves services from more than one Combined Plan Partner. Appendix J contains the Office of the Governor's guidelines for the creation of Local Workforce Development Board WIOA plans. Each local board will be required to describe how service delivery will be coordinated across all Combined Plan Partner programs at the local level in accordance with labor market realities and development goals. In addition, local boards will describe how funds will be allocated in accordance with the business plan and how funds will be allocated to support shared infrastructure costs.

State Program and State Board Overview

State Agency Organization

Workforce development activities in Mississippi have been on a 10-year trajectory toward cooperation and partnership. The Governor's Office has successfully encouraged a unified, jobs-focused approach to workforce and reemployment services by its creation of and support for the Mississippi Works system of technology and services. Many of the agencies that will be WIOA partners are already linked together as "Proud Partners of Mississippi Works." The current agency structure has produced notable agency-to-agency partnerships such as the MDES/MDOC Corrections Connection job search program for ex-offenders. WIOA implementation will provide an opportunity to enrich those connections.

Figure 15 depicts the state agency structure under which workforce-related services are administered by the agencies that will be Combined Plan and Strategic Partners under WIOA.

The Governor appoints the chair of the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB).

The Governor appoints the executive directors of Mississippi Department of Corrections, Mississippi Development Authority, Mississippi Department of Human Services, and Mississippi Department of Employment Security.

The Mississippi Community College Board, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, and Mississippi Department of Education are governed by separate boards that appoint each agency's executive director.

MCCB, Office of Adult Education, offers Adult Basic Education services through its 15 member colleges and local programs approved through a formal request-for-proposal process.

MDRS provides services to the community via a combination of its own offices and through contracting organizations.

MDHS provides services to individuals and families through a network of 82 county offices.

MDOC manages a network of state and private correctional facilities.

Figure 15: State Agency WIOA Organization
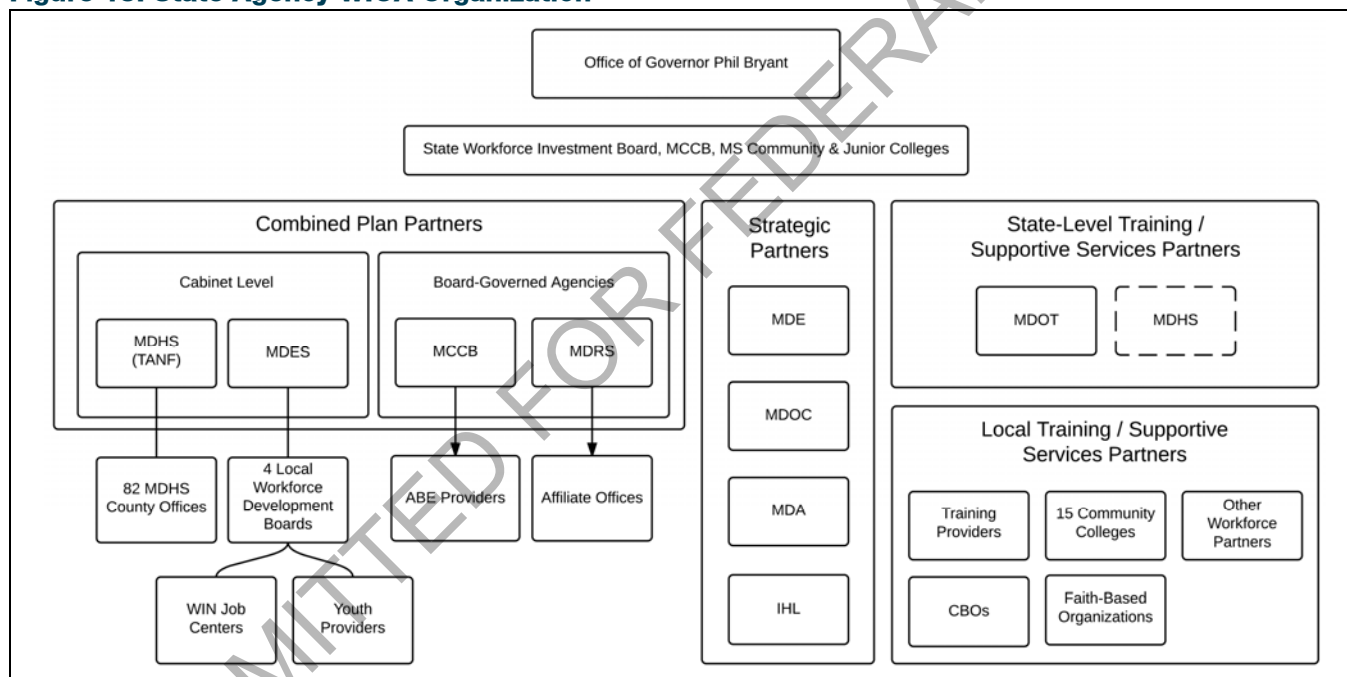
MDES works closely with local partners, the four local workforce development areas, and the 10 Planning and Development Districts to deliver services via a network of WIN Job Centers and local Youth Providers.

The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House appoint members of the Mississippi Board of Education (MBOE), and MBOE appoints a superintendent to oversee operations of MDE. MDE delivers services through a network of local school districts that operate K-12 schools.

Finally, various community-based organizations such as Jobs for Mississippi Graduates and Goodwill's Mississippi Goodworks specialize in working directly with clients in cooperation with various agencies. These agencies coordinate with Combined Plan Partners through local workforce development boards or through contracts created with Combined Plan Partners.

State Board

Mississippi's State Workforce Investment Board, through its WIOA Board Committee, consults with the Governor's Office to establish and promote state workforce priorities in consultation with Combined Plan Partners. The State Workforce Investment Board, through its WIOA Board Committee, is also responsible for ensuring that Mississippi's Combined Plan is executed and for reviewing and approving any agency-specific regulations created by partners that may impact WIOA Combined Plan programs.

Membership Roster

The State Workforce Investment Board's WIOA Board Committee is composed as follows:

2015 State Workforce Investment Board WIOA Board Committee	
Member Organizational Affiliation	**Member Name**
1. Mayor	Billy Hewes
2. Supervisor	Paul Watson
3. Labor Rep Nominated by Labor Federation	Terrance Nellum
4. Labor Rep Nominated by Labor Federation	Darius Johnson
5. Labor Rep from Joint Apprentice Program	Garry Mercer
6. Youth Activities Rep	Jackie Beasley
7. Youth Activities Rep	Mary Graham
8. Business & Industry	Ron Aldridge
9. Business & Industry	Brad Bounds
10. Business & Industry	Charles Evers
11. Business & Industry	Michael Hall
12. Business & Industry	Kristi Henderson
13. Business & Industry	Ed Langton
14. Business & Industry	Jay Moon
15. Business & Industry	Joe Morton
16. Business & Industry	Lex Taylor
17. Business & Industry	Michael Thomas
18. Business & Industry	Robert Clark
19. Business & Industry	Charles Holder
20. ED Employment Security	Mark Henry
21. ED Rehab Services	Chris Howard
22. ED Community Colleges	Andrea Mayfield
23. ED DHS	John Davis
24. Governor or designee	Laurie Smith
25. Senator (non-voting)	Terry Burton
26. House 1 (non-voting)	Donnie Bell

Board Activities

The State Workforce Investment Board will conduct in-person meetings three times annually and will conduct other business through electronic means. The board is responsible for the development, implementation, and modification of Mississippi's Combined Plan and for the convening of meetings with all relevant programs, required partners, and stakeholders. The board consults with the Governor to ensure that Mississippi's Combined Plan is carried out in a transparent manner and in consultation with representatives of local boards, chief elected officials, businesses, representatives of labor organizations, community-based organizations (CBOs), adult and youth education and workforce development providers, institutions of higher education, disability service entities, youth-service programs, and other

stakeholders with an interest in the services provided by the core programs and any optional program included in Mississippi's Combined Plan, as well as the general public, including individuals with disabilities. State Workforce Investment Board activities will also include coordinating economic and workforce data analysis activities with the Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Governing Board to ensure that local economic developers have access to detailed information to formulate sector strategies in local areas. Further, the State Workforce Investment Board will oversee the creation of training modules to be used for continuing education of One-Stop Center staff through the Mississippi Works University online learning system.

Local Workforce Development Boards

Mississippi is divided into four local workforce development areas. Local workforce development boards are board-administered, WIOA Strategic Partners responsible for regional and local development of workforce programs and the local implementation and oversight of One-Stop Centers. Local workforce development boards provide workforce-related education and training strategies for youth by contracting with local youth service providers.

The location of the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and strategic partnership details will be determined by the local workforce development board in each local workforce development area based on targeted industries in the area and the needs of the workforce. This approach will ensure that the services provided by the One-Stop Centers are aligned with data-driven sector strategies set by the State Workforce Investment Board. The local workforce development boards will also be responsible for memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with strategic partners. These MOUs will describe the programs offered, detail the expectation of services for all involved partners, and address funding for support staff for each center. Appendix J contains the Office of the Governor's guidelines for the creation of Local Workforce Development Board WIOA plans. Each local board will be required to describe how service delivery will be coordinated across all Combined Plan Partner programs at the local level in accordance with labor market realities and development goals.

Local workforce development boards will have the option to include additional Affiliate One-Stop Centers with any subset of Combined Plan Partners as long as they include at least two partners. Local workforce development boards also have the flexibility to include additional partners in Affiliate One-Stop Centers. While local workforce development boards ultimately decide the logistics of affiliate centers, the WIOA law specifically identifies the following approved federally funded partners: employment and training programs administered by the Social Security Administration, including Ticket to Work and the Self Sufficiency Program; employment and training programs carried out by the Small Business Administration; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) programs; Client Assistance Program; and programs authorized under the National and Community Service Act of 1990.

Local workforce development boards will also be responsible for ensuring that local activities are in line with state-level sector analysis. The Mississippi LifeTracks system will constantly update web-accessible reports that feature dashboard numbers, pathway analysis, and supply and demand analysis to ensure that economic developers in Mississippi have a near real-time picture of the labor market. Sector analysis will reveal laborshed zones that transcend local workforce development area boundaries and allow local workforce development boards to serve as intermediaries to connect local employers and training providers to meet labor market demands. Employers will communicate labor demand in real time by posting job orders in Mississippi Works Labor Exchange.

A Performance Coordinator will be employed to assist Local Workforce Development Boards in support of coordinated case management when participants receive services from more than one Combined Plan Partner and to monitor active cases to ensure that plans are drafted so as to maximize the allocation of resources to best serve participants and employers. This function will be carried out by persons or entities to be determined during Combined Plan Partner WIOA implementation discussions.

Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System (LifeTracks)

Mississippi's State Longitudinal Data System (LifeTracks) was created to help meet data needs for reporting requirements and to answer critical policy questions relevant to education, workforce, and economic development. The Governing Board for the system consists of the executive directors of all data-contributing agencies in Mississippi, all of which are either Combined Plan Partner agencies or Strategic Partner agencies under WIOA. LifeTracks will play an integral role in combined WIOA reporting during Year One of Mississippi's WIOA implementation. Because all Combined Plan Partners currently contribute data to the LifeTracks system, and because LifeTracks was created, in part, for the purpose of assisting state agencies with reporting and strategic planning, Mississippi will be able to meet its reporting requirements efficiently even while the Mississippi Department of Employment Security completes development and testing of the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. Further, LifeTracks will play a continuing role in the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model by coordinating with the State Workforce Investment Board to produce a state WIOA system reporting page on the Lifetracks.ms.gov website that contains dashboard statistics, pathway analysis, and supply/demand analysis numbers that will enable state and local economic development professionals to organize all career pathway training around data-driven sector strategies in laborsheds that often cross local workforce development area boundaries.

LifeTracks is built upon the clearinghouse model that relies on strong partnerships and coordination between strategic partners. Mississippi's data clearinghouse is the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center at Mississippi State University. The clearinghouse includes data from early childhood entities (e.g., Head Start); Mississippi Department of Education (MDE); all 15 community colleges and the Mississippi Community College Board; all eight public universities and the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL); Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES); Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS); Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS); Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC); Mississippi Development Authority (MDA); Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH); and Mississippi Division of Medicaid (DOM). The clearinghouse includes data from 2000 to the present. Partners regularly transmit data through a secure transfer according to SLDS Governing Board rules and regulations and via memoranda of understanding (MOUs). The state data clearinghouse developed and manages Mississippi's online SLDS reporting system, LifeTracks (www.lifetracks.ms.gov). All data are stored in a state-of-the-art data center built for managing large databases and hosting mission critical systems. The Mississippi SLDS also has access to one of the most powerful computing systems in the country for high-performance computations and complex modeling.

Assessment of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

Mississippi's climate of data cooperation will enable a smooth implementation of WIOA program assessment and reporting requirements.

Core Programs Assessment

All Combined Plan Partners will provide data required for WIOA federal reporting to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module, and local workforce development boards and the State Workforce Investment Board may establish other metrics to be used internally for strategic planning. A common participation period occurs when an individual is co-enrolled in more than one WIOA core program. Under these conditions, the client's performance will be measured under all appropriate programs two and four quarters after exit from all programs.

Based on legislation and proposed rules, WIOA reporting appears to involve tracking data needed to compute eight primary indicators:

- Percent employed 2nd quarter after exit (Adult).
- Placement in employment or education 2nd quarter after exit (Youth).
- Percent employed 4th quarter after exit (Adult).
- Placement in employment or education 4th quarter after exit (Youth).
- Median earnings 2nd quarter after exit (all programs).
- Credential attainment up to one year after exit (all programs except Wagner-Peyser).
- Measurable skill gains (all programs except Wagner-Peyser).
- Effectiveness in serving employers (all programs).

Several indicators rely on the concept of the "exit" that, under current DOL regulations, occurs when an enrolled participant goes 90 days without receiving a service under a relevant program. In order to calculate the cross-agency participation periods necessary to determine when an exit occurs for co-enrolled participants, the State Workforce Investment Board will assist in establishing a procedure for maintaining a Common Service Catalog, which will capture services provided by each Combined Plan agency and whether each service impacts participation periods. This list of standardized services will enable the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to receive service delivery data from each agency, determine whether a given service is relevant to WIOA reporting, and calculate a revised expected exit date in real time.

One-Stop Program Assessment

Assessment of One-Stop Partner programs will take place according to 1) WIOA performance measures and 2) specific longitudinal measures of socioeconomic mobility and program effectiveness set by the State Workforce Investment Board. Data for assessment will initially be provided through a coordinated schedule of data transfers to the State Longitudinal Data System, LifeTracks. Once all coordinated technologies are operational and Combined Plan Partners begin submitting real-time data to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module, assessment of all partner programs will be able to occur in near real time.

Previous Assessment Results

Previous assessment results, based on WIOA performance measures, were computed for 1) all WIOA core programs, 2) Unemployment Insurance, and 3) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Employer retention was computed as a percentage of those employed in Q2 who had the same employer in Q4. Table 11 contains the results for fiscal year 2011-2012, and Table 12 contains results for fiscal year 2012-2013. These two fiscal years are the most recent years available based on wage data and the need to calculate measures four quarters from participant exit.

Table 11: Assessment Results of Combined Plan Programs, FY2011-2012 (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012)

	Quarter 2 Employment	Quarter 4 Employment	Employer Retention	Quarter 2 Earning	Credential Attainment Rate	Skill Gain Rate
	(%)	(%)	(%)	($)	(%)	(%)
UI	59.18	59.93	73.61	4,466.70	4.04	2.64
MDRS	40.46	39.49	74.30	3,948.50	0.73	1.14
ABE	36.96	39.10	57.96	2,657.77	15.50	11.06
TANF	16.38	16.44	57.71	2,462.51	1.28	3.21
WIA Adults	63.50	63.30	70.50	3,995.00	28.80	50.00
WIA Dislocated Workers	59.40	59.90	67.90	4,409.00	29.30	51.90
WIA Youth	47.60	56.30	64.10	1,938.00	67.70	68.30
Wagner-Peyser	60.40	60.50	66.00	3,851.00	--	--

Source: LifeTracks, 2015.

Table 12: Assessment Results of Combined Plan Programs, FY2012-2013 (July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013)

	Quarter 2 Employment	Quarter 4 Employment	Employer Retention	Quarter 2 Earning	Credential Attainment Rate	Skill Gain Rate
	(%)	(%)	(%)	($)	(%)	(%)
UI	63.20	64.22	75.78	4,983.77	3.82	2.51
MDRS	41.69	40.73	74.22	4,102.52	1.88	1.27
ABE	35.89	38.31	56.43	2,824.11	17.33	11.20
TANF	16.82	17.11	55.89	2,408.42	1.74	2.81
WIA Adults	77.00	77.20	80.80	4,773.00	33.40	62.70
WIA Dislocated Workers	66.40	68.40	76.10	4,687.00	31.10	68.20
WIA Youth	50.00	56.80	65.80	1,911.50	71.90	78.90
Wagner-Peyser	62.60	62.90	66.20	3,807.00	--	--

Source: LifeTracks, 2015.

During the period covered by this performance analysis, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security had already completed a transition to viewing all of its programs in the context of employment services. All participants registering for Unemployment Insurance benefits, Adult services, Dislocated Worker services, and Youth services joined Wagner-Peyser participants in completing a workforce profile in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange as a part of overall agency intake. Employment performance measures for Q2 and Q4 demonstrate the benefits of the reemployment mindset in producing consistently good employment outcomes for participants in programs that partner with employment services.

In addition, in the first quarter of 2014, MDES restructured its weekly UI recertification procedures to provide access to its UI system, Access Mississippi, through a link from each participant's Mississippi Works Labor Exchange personal dashboard. This process resulted in a weekly engagement with job recommendations provided to each UI recipient on his or her Mississippi Works Labor Exchange dashboard. Usage of the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange nearly doubled between the fourth quarter of calendar year 2013 and the third quarter of calendar year 2014.

These performance results emphasize the positive impact on employment that may be realized through partnership strategies that involve participants in any state workforce or supportive program with concurrent reemployment activities. This observation forms the foundation of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model, a roadmap for ensuring that every form of assistance provided by partner

agencies includes reemployment assistance to support reconnecting participants with the Mississippi labor market.

Evaluations and research projects conducted within or across WIOA core programs will be coordinated with local boards and state agencies through the State Longitudinal Data System Governing Board. See Appendix B for rules governing the work of the Mississippi SLDS board.

Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Funds will be distributed according to WIOA requirements along with factors developed by the State Workforce Investment Board. These additional factors will be developed to ensure that funds are allocated in accordance with the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model and the implementation of the One-Stop Center system. Local workforce development areas will also be required to develop a business plan that clearly outlines how funding streams from multiple programs will be aligned with the activities of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. As a result, Mississippi job seekers from every part of the state will have the opportunity to take advantage of an efficient, coordinated, and tailored workforce system.

Title I

See Appendix H: WIA Communication Number: 14-010 for written policies on distribution of funds for Title I programs serving youth, adult, and dislocated worker participants.

Title II

The Mississippi Community College Board, Office of Adult Education (OAE) is the state's Eligible Agency for Adult Education. OAE is responsible for administering funds to eligible providers, and providing program/performance oversight to grantees. OAE will provide funding to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Request for Application (RFA) process. The RFA is the mechanism through which OAE will identify, assess, and award multi-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state. An eligible provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include:

- A local education agency;
- A community-based or faith-based organization;
- A volunteer literacy organization;
- An institution of higher education;
- A public or private nonprofit agency;
- A library;
- A public housing authority;
- A nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- A consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

Eligible individual means an individual who has attained 16 years of age; who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and who is basic skills deficient; does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or is an English language learner.

The Office of Adult Education will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The grant competition will be publicized through a variety of print and electronic media throughout the state. Information will be shared via the MCCB Office of Communications and Public Relations in the form of a formal press release, a posting on the MCCB website, social media outlets, and other means of available communication.

The Office of Adult Education will award funds to eligible providers for the delivery of adult education services, which are academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

- Read, write and speak English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- Transition to postsecondary education and training; and
- Obtain employment.

In accordance with federal regulation, eligible providers may receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities:

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language and acquisition activities;
- Integrated english literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training.

The Mississippi Community College Board will use the following process to distribute funds to approved applicants:

1. Not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contacts under section 231 and to carry out section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out section 225;
2. Shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds to carry out state leadership activities under section 223; and
3. Shall use not more than 5 percent of the grant funds, or $85,000, whichever is greater, for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

Federal funds may be used to increase the level of nonfederal funds that would be available in the absence of federal funds, and, in no case, replace those nonfederal funds. Federal funds must not be used for the purpose of supplanting, only for supplementing.

See Program Specific Requirements for Core Programs, Title II, Adult Education and Literacy Programs for additional details regarding the processes for distribution of funds and the request for application process.

Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation General and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind operate under the same administrative structure within the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services as a Combined State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. These programs report to a common administrative director. They share programmatic staff as well as agency resources to eliminate overlap and unnecessary duplication. Funds are allocated for both programs based on average cost per client served in each program and with consideration of additional costs for facility accessibility and training cost requirements for blind individuals.

Program Data

Data Alignment and Integration

Combined Plan Partners currently use a variety of agency-specific data systems to manage service delivery and case management data. With the exception of MDES-administered programs, these systems do not exchange data in real time with other state partners. Every Combined Partner data system does, however, share data regularly with Mississippi LifeTracks, the state longitudinal data system. Because Mississippi already aligns all Combined Plan Partner data through the LifeTracks data clearinghouse, Mississippi's partners will be able to fulfill all data alignment responsibilities under WIOA in the near term while undertaking software development efforts to create the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module that will enable real-time partner data integration.

Interoperability

All current Combined Plan Partner data systems will either 1) be modified from their current state of interoperability to support real-time, cross-program data exchanges with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module through the use of web services; 2) be replaced by systems that support such data exchanges; or 3) be replaced by direct use of the user interface provided by the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module.

Combined Plan Partner data systems to be integrated include, by agency:

- **MDES** - The Mississippi Works Labor Exchange is the current workforce management software system used by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) to administer, track, and report case management activities for Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services; Title III Wagner-Peyser services; Senior Community Service Employment Program services (SCSEP); Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) services; Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program services; and other workforce services. Mississippi Works is a mature, real-time, integrated web and mobile solution providing labor exchange services to job seekers and employers and allowing MDES One-Stop partner staff to perform case management activities. The system was developed in Mississippi through a partnership between MDES and the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (NSPARC) at Mississippi State University (MSU). Mississippi Works currently supports the calculation of common participation periods across what have become all WIOA Title I and Title III programs. Mississippi Works already supports web services as a way to integrate with external systems. In addition, MDES administers the state Unemployment Insurance system using AccessMS, a modern web application that supports web services. Currently, Mississippi Works and AccessMS integrate to 1) ensure that participant contact information remains updated in both systems, 2) allow AccessMS to fetch job matches for unemployment insurance benefits recipients, 3) allow workforce staff using the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to access the UI status of a

participant, and 4) allow workforce staff to log into both applications with one set of credentials (single sign-on).

- **MDRS** - The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services administers vocational rehabilitation services using a commercial software package, AwareVR, created by Alliance. This modern web application allows for complete program-specific case management of MDRS participants. AwareVR supports web services, making interoperability with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module possible.

- **MCCB** - The Mississippi Community College Board administers Adult Basic Education services via an internally developed, web-based software system currently called the Adult Education Management System (AEMS). The board will upgrade the existing system as needed to convey next steps to move in a direction to enhance the technology to provide real-time integration to meet the requirements of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model and to improve functionality. The system allows MCCB and its affiliate instructors to enroll students and track performance through pre- and post-tests using a basic education-level assessment. In addition, the system allows MCCB to spot poorly attended classes before funds are spent inefficiently on instruction for few students. AEMS was created using technologies that support the use of web services.

- **MDHS** - The Mississippi Department of Human Services administers the TANF program through several legacy applications, including MAVERICS and JAWS. MAVERICS supports case management data such as intake and eligibility information, and JAWS supports TANF Work Program data. These systems do not inherently support web services, but various enterprise solutions exist to allow a modern, intermediate application to interface with such systems. This intermediate application, developed in Java, would be able to implement and consume web services on behalf of the legacy application. In addition, MDHS is in the process of a multi-year system modernization effort that will reduce the agency's reliance on legacy applications for case management.

Figure 16 illustrates how all WIOA Combined Plan Partners will interface with the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module in order to ensure that agencies are coordinated not only for the purposes of reporting and performance measurement but also in their approaches to individual case management.

Figure 16: Data Exchanged Between Partners and the Common Module
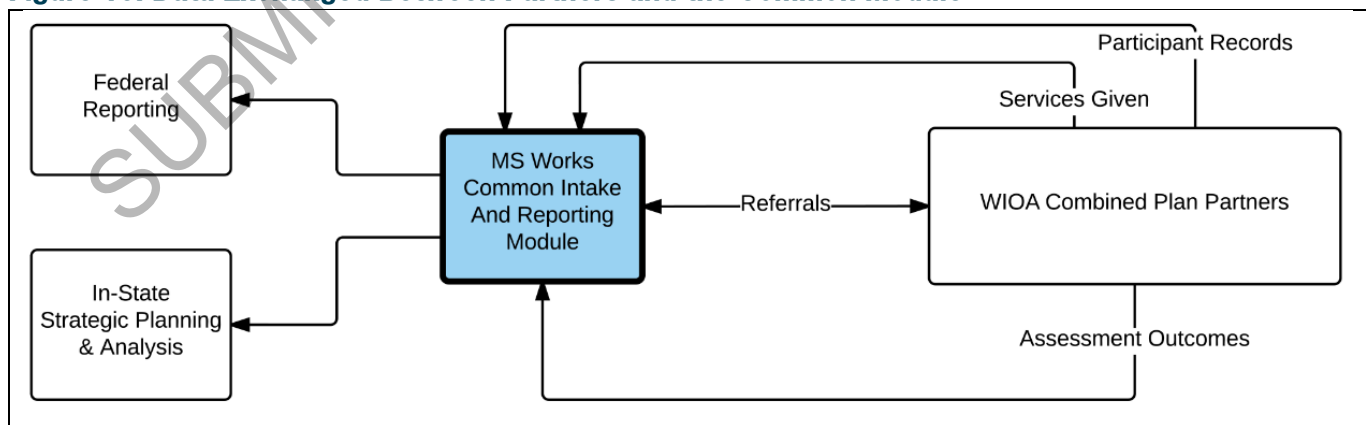
During the course of case management activities, each Combined Plan Partner will generate participant data such as participant records (basic information), information on services given to the participant,

information on assessment outcomes, and any referrals to partner programs. These data items will be passed from Combined Plan Partner systems to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. In addition, Combined Plan Partners will receive any referrals submitted by other Plan Partners. Information in the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module will be used to compute Combined Plan Partner performance measures for reporting to the Department of Labor and also to conduct data-driven in-state strategic planning.

In order to exchange program data, the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module will provide two, real-time interfaces: a human interface and a machine interface. Agencies without interoperable case management systems will be able to log in to a user-friendly portal to initiate or update WIOA-relevant enrollments, services, assessments, Individualized Success Plans, and referrals for existing or new participants. Agencies able to modify their internal systems to take advantage of web services can use the machine interface to ensure that data are reported properly and in real time while enabling their staff to continue to use familiar case management technology. Figure 17 illustrates the way that agency caseworkers will access the common intake system either directly through a human user interface or via their own agency's internal system.

Figure 17: Conceptual Model of Agency System Integration
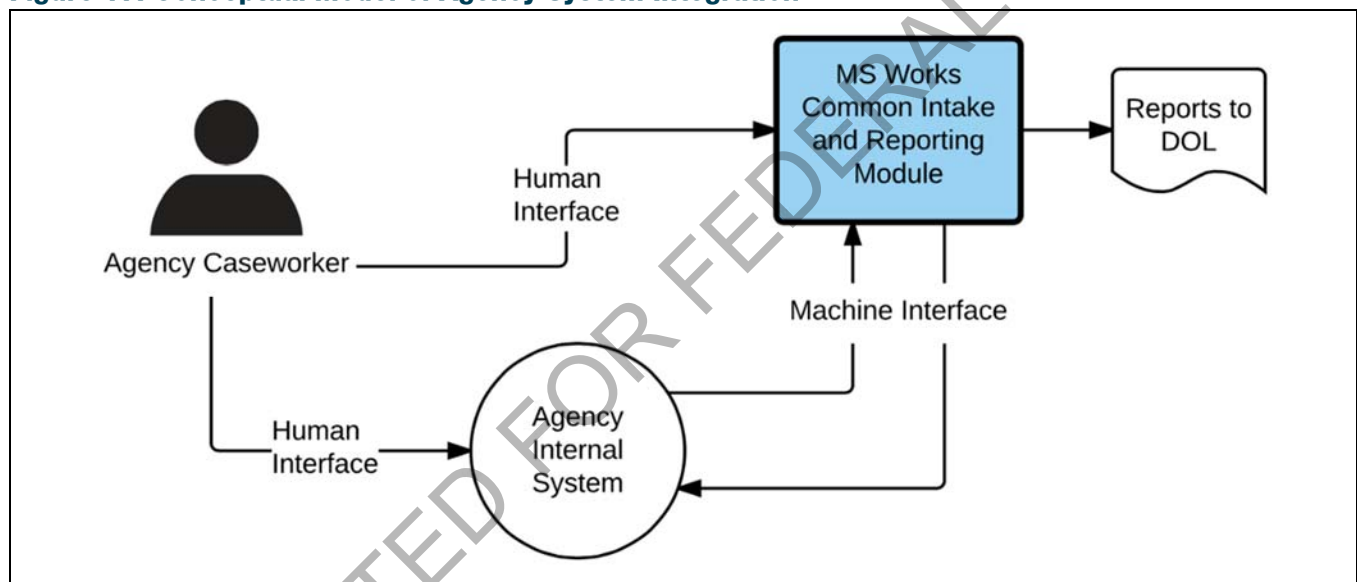
Integrated Intake and Service Delivery

While all Mississippi Combined Plan Partners will serve participants in ways that fit best with each partner's focus and in terms of each partner's programmatic rules, several data artifacts of case management will be standardized to ensure that agencies are able to align their intake and service delivery processes efficiently to avoid duplication.

- Common Intake Profile and Identifier - The Mississippi Works Common Intake Profile is the basic unit of identification for a participant who begins to receive services through any Mississippi Combined Plan Partner. Each profile will have a Mississippi Works ID number that will be generated to allow the correlation of participant profiles with future data exchanges of services, referrals, Individualized Success Plans, and other participant attributes. There is no wrong door in the Smart Start Career Pathway Model; a participant may begin at any partner and be referred at any point to other partners for training and supportive services needed to fulfill the participant's career pathway into

middle-skill employment.

- **Diagnostic Checklist and Decision Tree** – Along with the common intake profile, each Combined Plan Partner will collect, during intake, answers to a diagnostic checklist composed of questions submitted by all Combined Plan Partners. Upon receiving the diagnostic checklist from the Combined Plan Partner system, the Common Intake and Reporting Module will compare the diagnostic checklist to a decision tree that will automatically generate electronic referrals on behalf of the participant to any relevant Combined Plan Partner. For instance, a positive answer to the diagnostic checklist question "Have you recently lost a job?" may generate a referral to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, which administers Unemployment Insurance.

- **Agency-to-Agency Referrals -** Agency-to-agency referrals are electronic records created in the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to connect a participant who receives services from one WIOA Combined Plan Partner to another partner. The benefit of a formalized referral process is that it enables follow-ups, assessments of partner cooperation, and greater accountability for participants who have work search requirements associated with Combined Plan Program enrollments. Referrals will have several attributes, including the referring partner, the recipient partner, the recommended partner service, status, an urgency rating, and staff notes. All new referrals will receive the status "pending." Combined Plan Partner staff in local partner offices and Comprehensive One-Stop Centers will access a real-time list of referrals for participants in their local area. Clicking on a referral will allow the staff member to change the status of a referral (from "pending" to "in-process"), view the participant's Individualized Success Plan, view the referring agency's referral note, and access contact information so that the partner can contact the individual for a phone or in-person interview. Once a participant receives a service through the agency that received the referral, the referral will change to "resolved." If the participant is ineligible or does not need the services offered by the partner, the partner can mark the referral "closed without services" and choose a reason from a drop-down list to indicate why the participant received no services as a result of the referral.

- **Common Individualized Success Plans -** Individualized plans exist under various names in each Combined Plan Partner's toolkit for case management. For instance, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services clients complete an "Individualized Plan for Employment" with a staff member, and Mississippi Department of Employment Security participants in the Trade Adjustment Assistance program complete an "Individual Employment Plan." The Common Individualized Success Plan, under Mississippi's WIOA implementation, will be an electronic record stored in the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module that captures information common to current plans, such as goals, skills and experience, barriers, barrier mitigation strategies, referrals to supportive services, and participant rights/responsibilities. In addition, the plan will capture agency addenda for each agency serving the participant and will allow cross-agency case notes. This plan will accommodate planning elements unique to one or more agencies but not common to all. As a participant receives referrals, these elements will be attached to his or her Individualized Success Plan. Participants who have created accounts in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange will be able to review and print their own Common Individualized Success Plan, along with any referrals and agency addenda. The Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module will allow agency staff to consult and modify relevant portions of any participant's Common Individualized Success Plan. Agency-specific addenda from a partner agency, however, will be modifiable only by staff in the relevant agency.

- **Common Service Catalog -** In order to ensure the most efficient alignment of services and avoid duplication in service delivery, the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module will support the maintenance of a catalog of partner services. This common catalog of services will

contain services offered by all Common Plan Partners as well as supportive services from Strategic Partners. Each service will be categorized. For example, childcare services offered by the Mississippi Department of Human Services under TANF may be categorized as a "Childcare Barrier Mitigation Service." Likewise, childcare services offered by a community college Strategic Partner may also be categorized as a "Childcare Barrier Mitigation Service." When agency staff attempt to create a referral that suggests a service already being offered to the participant, the system will be able to detect the potential service duplication and allow the agency staff or system to take the appropriate action. Agency collaboration in maintaining and updating the common catalog of services will ensure that complementary services will be categorized differently and duplicative services will be categorized identically.

- **Common Assessment Catalog -** In order to enable the computing of improvements in assessment outcomes such as literacy or numeracy scores or work-readiness, the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module will support the maintenance of a catalog of possible assessments. Each assessment will be categorized and consist of one or more numerically expressed scores. For example, Adult Basic Education service delivery makes use of an assessment of basic education level. Assessment scores are expressed as grade-level equivalency in several categories (reading, math, applied math, and language). The catalog would categorize the assessment as literacy/numeracy measurements and specify that scores will be expressed by a collection of four scaled numerical scores. Agency collaboration in maintaining and updating the common catalog of assessments will ensure that reported outcomes from different agencies administering assessments at different points in the participant's pathway can be compared properly to assess measurable gains in areas such as literacy, numeracy, work-readiness, and other measurable participant attributes.

- **Common Credential Catalog -** In order to enable the tracking and reporting of credential attainment, the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module will support the maintenance of a catalog of possible credentials. Credentials attained, such as industry-recognized certifications or academic certificates, will be reported by education or training partners during a participant's pathway progress. Agency collaboration with education and training providers to maintain and update the Common Credential Catalog will support efforts to assess whether Combined Plan Partners are supporting the attainment of credentials. The Common Credential Catalog will also provide a valuable source of data that enables participants to explore credential options within the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange.

- **Work-Ready Report Card -** For participants on the Work-Ready Pathway, creation of a workforce profile in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange will culminate with the automatic generation of a Work-Ready Report Card. Based on the participant's education, experience, driver's license class, location, and other profile information, the Work-Ready Report Card will clearly help the participant understand his or her skill level, experience level in the occupations appropriate for the skill level, likely career transitions based on the participant's previous experience, and labor market information (average salary, demand projections, and number of current job openings) for each occupation within the participant's skill level. The Work-Ready Report Card will also contain aspirational information about the preparation needed to be competitive for other occupations that may be in higher skill levels.

In addition to informational content, the Work-Ready Report Card will offer several actionable options, including, for example, "I'd like to find training to qualify for a better paying job," "I'd like to see job openings for which I'm already qualified," or "I need help with childcare while I'm at work." Answering these questions will enable the participant to begin building the Mississippi Department of Employment Security agency-specific addenda to his or her Individualized Success Plan. Other

questions will be designed to make the participant aware of cost-of-living issues relevant to occupation choice. The Work-Ready Report Card will also be available to any participant with a completed profile in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange, even those who registered in previous years, and it will be dynamic, taking into account current labor market information and any changes to a participant's profile.

Using a common profile, enabling agency-to-agency referrals, collaborating on a participant's Individualized Success Plan, operating via a common service catalog, and reporting assessment results via a common outcome catalog will enable a high degree of coordination and efficiency in WIOA case management. Figure 18 puts these elements together to demonstrate how data are collected and used at each point along a participant's engagement with the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model.

At nearly every step in the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model, data will be generated by Common Plan Partners and transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. The following material below describes each of the 18 data exchanges depicted in Figure 18. Numbers below correspond to the labels in Figure 18.

In addition to data generated during the participant's route through the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model, any transitional employment or final, unsubsidized employment will generate wage records captured by the Mississippi Department of Employment Services Unemployment Insurance system. These data, wage records, will be correlated with data on WIOA service enrollments in the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module to calculate WIOA performance measures such as "Employed in the Second Quarter after Exit."

Figure 18: Data Created and Aligned in the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model

Combined Plan Programs Point of Entry	1. When a participant first encounters a Combined Plan Partner to receive Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services, Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) services, Title III Wagner-Peyser services, Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, Unemployment Insurance (UI) services, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) services, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) services, Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program services, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), he or she will pass through a program-specific intake procedure that will collect the minimal amount of information required to create an initial Common Intake Profile. In addition, the participant will answer a questionnaire composed of diagnostic questions submitted by each Combined Plan Partner. As the partner program's system transmits the intake profile and diagnostic question to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module, the common system will either create a new Common Intake Profile or, if the participant has been registered previously, update the existing participant's Common Intake Profile with the newly collected information. The common system will respond to the Combined Plan Partner system with a Mississippi Works ID number that will enable future web service calls to transmit participant data by reference to a unique identifier. Based on answers provided to the diagnostic questions, the common system will automatically create electronic referrals to Combined Plan Partner services based on a decision tree. For example, if the participant signifies that he or she has recently lost a job, a referral may be made to MDES for Unemployment Services. 2. When a Combined Plan Partner enrolls the participant in a service, the partner's case management system will transmit a service enrollment to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. This service enrollment will reference both the participant's Mississippi Works ID and the unique identifier of the service itself, as listed in the Common Service Catalog. 3. Some Combined Plan Partners will perform workforce-readiness assessments. Any assessments will be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module as an Assessment Outcome. Assessment Outcomes are any measureable attribute, such as a test score, that WIOA partners wish to associate with a participant in order to gauge future improvements. In the case of a basic education level assessment, which is expressed as a grade level, the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module will allow all subsequent grade-level scores to be entered as outcomes to be assessed for improvements relevant to WIOA performance measures. Assessment Outcomes will reference the Mississippi Works ID of the participant and the Common Assessment Catalog ID of the assessment and will include the participant's earned score. 4. Combined Plan Partners often create agency-specific individual plans, and at the time of initial enrollment, basic plan elements such as overall goal and barriers to employment will be used to populate an initial Individualized Success Plan with an attached agency-specific addendum. The plan will then be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. 5. Once a participant has received core services from a Combined Plan Partner and is ready to pursue a workforce pathway, the Combined Plan Partner will either create and transmit a referral to workforce assessment services or provide these workforce services itself. For instance, MDHS (TANF) customers will be referred for workforce assessment services, and the referral will appear on staff dashboards in Mississippi Works Labor Exchange software in use at all One-Stop Centers and Youth Providers.
Workforce Assessment	6. As a first step in workforce assessment, the participant will register with the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange. This step will transmit a service record to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module and change the status of the workforce assessment referral to "resolved." 7. Registration in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange will lead automatically to the generation of a Work-Ready Report Card. The Work-Ready Report Card will be a living data object, automatically adapting to labor market information and accessible to partner agencies through the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module via a web service call. 8. Depending upon local workforce development area policies, some providers may perform an initial assessment of the participant using an assessment instrument included in the Common Assessment Catalog. Assessment Outcomes will be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module via a web service call. 9. Working together with a One-Stop Center or Youth Provider staff member, or a staff member from any intake agency, the participant will further refine his or her Individualized Success Plan to reflect an initial pathway destination (either the Smart Class, Career Tech, or Work Ready Pathway). The revised Individualized Success Plan will be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module.

	10. A referral will be generated to the Combined Plan Partner responsible for the initial pathway destination. The referral will be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module and will be visible on staff dashboards in the relevant Combined Plan Partner's case management system.
Pathway	11. The participant will begin pathway-specific activities under the oversight of a Combined Plan Partner. During pathway activities, a number of data elements may be generated and transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module, including service enrollments, earned credentials, or assessment outcomes. 12. Once the participant has completed pathway activities and has met the pathway's exit criteria, any assessment scores generated during exit assessment will be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. 13. Exiting participants will be referred back to the workforce assessment partner (One-Stop Center or Youth Provider) that initially referred the participant to the pathway. This referral will be recorded in the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module and will appear on staff dashboards in the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange software in use at all One-Stop Centers and Youth Providers.
Workforce Reassessment	14. After a pathway is completed, the participant will be assessed again by a One-Stop Center or Youth Provider partner to update the participant's Individualized Success Plan and determine next steps. The revised Individualized Success Plan will be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. 15. Reassessment will either determine that the participant needs to enter another pathway and begin the Pathway->Reassessment loop again or that the participant is ready to enter an exit strategy that will connect the work-ready participant to unsubsidized employment. Following the exit path, a referral to an exit strategy will be created and transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. Depending upon which exit strategy is chosen, staff for the relevant Combined Plan Partner will be notified of the referral.
Exit Strategy	16. During the participant's exit strategy, any service enrollments into Common Service Catalog services will be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. 17. Some exit strategies involve two- or four-year credential attainment or the attainment of other recognized credentials from the Common Credential Catalog. Earned credential records will be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. 18. Some exit strategies will involve further assessments. Assessment outcome records will be transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. Some credentials such as the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) are awarded based on assessments. In the case of the CRC, both assessment and credential records will be created and transmitted to the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module.

State Board Alignment of Technology and Data Systems

The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) will ensure the alignment of technology and data systems through collaboration with three state entities: the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), the State Longitudinal Data System (LifeTracks) Governing Board, and the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (NSPARC) at Mississippi State, the state data clearinghouse.

MDES will develop the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module according to SWIB priorities, and SWIB will convene committees of all Combined Plan Partners to inform the creation of the initial Common Assessment Catalog, Common Service Catalog, and Common Credential Catalog that will support cross-agency coordination of case management.

The State Longitudinal Data System Governing Board, consisting of representatives from all state data-contributing agencies, will work with SWIB to conduct data analysis and performance assessments and assist with federal reporting initially based on scheduled data delivery until real-time sharing is possible through the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module.

NSPARC serves the SLDS Governing Board by operating the state data clearinghouse. NSPARC will assist MDES in the development of the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module and in

the integration activities necessary to make Combined Plan Partner systems interoperable with the common system.

Plans to Produce WIOA Reports

Until real-time reporting is possible, the SWIB will create a schedule for designating the frequency that Combined Plan Partners must submit data to the State Longitudinal Data System (LifeTracks) for WIOA reporting. In addition, the State Workforce Investment Board will create a transition plan to guide the transition from scheduled data sharing to real-time data sharing through the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. Reports will be created by 1) correlating all agency service enrollments to determine the cohort of exiters, 2) correlating exiters with employment outcomes through state and Wage Record Interchange System wage data, 3) correlating exiters with skill gains through agency assessment reports, and 4) correlating exiters with credential attainment through agency credential reports.

Fiscal and Management Accountability Information System - GrantTrak

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security is currently in the process of creating a GrantTrak application that facilitates the tracking of awarded grant funds. This application will allow MDES to track grants received from DOL and to allocate the funds to local workforce development boards or to Planning and Development Districts, which will further track funds spent to serve WIOA participants. At the end of the life cycle of a given grant, GrantTrak generates ETA 9130 reports from the initiation to the close-out of the funds for DOL reporting. GrantTrak features automatic notifications of funds availability, reminders for deadlines, data validation, report generation, personnel approvals, and attachment/uploading of supporting documents that capture, for instance, approval signatures from local elected officials.

Assessment of Participant's Post-Program Success

In addition to making use of WIOA performance measures to assess the post-program success of WIOA participants, the State Workforce Investment Board will determine additional, specific longitudinal measures of socioeconomic mobility. Through the State Longitudinal Data System (LifeTracks), education, workforce, and other measures of well-being will be tracked not only in the second and fourth quarters after exit from WIOA-related services but also in the five to 10 years after exit to reveal economic and workforce trends, which will enable the state to more effectively compare actual outcomes with desired outcomes. Results for relevant measures will be available, in the aggregate, to all Mississippians via the LifeTracks online reporting website (LifeTracks.ms.gov) and will be used by the State Workforce Investment Board to further improve and coordinate Combined Plan Partner activities. In particular, this analysis will be used to ensure that combined activities support outcome improvements for all sub-populations, including veterans, persons with disabilities, at-risk youth, and other vulnerable Mississippians.

Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

Mississippi uses quarterly wage record information to measure progress on state and local performance measures. Currently, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security has a data sharing agreement with the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center at Mississippi State University to provide performance reporting through the ETA 9090 and the WIA Standardized Reporting Data (WIASRD) reports. State UI wage records and Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) data are transferred to the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center via a Mississippi Department of Employment Security secure web file server. Safeguards are in place to ensure that the National

Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center deletes all WRIS quarterly wage data after the ETA 9090 and the WIASRD reports are generated and delivered to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. State UI wage records, however, are stored by the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center on behalf of and for the use of the statewide longitudinal data system, Mississippi LifeTracks, for which the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center is the state data clearinghouse.

Privacy Safeguards

The state of Mississippi has made large efforts to ensure privacy protection. In order to protect the privacy of Mississippians, all partners that will provide and share data in collaboration efforts, through Mississippi Works and other aligned technologies, have agreed on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to ensure security of sensitive information. All partners expressly agree to abide by all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding confidential information and to adhere to the same standards of confidentiality as state employees, including but not limited to:

- 29 U.S.C. 2935; as amended by WIOA - reports, recordkeeping, and investigations.

- 29 U.S.C. 2871(f)(3); as amended by WIOA - regarding confidentiality.

- 20 CFR Part 603 - safeguards and security requirements regarding disclosed information under Unemployment Compensation.

- 42 U.S.C. 503 - regarding state laws governing Unemployed Insurance operations.

- 20 CFR 617.57(b) - regarding disclosure of information under the Trade Act.

- 29 U.S.C. 49I-2(a)(2); as amended under WIOA - regarding information to be confidential under the Wagner-Peyser Act.

- The Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552).

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g).

- 34 CFR 361.38 - protection, use, and release of personal information of Vocational Rehabilitation Services participants.

- HIPAA: 45 CFR 164.500 - 164.534.

- 2 CFR 200.303 - regarding reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information.

Each partner will ensure that the collection and use of any information, systems, or records that contain personally identifiable information will be limited to purposes that support the programs and activities described by relevant memorandums of understanding (MOUs) as part of the Mississippi workforce development system and Statewide Longitudinal Data System Rules and Regulations (see Appendix B) as provided for in Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-1 and §37-154-3.

Each partner will ensure that access to software systems and files under its control that contain personally identifiable information will be limited to authorized staff members who are assigned responsibilities in support of the services and activities provided as part of the Mississippi workforce development system

and who must access the information to perform those responsibilities. Each partner expressly agrees to take measures to ensure that no personally identifiable information is accessible by unauthorized individuals.

Priority of Service for Veterans

To ensure veterans receive consideration for all opportunities for which they qualify, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security will ensure 1) covered persons are aware of their entitlement to priority of service, 2) covered persons are aware of the full array of employment, training, and placement services available through One-Stop Centers and all service points, and 3) that all applicable eligibility requirements for these programs are understood and applied.

MDES will also utilize the following to provide priority of service:

- Referral of qualified veterans to new job openings, especially Federal Contractor job orders, prior to all non-veteran job referral activity.
- Veteran placement at the top of WIA waiting lists (ITAs and OJT) for limited training funds.

MDES management will monitor priority of service by reviewing quarterly performance reports, manager reports, and Online Employment Service System (OESS) special reports. MDES management will monitor priority of service in covered programs at two levels. Workforce Investment Network (WIN) Job Centers will continue to use established protocol of identifying targeted groups. At the state level, management will continue to analyze performance reports, manager reports, and OESS special reports. WIN Job Center services are made available and provided to eligible veterans, transitioning service members, VA VR & E Chapter 31 veterans, Native American Veterans, other groups targeted for special consideration, and veterans with significant barriers to employment through outreach activities performed by Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialists (DVOPs). MDES will continue to encourage non-DOL program partners to focus on providing priority of service to targeted groups for special consideration.

DVOPs are integrated into the WIN Job Center service delivery system at the local job center level. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses with significant barriers to employment are identified by intake forms or by electronic registration and referred to or assigned to DVOPs after other One-Stop Center staff complete initial service intake. DVOPs will be cross-trained to understand the full complement of WIOA and Combined Plan Partner programs that may be available. In instances when a DVOP is not available or has reached the predetermined caseload, another One-Stop Center staff will provide services to veterans and eligible spouses as appropriate.

Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System

The technical assistance guide for one-stop certification issued by MDES addresses accommodations for persons with disabilities. The guide recommends that all sites give priority to ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided with assistive devices to enable access to all services. The guide recommends that an accessibility assessment be performed at each site by an appropriate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specialist. The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services will provide technical assistance and consultation for ADA compliance.

Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security specifies its policies for assisting Limited English Proficiency individuals in its "Limited English Proficient (LEP) Individuals Policy Statement and Procedures." This document establishes policies designed to ensure the accessibility of all services to individuals with limited English proficiency in One-Stop centers, Youth Providers, and any recipients of federal financial assistance. Staff will first determine an individual's primary language using "I Speak" language posters. Using printed "I Speak" resources, staff will then inform the LEP individual that interpreter services are available at no cost. If the LEP individual cannot understand written or verbal English, staff can access several options for interpretation: local partner interpreter services; Language Line Interpreter Services; and the individual's own interpreter, if requested. Policies also specify that vital documents will be translated into appropriate languages.

COORDINATION WITH COMBINED STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Overview of Steps Taken to Align Agencies

The process began in July 2014 with the establishment of a SWIB task force to conduct a study on workforce development needs in Mississippi. A poll of SWIB members during the February 2015 SWIB meeting recommended using the findings of the task force study as a common framework in the development of the workforce plan as prescribed by WIOA (see Appendix A). To kick off the development of the workforce plan, Governor Bryant met with education and workforce stakeholders to encourage their participation in the process. A planning document was developed that clearly outlined how each party would be involved (see Appendix A). Working groups were established to seek input for the development of the strategic and operational aspects of the workforce plan. Open meetings provided ample opportunity for the public to contribute to the process. A focus group was conducted to gather input from the business community. A website was created to provide regular updates on the process and to provide an additional avenue for the public to participate.

Throughout the process, local workforce development areas participated through the Mississippi Association of Workforce Areas (MAWA), which was established as a 501(c) 3 organization in June 2006. MAWA's mission is to share information and to engage in education and training activities that address common problems within Mississippi's four local workforce development areas. Each WIOA workforce director is a member of MAWA. The State Workforce Investment Board met regularly with MAWA during the development of the Combined Plan. MAWA provided input for the following key areas: cross-program alignment of program services, coordination of business outreach, sector strategies, performance, and the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. MAWA was also represented in each workgroup and provided comments on the initial draft of the Combined Plan. In addition, local workforce development boards were tasked with updating and seeking input from chief elected officials in their respective areas on the development of the Combined Plan.

Mississippi WIOA Planning Document

The Mississippi WIOA Planning Document was created to inform the public about Mississippi's strategic plan to create an integrated workforce development system and to provide insight into the processes developed by the state to comply with the requirements of WIOA. This document provided a general

overview of WIOA's content, goals, and requirements, including its required components and planning elements. The document also informed Mississippians about the state-created planning workgroups, identifying each workgroup's members and detailing each workgroup's roles and responsibilities in developing Mississippi's Combined Plan. Strategies to engage the business sector and the public in the planning process were also disclosed in the document. A list of an additional set of operating groups was provided in the document. These operating groups consisted of the Office of the Governor, State Workforce Investment Board, Subject Matter Experts, Management Team, Data Team, Compliance Team, and Public Relations Team. The document revealed the communication plan, a critical component of the planning process designed to provide a systematic method of communication and a consistent exchange of information across all involved parties. The strategy for writing Mississippi's Combined Plan was presented in the document, discussing how the gathered input and information were collected and written. The document concluded with a timeline of meetings and collaborations relevant to the process of developing Mississippi's Combined Plan in order to ensure its timely completion and submission.

Planning Workgroups

In efforts to support the Governor's vision of an integrated workforce ecosystem and collaboration across stakeholders statewide, seven planning workgroups reflecting the two major planning elements (i.e., strategic planning and operational planning) of the WIOA were established. Each of these workgroups was tasked with specific roles and responsibilities to help focus efforts on critical components of the WIOA. A chair and a vice chair were selected from each group to help align internal workgroup activities. The seven planning workgroups were organized as follows:

Strategic Planning Workgroups	Operational Planning Workgroups
◉ Planning and Communication Workgroup	◉ One-Stop Operations Workgroup
◉ Aligned and Integrated Technology Workgroup	◉ Career Pathways and Assessment Workgroup
◉ Sector Strategies Workgroup	◉ Performance and Accountability Workgroup
	◉ Employer Engagement Workgroup

Strategic Planning Workgroups

The workforce groups organized under the Strategic Planning Element worked collaboratively on identifying strategies and goals for bringing the Governor's vision of a unified workforce ecosystem to fruition. These workgroups included the Planning and Communication Workgroup, the Aligned and Integrated Technology Workgroup, and the Sector Strategies Workgroup.

1. Planning and Communication

The Planning and Communication Workgroup managed the planning process of Mississippi's Combined Plan. The primary responsibility was to ensure that the other workgroups remained on task and on time with meeting deadlines. Communication facilitation was another responsibility of this workgroup, as it was tasked with effectively communicating with the other entities throughout the planning process. This group communicated with other workgroups as well as with stakeholders to ensure that the public voice was heard on the overarching vision for the state's revitalized workforce development system in order to create a vibrant economic climate for Mississippi.

2. Aligned and Integrated Technology

The primary task of the Aligned and Integrated Technology Workgroup was to understand the WIOA requirements, leverage resources, and integrate Mississippi Works (mississippiworks.org) as the foundation of the WIOA technology requirements. In order to meet the demands of today and the goals of tomorrow, technology must be used to bring Mississippians together to create a renewed and stronger workforce. This workgroup developed strategies to align the various agency systems to meet the WIOA

unified technology requirement and universal profile incorporated into Mississippi's Combined Plan. Six core programs are already under the Mississippi Works technology umbrella, a comprehensive system used by job seekers to apply for work, identify their barriers to employment, and follow through with an integrated case management system. Mississippi Works is working with technology vendors to ensure every Combined Plan Partner is compliant with the new law.

3. Sector Strategies

The Sector Strategies Workgroup was tasked with using data and analysis of the current and projected job market and economic conditions to develop strategies focused on linking job seekers to gainful employment. By identifying regional and local employment deficits, this group created strategies and approaches for training, development, and education programs that teach job seekers the skills necessary to address the needs of Mississippi's employers. This workgroup met to confirm that the appropriate economic data and analyses were easily accessible for informed decision making pertaining to the development and implementation of Mississippi's Combined Plan. Analyzing workforce, employment, and unemployment data, labor market trends, and the educational and skills level of Mississippi's workforce allowed this workgroup to develop sector-based workforce strategies. The group also discussed regional sector strategies, with an emphasis on how these strategies connected to the state's overall plan. To make the best use of state resources, the workgroup concurred that the state should focus on targeted sectors backed by solid data analysis to make the biggest impact. In addition, data analysis will provide a clear-cut picture of which sectors are the best return on investment. This workgroup also established how all state and regional sector strategies would link to the career pathways element of the operational component of Mississippi's Combined Plan to ensure that Mississippians are prepared to fill the state's available jobs. If additional funding is invested in specific sector strategies, then the workforce ecosystem should promote opportunities in these sectors, which would result in a strategy that is mutually beneficial to employers and job seekers. Advancing Mississippi's workforce participants so they can have gainful employment and become self-sufficient is the highest measure of success. The performance measures mandated in the WIOA provide Mississippi with an opportunity to improve its focus and align workforce training resources more effectively across all programs.

Operational Planning Workgroups

The workforce groups organized around the Operational Planning Element worked collaboratively to implement the strategies conceived by the workgroups in the strategic planning element. Each Operational Planning Workgroup was charged with specific roles and responsibilities to help focus their efforts on implementation of the goals and strategies developed by the Strategic Planning Workgroups. The Operational Planning Workgroups include the One-Stop Operations Workgroup, Career Pathways and Assessment Workgroup, Performance and Accountability Workgroup, and Employer Engagement Workgroup. Each of these workgroups first met in June 2015 to discuss specific focus areas and strategize about methods to achieve the Governor's vision of a workforce ecosystem.

1. One-Stop Operations

The goal of the One-Stop Operations Workgroup was to design a comprehensive workforce development system that encourages cross-program alignment of services in a seamless, coordinated, service-delivery model that accommodates all job seeker and employer customers. The workgroup developed a One-Stop System that provides access to all program services through a network of physical locations and a virtual environment. This system will allow individuals to have access to all appropriate programs at any point of entry into the system. In order to ensure the efficiency of the One-Stop system, the One-Stop Operations Workgroup implemented a clearinghouse where all programs communicate and are fully integrated.

The One-Stop Operations Workgroup met to discuss ideas for cross-program alignment of all services in a seamless model that best accommodates job seekers and employers. Various tiers of One-Stop Centers were developed. Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Centers will provide access to all Combined Plan Partner services and to in-house career and technical education. Comprehensive One-Stop Centers will provide access to all of the Combined Plan Partner services in one place to assist the customer and provide referrals for career and technical education. A minimum of one Comprehensive One-Stop Center will be located in each of Mississippi's four local workforce development areas. In order to provide Mississippi job seekers with the education, training, and skills to meet the demands of Mississippi employers, a network of Affiliate One-Stop Centers will offer basic services and refer the customer to a Sector Training Plus or Comprehensive One-Stop Center if the affiliate center is unable to meet the customer's needs. Access points located throughout each local workforce development area would provide virtual access to job seekers. This workgroup also noted that in order for the Sector Training Plus, Comprehensive, and Affiliate One-Stop Centers to be successful, there is a critical need for a staff of skilled counselors who are cross-trained on all of the programs and services to best meet the needs of the job seeker. Another objective of the One-Stop Operations Workgroup was to develop a strategy to find job seekers who are not currently in the system, identify the services they need, and ultimately move the needle to increase Mississippi's workforce participation rate.

2. Career Pathways and Assessment

The Career Pathways and Assessment Workgroup was responsible for the design and implementation of career-readiness plans that allow Mississippians to gain the necessary training or education to move directly into careers that are in demand in the 21st century and in their respective local workforce development areas. This process includes individualized education and training plans with multiple entry and exit points that ultimately track the job seeker's progress through the workforce ecosystem. The workgroup discussed strategies that included cross-program, non-duplicative assessments of education, skills, and assets. The workgroup also agreed on a need for a common assessment instrument for entry into the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model, the statewide integrated pathway model. The state-approved measure will be a recognized credential for the state of Mississippi and will assess a job seeker's trainability. To support this effort, there is also an individualized plan in place for every job seeker in the workforce pipeline.

The Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model will guide job seekers through aligned resources and support to help them find a job and increase Mississippi's workforce participation rate. The overarching goal of the state's integrated workforce pathway model is creating opportunities for Mississippians to receive higher skills and higher wages as they progress through the workforce pipeline.

3. Performance and Accountability

The Performance and Accountability Workgroup was tasked with developing a reporting system that will support the performance evaluation process. WIOA increases accountability and places stronger emphasis on results through the establishment of common employment outcome measures across all WIOA programs included in Mississippi's Combined Plan. The workgroup reviewed the six performance indicators mandated by WIOA and discussed how each measurement impacts each core program.

Currently, each program has its own definition of a "participation period" within the workforce system. Under WIOA, a common measurement is required across programs with well-defined entry and exit points. Median earnings of participants is another performance indicator that core programs must determine. Although job seekers can choose their own path, the workforce system will need to counsel job seekers on obtaining higher-level skills to meet the overarching goal of closing the middle-skill gap. Mississippi will be measured on its performance in educating and training workers under WIOA to meet the needs of employers seeking middle-skill workers.

The law also requires Mississippi to measure incremental steps or benchmarks that job seekers must take to obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent). Therefore, the workforce system must not only enroll low-skill job seekers into a training program but also ensure that the training program is successful and show evidence of putting people on a path to obtain higher credentials that result in higher wages.

The final performance indicator will be determined by the Department of Labor (DOL), which will establish parameters for employer participation. Mississippi will develop a plan with the understanding that the plan will be modified once DOL issues guidelines.

The workgroup determined that all of the performance indicators will be communicated through the technology developed by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, which is already in place. A conceptual policy plan and timeline were developed to outline how all of the systems will share data, create reports, etc. Additional components to develop for this shared system will include a dashboard that allows workforce partners to view the status of performance indicators calculated in near real time and a notification system to ensure continuous progress.

4. Employer Engagement

The Employer Engagement Workgroup was tasked with designing a systematic approach to grow employer engagement and offer solutions on how to manage it. WIOA emphasizes engaging employers across the workforce system to align training with needed skills and match employers with qualified workers. There are 55,000 employers across Mississippi, but the current system is only engaged with 25 percent. The workgroup is committed to increasing employer involvement for Mississippi's workforce system of the future and developing strategies to increase employer engagement.

One strategy is to assign each employer a project manager since most companies prefer one point of contact. To avoid duplication and to streamline the process, the committee created a checklist of what information is needed from employers so that everything is addressed at one time. The group decided to contact employers less but in a more valuable way. Understanding the needs of the employer, referring them to the appropriate workforce partner, and ultimately following through on requests bring considerable value and will increase credibility and participation. When employers experience the positive benefits of the workforce system, they will be more inclined to participate. In addition, employers who help the system should be given priority of service.

Another strategy that will add value for both employers and workforce partners is tracking the engagement progress through technology similar to Mississippi Works. This technology will be designed to streamline the efforts of workforce partners making cold calls and referrals by allowing workforce partners to view data in a secure and centralized system to see who is involved with employer engagement. This strategy will allow Mississippi to have a better understanding of the needs of employers, which in turn directly impacts how the state trains and directs job seekers.

To be continuously effective, workforce partners recognize the need for ongoing professional development and training for themselves. The workgroup strategized that workforce partners should meet on a regular basis and provide cross-training of programs so all of the core agencies will have common knowledge of the services and programs that are offered. This strategy will enhance the referral process and keep the lines of communication open and the sharing of ideas ongoing. This workgroup will identify a curriculum and/or certificate program as well as a coordinator to start this process.

A final strategy from this workgroup identified internships as a win-win for both the employer and job seeker. Mississippi's Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) and community colleges are working with MDES to match job seekers who are looking for internships. There is an effort to give job seekers both work experience and experience related to their field of study. An internship allows job seekers an opportunity to demonstrate their ability and connect with potential employers.

Input from Mississippi Businesses

On July 8, 2015, Mississippi conducted a focus group with business representatives to obtain additional input on the plan. The purpose of this focus group was to gauge the interest of businesses in public partnership and determine the needs of Mississippi businesses. Involving the business community enabled the planning workgroups to incorporate a business sector perspective into the planning and implementation of Mississippi's Combined Plan and create momentum for increasing business and industry involvement in the workforce ecosystem. Participants were invited by the State Workforce Investment Board Executive Director. Feedback from attendees was first captured by an online survey, and the results were immediately shared with the focus group. This initial input provided a baseline discussion on the effectiveness of the current workforce system in meeting industry needs and the identification of barriers experienced by employers in locating skilled employees. Strategies to ensure that Mississippi has a successful and thriving business climate were also discussed.

Communication Plan

Communication was critical to the planning process and to successfully fulfilling the requirements of WIOA. To facilitate communication throughout the entire planning process, a plan was developed to maintain a systematic method of communication across all parties and to ensure a consistent flow of information across all involved parties. The Office of the Governor provided overall guidance and leadership in the implementation of WIOA. The chairman of the SWIB Task Force served as the point of contact between the Governor's Office and the SWIB. Communications between the general public, Internal Workgroup, Subject Matter Experts, the Strategic Planning and Operational Planning Workgroups, and the SWIB Task Force was coordinated through the SWIB via the executive director of the SWIB. The Management Team, as part of the Internal Workgroup, coordinated all activities and maintained communication with the SWIB. The remaining teams of the Internal Workgroup, specifically the Compliance Team and Public Relations Team, maintained communications with each other to ensure a smooth and consistent flow of information and that the writing of Mississippi's Combined Plan remained on schedule. Subject Matter Experts interacted with the teams of the Internal Workgroup. Any information submitted by the Strategic Planning or Operational Planning Workgroups was shared with the SWIB and all members of the other workgroups.

State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) Website

To ensure transparency and compliance with WIOA, the SWIB website (swib.ms.gov) added a section titled Mississippi Works: WIOA. The purpose of this website was to keep Mississippians informed about the state's strategic plan to create an integrated workforce development system and a process to meet the requirements of WIOA. The Mississippi WIOA Planning Document and the SWIB Workforce Development Needs Study were posted to the website. Information and membership for the Strategic Planning Workgroups and the Operational Planning Workgroups were also available on the website. Dates, times, and locations of upcoming WIOA planning meetings were listed on the website. Beginning on June 15, 2015, a weekly newsletter was posted to the website. These newsletters summarized the progress being made on the development of Mississippi's Combined Plan. These items remained on the website until the plan review and comment period ended on September 28, 2015.

Open Meetings

All planning workgroup meetings were open to the public. Three public forums were held at different stages in the development of Mississippi's Combined Plan in order to invite comments on the plan from the general public. Notice of these public meetings was announced in *The Clarion Ledger* and posted on the websites of the SWIB and involved state agencies (e.g., Mississippi Department of Rehabilitative Services). The initial public forum allowed all concerned individuals the opportunity to voice their comments and concerns regarding the development of the state's plan. The information collected from the initial public forum was collated and provided to the WIOA plan writing team. The second public forum focused on plan implementation. The comments and suggestions from the second public forum were also provided to the WIOA plan writing team. The final public forum was held on September 18, 2015, to reveal the final plan and allow for final comments. Any comments submitted at the final public forum were collated and placed on the SWIB website for public viewing.

Overview of Process to Designate Local Workforce Development Areas

In accordance with the requirements of section 106 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Mississippi's Local Workforce Development Area Designation Policy (Appendix C), Governor Phil Bryant received and approved requests for initial designation from the four local workforce development boards: Delta, Mississippi Partnership, Southcentral Mississippi Works, and Twin Districts. Prior to submitting the initial designation requests to Governor Bryant, the boards posted the requests on their websites for a public comment period. These areas met the three criteria for initial designation: (1) they were designated as local areas for the purposes of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 prior to the two-year period preceding the date of enactment of WIOA; (2) they have performed successfully; and (3) they have sustained fiscal integrity.

Subsequent designation of local workforce development areas and the definition of regions will take place according to Mississippi's Local Workforce Development Area Designation Policy in compliance with all relevant sections of WIOA.

COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

	X or N/A	STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE	DOCUMENTATION and COMMENT
1.	X	The State established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member presents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	The State has a policy (State Policy #5, Conflict of Interest) to ensure that individuals or representatives entrusted with public funds do not personally or professionally benefit from the award or expenditure of such funds. For full description, see Appendix I1A.
2.	X	The State established a policy to provide to the public(including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	The State has a policy addressing open meetings (State Policy #4, Sunshine Provision). Requirements for conducting business in an open manner as mandated by WIOA are detailed. For full description, see Appendix I1B.
3.	X	The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Included in State of Mississippi WIOA MOU (Second paragraph under Roles, Responsibilities, and Governance Structure).
4.	X	(a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners, and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stake holders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public;	The State posted three public meetings for public comment and review of the planning process and plan. The state obtained input into the development of the State Plan and provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, other primary stakeholders, and the general public.

	X	(b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	
5.	X	The State has established, in accordance with WIOA Section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities.	The State complies with all WIOA requirements of fiscal control and fund accounting procedures regarding the disbursement of, and accounting for all funds paid to the State.
6.	X	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA Section 184(a)(3)	The State complies with the uniform administrative requirements from 2CFR200, including the requirement that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA Section 184(a)(3). For full description, see. Transitional State Policy #8 WIOA Programmatic and Fiscal Monitoring, provided in Appendix I1C.
7.	X	The State has taken the appropriate action to be compliant with WIOA Section 188, as applicable	The State complies with WIOA Sections 188. All information relating to actions taken by the State for compliance can be found at: http://www.mdes.ms.gov/media/35202/MDES_EO_MOA_2013.pdf
8.	X	The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	All core program Agency Directors assure that the WIOA federal funds for their programs will only be utilized for the purposes prescribed per WIOA for their program. See State of Mississippi WIOA MOU (Second Paragraph under Purpose).

9.	X	The State will pay the appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	See State of Mississippi WIOA MOU (Fourth paragraph under Purpose).
10.	X	The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	The State has in place a certification procedure for all one-stop centers to ensure compliance with all physical and programmatic accessibility requirements as prescribed in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Please see One-Stop Certification Checklist (Appendix I1D).
11.	X	Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	The MDES administers the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) for the state. An assessment tool was created by MDES and is provided to the one-stop Wagner-Peyser staff to utilize in identifying veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE). All veterans who enter the one-stop and request services are assessed using the tool. Once identified as having a SBE, a veteran is referred to a DVOP for appropriate services. This procedure is described in the MDES JVSG grant.
12.	X	Priority of Service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

(OMB Control Number: 1205-0NEW)

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section of the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

Title I-B

(a) <u>*General Requirements*</u>

    (1) Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas.

        (A)   Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.

The state has redesignated four local workforce development areas. Each of the four local workforce development areas have also been identified as regions.
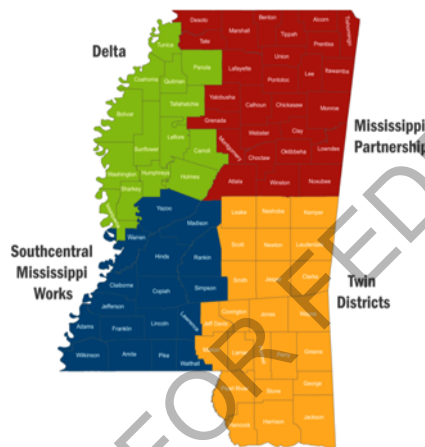
        (B)   Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for "performed successfully" and "sustained fiscal integrity" in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.

WIOA Policy #1 (15-007 Local Workforce Designation Policy, Appendix I2A) outlines the process used for designating local areas. The policy was developed in consultation with the State Workforce Investment Board and posted on websites for public comment. The policy defines performed successfully as meeting or exceeding the adjusted levels of performance for each performance goal for two consecutive years immediately preceding the enactment of the WIOA. See Appendix I2A for a full description of the process. Sustained fiscal integrity is defined as the administration of WIA programs for the two consecutive years immediately preceding the enactment of WIOA with no formal determination of misexpended funds or gross negligence. Each local workforce area submitted a request for initial designation supported by documentation of successful performance and sustained fiscal integrity.

(C) *Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.*

Regions are aligned with the four local workforce development areas. The state identified regions using the following data: common labor markets, common economic development areas; community college districts; geography, population density; communing patterns and sufficiency of Title II providers. The analysis is included in the combined plan. Planning meetings were held with local boards and chief elected officials. Specific Appeals process information is provided in the Local Workforce Area Designation Policy provided in Appendix I2A.

(D) *Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.*

State entities responsible for the administration of Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, TANF, WP, ABE, and Rehabilitation Services have agreed to physically co-locate in at least one comprehensive center in each workforce area. An MOU will be developed to describe roles and responsibilities and shared cost for infrastructure. The State will develop a WIOA policy to establish an appeals process related to determinations for infrastructure funding. The appeals process will be incorporated in the WIOA one-stop certification policy.

(2) Statewide Activities.

(A) *Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.*

Mississippi Senate Bill 2958 of the 2014 Mississippi Regular Legislative Session amended Section 71-5-353, Mississippi Code of 1972 to provide that money in the state workforce investment board bank account shall be used for administration of state workforce investment board business, grants related to training, and other projects as determined appropriate by the state workforce investment board.

(B) *Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers*

The 2015 allocation for Governor's Set Aside Funding is 10%. WIOA provides these funds to be used for "statewide employment and training activities" (WIOA Section 134). Statewide activities include required and allowable activities. Funds must be reserved for mandatory activities before optional activities are funded.

Mississippi plans to use the funding primarily for mandatory statewide WIOA activities as follows:

- Administering Mississippi's WIOA system. This activity happens at MDES and is capped at 5% of the total WIOA allocation. Included costs are accounting, staffing, policy and procedure issuance, monitoring and audit, planning, grant management and liaison with USDOL and the local areas. Most states use the full 5% amount to carry out these functions.

- Operating the State's management information systems. In the past, the largest expense within the state's Governor's reserve has been the MIS system. USDOL requires complex and ever changing performance and reporting tracking for all WIOA programs. Over 100 data elements are collected from every participant, each data element is validated and entered into the MIS system and reports are delivered to USDOL and the four local workforce development areas.

- Incentive grants and technical assistance for local areas. Historically, each of the four local workforce development areas has been awarded funds each year for coordination, technical assistance and performance.

- Eligible Training Provider information (ETPL). WIOA requires that states maintain and disseminate a list of every vocational training program, including detailed performance information such as student completion and employment rates. Customers of all the WIN Job Centers use this list and the performance information to select their training program. Youth programs are also tracked statewide.

- Evaluation and continuous improvement. All statewide WIOA programs are to be evaluated with a goal for continuous improvement. Evaluation activities are conducted using the On-line Employment Services System (OESS) and on-site monitoring of all programs.

- Operating the WIN Job Centers. To date, funding for the Centers has come from other sources.

Any expenditures from the Governor's Set Aside Funding will be in compliance with Section 134 of the WIOA.

Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) is the lead agency for Rapid Response services in Mississippi. The State also allocates a share of available Rapid Response funds to local workforce development areas based on mass layoff or plant closure activity. Each workforce area has designated a staff member as their Rapid Response and dislocated worker program coordinator. Local area boards will develop plans that describe how the State and local areas coordinate Rapid Response services to address each area's specific labor market needs.

The MDES responds to both the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) and non-WARN events, that is, events involving fewer than 50 individuals. MDES receives official WARN notices of impending closures or mass layoff events from the affected business. To ensure that assistance and services are provided to as many dislocated workers as possible, MDES also established a policy to respond to non-WARN events, regardless of the number of individuals affected. MDES may learn of non-WARN events from the media, partner agencies, local economic development offices, WIN Job Center and local workforce area staff, businesses, affected workers, community college rapid response coordinators, and other local sources.

Within 24 hours of the receipt of a WARN or non-WARN notice, the MDES staff contacts the company to discuss available Rapid Response services and offers assistance to the company and the affected workers. An on-site visit with the company representative and, when appropriate, the union or employee representative, is scheduled as soon as possible.

The State developed an employee survey form to determine the specific assistance needed by the affected workers. The survey is provided to the employer during the on-site visit for immediate distribution to the workers. The form collects information on the employees' education and skill levels, work history, employment assistance needs, and training interests. After compiling and analyzing the information provided by the employees, the team identifies the workers' specific needs and coordinates with the local area and community college to facilitate the delivery of services from the appropriate partner agencies.

Working in coordination with local workforce development areas and WIN Job Center staff, a plan of action is developed to deliver services to the affected dislocated workers. Whenever possible, Rapid Response services are delivered on-site prior to layoff, onsite at the company and on company time. Providing services on-site is dependent upon the company's willingness to allow workers to attend sessions during work hours and the availability of meeting space at the site.

When MDES learns of a layoff or closure, MDES immediately notifies the Mississippi Development Authority, the state's economic development agency, and informs them that a company may be in need of assistance. The local economic development staff is in a position to assist the employer in exploring options that may help them to avert the layoff. In addition, if it is evident that a closure will occur, local economic development staff may be able to market the site to employers who will be moving to the area.

MDES has developed a comprehensive, integrated Management Information System that includes Rapid Response and Trade Adjustment Assistance Act programs. A file is maintained for each Rapid Response event that includes a checklist that describes all services provided, names of company contacts, copy of the WARN notice, and information on any follow-up activities. The file contains information on each closure or layoff event, and each individual affected. It provides individual contact information and the skills of the

affected workers. A quarterly WARN report is also maintained that lists all WARN and non-WARN activities, name and location of each company, type of company affected, number of workers, services provided, and if the event is trade related.

(C) *In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.*

Because MDES serves as the lead agency for Rapid Response in the state, it is uniquely positioned to provide mandated services in the case of natural disasters. Rapid Response staff are part of the agency's disaster response team. Staff assists in the identification of businesses adversely affected and workers who lost jobs as a result of the disaster. This information is important for the development of requests for national emergency grant funds. Rapid Response staff also assist in disseminating information on emergency unemployment insurance and reemployment services available. The agency disaster response team works with FEMA and other appropriate state and federal agencies to develop strategies for addressing natural disasters to ensure rapid access to the broad range of assistance.

(D) *Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.*

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security administers the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Act.

Providing early intervention to worker groups on whose behalf a TAA petition has been filed:

- The MDES leads Rapid Response efforts across the state. When working with a business to provide Rapid Response services, the MDES staff activates team efforts locally. The Team includes a rapid response coordinator from the appropriate Local Workforce Area, a representative of the local WIN Job Center representing Wagner-Peyser, and staff representative from the Trade Adjustment Assistance department. Whenever possible, the team conducts on-site presentations at the business location. Every effort is made to provide information sessions prior to the commencement of the lay-offs and/or plant closure. The presentation consists of an overview of the benefits and services that can be expected from each of the partner groups.

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- During these sessions, the Rapid Response team emphasizes how the partner agency staff representatives will be working together as a team to offer the customer individualized comprehensive reemployment benefits and services.

- Once a petition is approved, additional sessions with affected workers are scheduled to provide information about TAA services only. These sessions give the workers the opportunity to ask detailed questions or questions directly related to the workers' individual needs. The sessions may be set up through the employer if the place of business is still open or through TAA staff at the nearest WIN Job Center or at another location.

- When an individual enters the WIN Job center and is identified as Trade eligible, a Trade case manager provides them with an orientation to explain available Trade benefits and services.

Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.

Funds are used for staff to monitor, identify and communicate with worker groups that file a TAA petition.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

(1) *Work-Based Training Models If the State is utilizing alternative training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.*

The state is utilizing alternative training models to include on-the-job training, incumbent working training, and transitional jobs. The training strategy is included in the plan.

(2) *Registered Apprenticeship. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.*

WIOA Communication 15-009 - Transitioning WIA ETPs to WIOA ETPs (Appendix I3A) was sent to Local Workforce Development Areas and State Policy #9 is pending. As discussed in Section IV of 15-009, ETPs will need to sign a new Certificate of Assurances, which has been modified to include WIOA's additional performance indicators.

(3) *Training Provider Eligibility Procedure. Provide the procedure for determining training provider eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).*

WIOA Communication 15-009 – Transitioning WIA ETPs to WIOA ETPs (Appendix I3A) was sent to Local Workforce Development Areas describing the processes that will be used for the identification and listing of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors and eligible

training service providers on the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) System. The State office will work with the Office of Apprenticeship to identify Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. The Local Workforce Development Areas will reach out to the Registered Apprenticeship sponsors in their respective areas. The state will use the current web based application processes for the registration of Apprenticeship sponsors and their program(s) of study. Apprenticeship sponsors will not be required to meet the state's minimum performance standards published in state policy, will be granted automatic approval, and will not be required to meet continued eligibility requirements. WIA ETPs were sent a letter requesting signature on a revised Certificate of Assurances to ensure their transition from WIA to WIOA. The State will continue to use its current web based ETPL system for the registration, initial eligibility, and continued eligibility of all WIOA training service providers. State Policy Number 9 will describe these processes in detail and is still in draft.

(4) *Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program*

A description of how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient is provided in Priority of Service for WIOA Adult Program Participants, State Policy #7 (Appendix I3B).

(5) *Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs*

The State empowers the local areas to determine their need to transfer funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs based on workforce demands and needs of the each local area.

The State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds is provided in the State's WIOA Allocation Policy, Policy #11 (Appendix I3C).

Youth Program Requirements

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

(1) *Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants.[7]*

The State met with the local workforce development area directors to discuss the RFP process for youth providers. In this meeting, requirements were outlined to include performance indicators. The State then provided two draft RFPs to the directors to be

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[7] *Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)*

used in developing the areas' RFPs. The State reviewed the RFPs prepared by the local workforce development boards and the rating tools. The rating tools were designed to ensure awareness and capacity to meet WIOA performance indicators

(2) *Describe the strategies the State will use to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth as described in 129(a)(1)(B), including how it will leverage and align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.*

The State is implementing a WIOA Common Intake and Reporting System that will capture common participant information for the four core programs. The system will align resources and generate automatic referrals among the core programs.

Using a no wrong door policy, all participants will develop an individualized success plan that coordinates the optimum blend of services and funding to achieve their goals for success. This success plan also indicates which of the pathways in the Smart Start Pathways Model to which the participant will be assigned. A connection to a career pathway must be included as part of a youth's individual service strategy or MS Smart Start Success plan. This model is an integrated compilation of programs and services intended to develop basic, technical and employability skills; provide continuous education and training; and work supports that lead to high-demand jobs in targeted sectors.

(3) *Describe how the State will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA Section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented.*

Services to eligible youth are delivered through a network of youth providers. The local workforce areas competitively procure independent contractors to deliver youth services.

The State and LWDAs require these contractors to ensure that these services include all 14 program elements outlined in WIOA Section 129(c)(2). The States participant tracking system, OESS, has been modified to capture all 14 program elements.

Innovative approaches used by youth providers include the Counseling to Career (C2C) youth programs, the Senior Transition Program, Out of School Youth Work Experience, and Career Connections.

C2C provides one to one counseling that helps to develop a personalized individual service strategy that leads to short term and long term employment. The Senior Transition Program enhances work readiness, college preparedness, and transition to work skills to WIOA eligible high school seniors on track to graduate during the program year. Career Connections offers four types of training designed to equip youth with the education and skills to take advantage of new and increasing job opportunities in high growth labor markets.

(4) *Provide the language contained in the State policy for "requires additional assistance to complete and educational program, or to secure and hold employment" criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA Sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII) and for requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program,* or *to*

secure and hold employment" criteria for in-school youth specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

The state includes in Transitional Policy Number 13 – WIOA Youth Eligibility a definition for youth requiring additional assistance. Youth requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment is defined as an in-school or out-of-school youth who is low income, and meets one of the following criteria:

- Lacking relevant work experience to secure or hold employment;
- Lacking credential related to local or regional targeted sectors; or
- In need of an ITA to complete the Start Smart or Career Technical Pathway.
- Criteria defined by local board and included in the local plan.

The WIOA Youth Eligibility Policy, Transition Policy Number 13 is provided in Appendix I3F

(5) Provide the State's definition of "alternative education".

Alternative education is defined as a specialized structured curriculum that may:

- Provide academically rigorous preparation for work and/or post-secondary education;
- Assist with the transition to work and/or post-secondary education;
- Address the youth's barriers to work and/or education.

Some examples include:

- Alternative high schools;
- Juvenile boot camps;
- Wilderness treatment.

(6) If not using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the State definition .

State law does not define "not attending school."

Pursuant to MS Code §37-13-91, a parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child in this state shall cause the child to enroll in and attend a public school or legitimate nonpublic school for the period of time that the child is of compulsory-school-age. A "compulsory-school-age child" means a child who has attained or will attain the age of six (6) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year and who has not attained the age of seventeen (17) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year; and shall include any child who has attained or will attain the age of five (5) years on or before September 1 and has enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program. Provided, however, that the parent or guardian of any child enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program shall be allowed to disenroll the child from the program on a one-time basis, and such child shall not be deemed a compulsory-school-age child until the child attains the age of six (6) years.

(7) If utilizing the portion of the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.

Mississippi is using the basic skills deficient definition as contained in WIOA, as follows:

(5) BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT.—The term "basic skills deficient" means, with respect to an individual—
    (A) who is a youth, that the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
    (B) who is a youth or adult, that the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

(d) Single-area State requirements. In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA Section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

Mississippi is not a single area state.

(1) Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA Section 108(d)(3).)

N/A

(2) The entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA Section108(b)(15).)

N/A

(3) The type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA Section 108(b)(9).)

N/A

(e) Waiver Requests (optional). States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

Mississippi is not submitting a request for waivers as part of its I-B Operational Plan.

(1) Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;

N/A

(2) Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;

N/A

(3) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;

N/A

(4) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

    (A) supporting employer engagement;

        N/A

    (B) connecting education and training strategies;

        N/A

    (C) supporting work-based learning;

        N/A

    (D) improving job and career results, and

        N/A

    (E) other guidance issued by the Department.

        N/A

(5) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and

N/A

(6) Describes the processes used to:

    (A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;

        N/A

    (B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;

        N/A

    (C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;

N/A

(D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.

N/A

(E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

N/A

(7) The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

Title I-B Assurances

	X or N/A	STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE	DOCUMENTATION and COMMENT
1.	X	The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individual career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	See Priority of Service for WIOA Adult Program Participants (Appendix I3B)
2.	X	The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	The MDES collaborates with the local workforce development areas to ensure that the local plans incorporate an integrated strategy and process for the overall service delivery of services to veterans.
3.	X	The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	See Local Workforce Development Area Designation with Attachment (Appendix I2A).

4.	X	The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA Section 107(c)(2);	See Local Workforce Development Area Designation with Attachment (Appendix I2A).
5.	N/A	Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA Section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	
6.	X	The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	WIOA Allocation Policy (Appendix I3C).
7.	X	The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA Section 181(b)(7);	The State assures that it will not use any WIOA funds to assist, promote, or deter union organizing. See State of Mississippi WIOA MOU (Fifth Section under Purpose).
8.	X	The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year to year during the period covered by this plan;	WIOA Allocation Policy (Appendix I3C).
9.	X	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services administers the state laws for vocational rehabilitation. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under WIOA Title I. The two agencies will collaborate in ensuring delivery of workforce services. See MOU between MDES and MDRS provided in Appendix I4A.
10.	N/A	The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	

11.		X	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3).	WIOA Programmatic and Fiscal Monitoring Policy (Appendix I3E).

Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Employment Services)

(a) _Employment Service Professional Staff Development_.

(1) _Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers._

MDES utilizes a one hour weekly staff meeting to share information and train staff. Quarterly managers meetings are held to provide training to management staff. In addition, MDES provides access to the Mississippi Enterprise Learning Management System (MELMS) for all MDES staff. Staff can take unlimited online courses through MELMS from any internet connected computer. Courses include subject matter such as customer service, attitude and ethics. Each MDES staff member has an Individual Development Plan on file that includes the requirements to complete training online or in person.

(2) _Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility issues._

All Wagner-Peyser staff are cross trained to identify Unemployment Insurance eligibility issues and participate in training along with WIOA staff. Wagner-Peyser management works closely with Unemployment Insurance management to provide continuous training to staff on updated policy information.

(b) _Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service._

Wagner-Peyser staff will provide staff assisted services to help Unemployment Insurance claimants file online. Resource rooms with internet access are available in all one-stop centers to UI claimants and resource room attendants are available to assist claimants during the filing process.

(c) _Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals._

MDES operates several programs for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) and Keep Mississippi Working (KMW) programs are initiatives in Mississippi to provide intensive career services to help reconnect UI beneficiaries with work as quickly as possible. Services to claimants in the programs include: labor market information, development of an Individual Employment Plan, orientation of services and

programs offered, registration in MDES' workforce technology system, job match, skills gap analysis and soft skills training.

(d) Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:

(1) Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;.

MDES Wagner-Peyser staff are cross trained to provide staff-assisted services to Unemployment Insurance claimants. The integrated workforce technology system is designed to allow UI claimants to utilize self-assisted services from any location.

(2) Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

MDES has an integrated workforce registration system that captures common ES and UI data elements and provides real time triage.

(3) Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

MDES Wagner-Peyser staff are cross-trained and have a process in place to administer the work test including making eligibility assessments for UI claimants. Wagner-Peyser staff provide staff assisted reemployment services to UI claimants. UI claimants also have access to self-service labor exchange features in the workforce technology system.

As potential availability issues are detected by WIN Job Center staff during interviews with individuals receiving Unemployment compensation, they reported to UI staff for adjudication.

(4) Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

MDES Wagner-Peyser staff are cross-trained to provide referrals and application assistance for training and education programs and resources. MDES utilizes a one hour weekly staff meeting to share information with partners and to train staff.

(e) Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of
the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include—

(1) Assessment of Need. Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

(A)   An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they

*expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3)
Identifying any economic, natural,   or other factors that are affecting agriculture
in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.*

*(B)   An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing
MSFW characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain
c o u n t r i e s , what language(s) they speak, the approximate number
of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and
whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers).
This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section
167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW
organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency
data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S.
Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.*

Due to the low number of migrant and seasonal farm workers in Mississippi, it is
considered a non-significant state relative to the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker
(MSFW) program. The estimated number of MSFWs during the peak season in the
state is 2500. This is based on data supplied by the WIOA Title 1 section 167
National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee, other MSFW organizations,
employer organizations, and federal and/or state agency data sources such as the
U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Employment and Training Administration
(ETA).

Spring, summer, and fall represent the planting to harvest seasons in the 30 to 39
counties where the majority of crops are grown. The number of seasonal
farmworkers remains constant during these months with more migrant workers
coming in during the harvest season (fall).

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) entered into a non-
financial cooperative agreement with the Mississippi Delta Council for Farm Workers
Opportunities, Inc. (MDC), which is the state's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity
Act (WIOA) 167 Grantee. MDES and MDC work together to identify major labor
intensive crop activity relative to MSFWs. MDC, in its outreach team efforts, has
identified that the Delta and semi-Delta counties in the state are where 90% of
MSFWs reside and work. There are small pockets of MSFWs throughout the state
involved in agricultural production throughout; however, most of the labor intensive
crops are produced in the Delta. The top five crops include: cotton, corn, soy beans,
sweet potatoes, and rice. Other important crops include wheat, milo, peanuts, and
catfish. Dairy and poultry farming are located in the hilly section of the state. The
coastal and southeastern areas include tree farming (timber).

Agricultural employers in the state are predominantly focused on hiring local
workers. In instances where they are unable to obtain an adequate workforce,
employers turn their focus to hiring foreign workers. However, when there is a

scarcity of agricultural workers, they utilize MSFWs and the H-2A and H-2B Foreign Labor program.

Agricultural employers are challenged to meet a constantly evolving market demand for commodities, which affects their economic viability. Agriculture in the state is impacted by market demand and also by natural disasters, such as the recent flooding in the Mississippi Delta region.

An assessment of migrant, seasonal and year-round farm worker characteristics indicates that migrant and seasonal workers are predominately Hispanic during the peak season, while year-round workers are predominately African American. Typically, migrant and seasonal workers speak Spanish and year-round workers speak English. MDC, the state NFJP 167 grantee, has bilingual staff available to assist Hispanic workers.

(2) *Outreach Activities. The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:*

> *(A) Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.*

> *(B) Providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.*

> *(C) Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.*

> *(D) Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.*

> *(E) Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.*

Through the MOU agreement with MDC, the MDES is able to achieve many of the state's outreach goals for ensuring appropriate services are provided for MSFWs. As the MDC interacts with MSFW and assesses their needs, they identify those who will

benefit from WIN Job Center services and make referrals to the local center. Services provided to MSFWs in the WIN Job Center include information on unemployment insurance, assessment, counseling, job referrals, job development contacts, training, support services and job placement assistance. Appropriate assessments for each MSFW that registers at the WIN Job Center are conducted, to determine the specific employment and training needs of that worker so they are able to advance their skills and become competitive in a local job market.

As a MSFW non-significant state, Mississippi assigns one half-time State Workforce Agency (SWA) staff position to outreach activities. The SWA staff person coordinates with the MDC to ensure that appropriate outreach activities are carried out. The State SWA staff, as well as staff of the MDC which conducts the outreach to MSFW, attend appropriate conferences and training, as well as participate in DOL conference calls relative to outreach activities. The SWA staff provides appropriate training to local one-stop staff as appropriate. SWA staff also coordinates with the MDC regarding outreach and other activities.

(3) Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

    (A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:
        i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;

        ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

    (B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

    (C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Staff in each MDES local one-stop and MDC work cooperatively to ensure information on each agency's services is available to MSFWs upon entering local offices. This includes MDES Grievance Procedures, which are available for dissemination to the farm workers in the language prevalent among the farm worker population in that area through such means as posters, pamphlets, use of the media, and workshops. A cooperative and coordinated effort is achieved to minimize the duplication of services and to maximize the number of MSFWs that are contacted.

MDC is considered a non-profit, not an advocacy group. The groups MDC works with are described below.

The Mississippi Delta Council for Farm Workers Opportunities, Inc. (MDC\FWOI) was organized in 1971 as a private non-profit corporation chartered to operate programs to assist migrants and seasonal farm workers in the State of Mississippi. Its two

primary objectives are: to help farm workers seek alternatives to agricultural labor; and to improve the agricultural lifestyle of those who wish to remain in agriculture.

As the WIOA Title 1 section 167 grantee, MDC receives a grant from the Department of Labor to address the needs of MSFW related to employment or personal needs. Some of the agencies MDC partners with to meet the personal needs of MSFW are Delta Housing and community action agencies, which offer assistance with paying utility bills, local food banks supplement food needs, health departments/agencies help with free or low cost health and dental care, the local community college offers training and certification opportunities. MDC also provides pesticide training and farm safety training to MSFW's and makes referrals to agricultural employers for job opportunities. MDC refers MSFWs to the WIN Job Centers as appropriate for other job certifications.

Outreach and resource materials are translated into languages other than English so that Limited English Proficient (LEP) clients can understand and access one-stop services. Local WIN Job Centers have access to translators via an 800 telephone number and a listing of local individuals who can provide translation services at no cost to the individual.

As a MSFW non-significant state, Mississippi strives to ensure that employment and training services required under WIOA Title I are provided to MSFWs at the WIN Job Center. As previously mentioned, services provided to MSFWs in the WIN Job Center includes information on unemployment insurance, assessment, counseling, job referrals, job development contacts, training, support services and job placement assistance. Appropriate assessments for each MSFW that registers at the WIN Job Center are conducted, to determine the specific employment and training needs of that worker. WIN Job Center customers are able to advance their skills and become competitive in a local, regional and global economy.

The MDC works with local partner agencies to ensure that each customer has access to a variety of services to complement the ones offered by the WIN Job Centers. Some of the agencies MDC partners with are Delta Housing and community action agencies, which offer assistance with paying utility bills, local food banks supplement food needs, health departments/agencies help with free or low cost health and dental care, the local community college offers training and certification opportunities. The state's WIN Job Centers also offer job certifications. MDC also provides pesticide training and farm safety training to MSFW's and makes referrals to agricultural employers for job opportunities.

MDES is able to reach out to agricultural employers for job development, assistance with job orders and to ensure that the agricultural employers are able to secure a reliable labor force. MDES strives to offer technical assistance to agricultural employers in a continued effort to meet their needs and requirements. Upon initial contact with the SWA, the agricultural employer is able to register their job order with the state's WIN Job Center. The job order includes the agricultural employer's requirement of job specifications, number of required workers and length of employment. The MDES is then able to job match applicants tailored to the specific requirements of the agricultural employer. Appropriate referrals of applicants are

made to the employer. Prior to referral, all applicants are e-verified by the state's WIN Job Center.

(4) Other Requirements.

(A) *Collaboration. Describe any collaborative agreements the SWA has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).*

(B) *Review and Public Comment. In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.*

    i. *The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.*

(C) *Data Assessment. Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.*

(D) *Assessment of progress. The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.*

(E) *State Monitor Advocate. The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.*

Working together, MDES and MDC estimate approximately 300 MSFWs are served each year.

The State Monitor Advocate works for the MDES, and was afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the Program Year 2014 AOP.

The Mississippi AOP for Program Year 2014 was reviewed by the 167 NFJP grantee, and at the discretion of the NFJP other interested groups affiliated with the NFJP were given an opportunity to comment on the state AOP.

The plan was posted on the MDES public web site available to the public for review and comment. Although solicited, no additional information and no comments were received.

MDES submits an AOP in accordance with Department of Labor directives each year. However, no AOP was required by the Department of Labor for Program Year 2015, due to the implementation of WIOA. MDES will complete an AOP for Program Year 2016 in accordance with DOL guidance.

(The most recent data we have was included in the 2014 AOP, and is PY 2012 data. MDES does not expect the numbers to change significantly.)

Previous year's history based on Program Year (PY) 2012 data:

- Approximately 85 agricultural job orders and openings were received.
- There were no agricultural job orders filled entirely by MSFWs.
- Most job orders were filled with a combination of H2A and MSFW applicants totaling 100%.
- There were 114 interstate clearance orders received.
- There were 114 interstate clearance orders initiated.

Based on historical data and previous performance, MDES anticipates achieving the following goals for MSF:

- Approximately 100 agricultural job orders and openings to be received;
- Most job orders filled will be a combination of H2A and MSFW applicants totaling 100%.
- Approximately 1% of the job orders are expected to be filled by MSFWs;
- Project 125 interstate clearance orders to be received and initiated.

Assurances

	X or N/A	STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE	DOCUMENTATION and COMMENT
1.	X	The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3));	MDES is currently in compliance with the WIOA requirement that Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers.
2.	N/A	The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers;	
3.	X	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services administers the state laws for vocational rehabilitation. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under WIOA Title I. The two agencies will collaborate in ensuring delivery of workforce services. See MOU between MDES and MDRS provided in Appendix I4A.
4.	X	State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.	MDES is currently in compliance with 20 CFR Part 652 Establishment and Functioning of State Employment Services through Part 654.

Adult Education and Literacy Programs

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

(a) <u>Aligning of Content Standards</u>. Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

In July of 2013, the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), Office of Adult Education (OAE) adopted the *College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards for Adult Education* disseminated through the Federal Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). In January of 2016, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) adopted Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards (http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/MCCRS/about) for all K-12 students in the public school system. The standards were reviewed, analyzed and alignment was determined though collaboration efforts between the Office of Adult Education and MDE. The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school or seeking their high school equivalency diploma are prepared to enter credit-bearing entry courses in two-year or four-year college programs or enter the workforce. The College and Career Readiness standards reflect a broad agreement among subject matter experts in education about what is desirable for students to know to be prepared for the rigors of postsecondary education and training.

Effective July 1, 2016, eligible providers will be required to adopt and implement these standards to maximize the effectiveness of curricula and instruction, and to prepare students for transition to postsecondary education and/or the workforce. In order to ensure that all instructors are knowledgeable of the CCR and that they understand how to use them effectively to guide classroom instruction, OAE will provide significant levels of professional development to all instructional staff in currently funded programs and to any future adult education grantees. The professional development sessions will be presented by experts in the field of content standards and will have the intensity and duration to ensure the successful transfer of understanding and skills.

(b) <u>Local Activities</u>. Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

    Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)
        Adult education;
        Literacy;
        Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
        Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities;
Integrated English literacy and civics education;
Workforce preparation activities; or
Integrated education and training that—
1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

Adult Education Funding
The Mississippi Community College Board, Office of Adult Education (OAE) is the state's Eligible Agency for Adult Education. OAE is responsible for administering funds to eligible providers, and providing program/performance oversight to grantees. OAE will provide funding to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Request for Application (RFA) process. The RFA is the mechanism through which OAE will identify, assess, and award multi-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state. An eligible provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals. To ensure that programs are of high quality, all eligible providers submitting a RFA will be required to provide performance data to support the request for funding. Eligible providers may include:
- a local education agency;
- a community-based or faith-based organization;
- a volunteer literacy organization;
- an institution of higher education;
- a public or private nonprofit agency;
- a library;
- a public housing authority;
- a nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- a consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

The Mississippi Community College Board will use the following process to distribute funds to approved applicants:

1. not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contacts under section 231 and to carry out section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out section 225;
2. shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds to carry out State leadership activities under section 223; and
3. shall use not more than 5 percent of the grant funds, or $85,000, whichever is greater, for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

Eligible individual means an individual who has attained 16 years of age; who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and who is basic skills deficient; does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or is an English language learner.

The Office of Adult Education will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants and the same application process will be used for all applicants. The grant competition will be publicized through a variety of print and electronic media throughout the state. Information will be shared via the MCCB Office of Communications and Public Relations in the form of a formal press release, a posting on the MCCB website, social media outlets, and other means of available communication.

The Office of Adult Education will award funds to eligible providers for the delivery of adult education services, which are academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:
- read, write and speak English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- transition to postsecondary education and training; and
- obtain employment.

In accordance with federal regulation, eligible providers may receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities:
- adult education;
- literacy;
- workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- family literacy activities;
- English language and acquisition activities;
- integrated English literacy and civics education;
- workforce preparation activities; or
- integrated education and training.

Description of Activities

As part of the Mississippi Combined Plan, Adult Education will be the provider of the SmartStart Pathway. This pathway encompasses Basic Skills, Career Exploration and Necessary Skills (Workforce Preparation).

Adult education (Basic Skills) will be provided through academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and

speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training; and obtain employment.

Literacy (Basic Skills) services will be provided to assist individuals in obtaining skills necessary to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

Workplace adult education and literacy activities will be provided concurrently and contextually by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce. Local area providers will partner with business and industry to provide basic skills training that will enhance the skills and knowledge of employees and increase employee productivity.

Family literacy activities will be provided for those programs that are of sufficient intensity and quality, to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities: (A) Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency. (B) Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children. (C) Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children. (D) An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences. See Special Rule for Family Literacy.

Special Rule for Family Literacy
The Office of Adult Education will not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that the agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, the Office of Adult Education will attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

English language acquisition services will be provided in all four local workforce regions of the state. This program of instruction is designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to postsecondary education and training; or employment.

Integrated education and training will be provided through a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. Building off of the dropout recovery strategies of ABE

programs, the Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skill Training (MI-BEST) initiative led by the Mississippi Community College Board has incorporated a career pathway model within the delivery of adult basic education. MI-BEST primarily targets high school dropouts, low-income individuals, and other students by accelerating their transition from basic skills education to postsecondary programs of study. MI-BEST incorporates contextualized learning by concurrently delivering ABE and career and technical education (CTE) classes using a team-teaching approach. In addition, MI-BEST provides low-skill, undereducated, and low-wage workers opportunities to enter career pathways with the appropriate level of instruction, leading to postsecondary degrees and/or credentials and, ultimately, self-sufficiency.

Through MI-BEST, Mississippi joins a growing number of states implementing best practices designed to recover and accelerate postsecondary credential attainment among high school dropouts and other nontraditional students. Participants in the MI-BEST program must earn a High School Equivalency Diploma, Career Readiness Credential at any level, complete at least 20 hours of employable skills training, and continue on-the-job training. Upon completion of this program, students have the skills and credentials to enter the workforce at the middle-skill level.

Integrated English literacy and civics education will be provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries that enable such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

Workforce preparation activities (Necessary Skills) will be provided to all students enrolled in ABE or IEL programs., These programs or services are designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment. As part of the Smart Start pathway, all students will participate in workforce preparation activities (Necessary Skills) to include but not limited to: Problem-solving, Teamwork, Communication skills, Goal Setting/Time Management, Professional Image, Role of Employer and Employee, Financial Awareness and Life Skills.

Federal funds may be used to increase the level of nonfederal funds that would be available in the absence of federal funds, and, in no case, replace those nonfederal funds. Federal funds must not be used for the purpose of supplanting, only for supplementing.

Request for Application
Funding allocations will be established after considering the census of need for each county within the state. The Office of Adult Education will ensure that all geographical regions of the state have adequate coverage, and that local providers are sufficiently equipped to meet the needs identified for each local workforce region. Further, eligible providers will be required to

collaborate with other social services and employment-related providers in the area in order to provide concurrent or supportive services for eligible recipients.

The grant application will collect basic information regarding an eligible provider (e.g. location, service area, the scope of the program, demographics served, fiscal management procedures and audit history). Additionally, each applicant will be required to submit a proposed budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements. Questions may include the following:

1. Provide the vision and mission of the program or organization. Please include a description of the population that the program will serve, including how the program will meet the needs of persons with barriers to employment (e.g. Displaced Homemaker, Low-income Individual, Individuals with Disabilities, Single Parents, and other individuals as described in the law).
2. Provide a description (and supporting documents, when available) of any cooperative agreements/contracts that the program has with other agencies and service providers for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities. Also, describe ways in which the program coordinates with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g. child care, transportation).
3. Describe how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services. Include a description of how the program will promote concurrent enrollment with Title I programs.
4. Describe the methods the program will employ to meet the State adjusted levels of performance. Additionally, describe the program's mechanism and process for collecting and reporting data to assess performance. The description of the program's methods to meet performance measures should focus on efforts to meet or achieve:
   a. Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment after program exit;
   b. Median earnings of program participants;
   c. Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma/equivalent during program participation or after exiting;
   d. Effective service provided to employers.
5. Describe the program's current and/or future involvement as a local One-Stop Center partner, including how the program will contribute to products or services for One-Stop Center participants— with emphasis on individuals with barriers to employment. Describe how the program's contribution to the One-Stop Center will be coordinated with other core providers, and delivered to Center's participants.
6. Describe the scope of the program's activities, and the delivery of services to ensure that the needs of all eligible participants will be met.
7. Describe the program's ability to meet the 13 considerations used to assess the RFA that are listed below.

Assessing the RFA
The assessment of each grant application will involve an intense evaluation of the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area, and to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. At minimum, the review process and scoring rubric will consider the following:
1. The ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs and English language needs identified for the population in the area. Particular emphasis will be given to the provider's ability to provide targeted service to individuals with barriers to employment—including low literacy skills and an English language barrier;
2. The eligible provider's ability to provide service to individuals with a disability;

3. The eligible provider's demonstrated effectiveness in providing literacy instruction, including its ability to meet State-adjusted levels of performance and improve the literacy levels of eligible individuals;
4. The eligible provider's alignment with the WIOA Local Plan;
5. The depth, intensity, and rigor of the programs and activities offered by the eligible provider. The proposed program must incorporate the basic components of reading instruction. Attention will be given to the extent to which the eligible provider incorporates stringent research in the grant proposal submission and the development of the literacy program itself;
6. The extent to which the eligible provider's program is based on intense research and best practices;
7. The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates the effective use of technology for instruction, to include distance education, toward students' improved performance;
8. The eligible provider's demonstrated integration of contextualized instruction, to blend literacy skills, and preparation for transition to post-secondary education or entry into the workplace. Particular attention will be given to activities that promote and lead to economic self-sufficiency, and the ability to exercise the full rights of citizenship;
9. The qualifications and expertise of the eligible provider's instructors, counselors, and administrative staff. All instructors must hold (at minimum) a Bachelor's degree. The eligible provider must also demonstrate its ability and intent to provide high quality professional development to instructors and staff, toward the improvement of student performance;
10. The eligible provider's collaboration with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community. Particularly, the eligible provider should have (or have the means to establish) meaningful partnerships with elementary schools, secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, industry partners, and workforce boards;
11. The flexibility of program scheduling offered by the eligible provider, including coordination (when available) with Federal, State, and local support services such as child care, transportation, and mental health services;
12. The eligible provider's information management system; the expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the state-administered designated MIS for all grant related data collection and reporting.
13. The demonstrated need within the area occupied by the eligible provider for English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

(c) <u>Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals</u>. Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

  Adult education and literacy activities;
  Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
  Secondary school credit;
  Integrated education and training;
  Career pathways;
  Concurrent enrollment;
  Peer tutoring; and
  Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

From funds made available under section 222(a)(1), the Office of Adult Education will carry out corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals within correctional institutions by offering a competitive, multi-year Request for Application process specifically for Corrections Education funding. OAE will not use less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contacts under section 231 and to carry out section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out section 225.

A correctional institution includes any prison; jail; reformatory; work farm; detention center; or halfway house, community-based rehabilitation center, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders. A criminal offender is any individual who is charged with or convicted of any criminal offense.

The funds shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs for—
    (1) adult education and literacy activities;
    (2) special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
    (3) secondary school credit;
    (4) integrated education and training;
    (5) career pathways;
    (6) concurrent enrollment;
    (7) peer tutoring; and
    (8) transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible provider that receives funds provided under section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five (5) years of participation in the program.

  (c) <u>Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program.</u> Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

The Office of Adult Education will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs by offering a competitive, multi-year Request for Application process specifically for Integrated Literacy and Civics Education funds to be held in conjunction with the Adult Education competition. The purpose of this program is to assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship. English language learners who hold degrees and credentials in their native countries are eligible to access all services provided by section 243.

Funds will be awarded to eligible providers at a minimum in each of the designated local workforce areas for the delivery of IEL/Civics Education, **help eligible individuals who are English language learners:**

- achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language;
- attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and
- transition to postsecondary education and training; or employment.

The Mississippi Community College Board, OAE, will use the following process to distribute funds to approved applicants:
- not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contacts under section 231 and to carry out section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out section 225;
- shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds to carry out State leadership activities under section 223; and
- shall use not more than 5 percent of the grant funds, or $85,000, whichever is greater, for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

The Office of Adult Education will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants and will use the same applications process for all applicants. The grant competition will be publicized through a variety of print and electronic media throughout the state. Information will be shared via the MCCB Office of Communications and Public Relations in the form of a formal press release, a posting on the MCCB website, social media outlets, and other means of available communication.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

The Office of Adult Education will make funds available under section 243 for the delivery of integrated English literacy and civics education, in combination with integrated education and training activities, to adults. In the application for funds, OAE will consider whether an eligible provider has demonstrated the need for these types of services in a designated service delivery area. Data sources could include tables from the US Census Bureau, reports from the Office of Immigration Services, documentation of prior participation in these types of services, or other data.

Programs requesting funds will complete a Request for Application (RFA) that includes a budget and narrative describing the program's plans for funds; the ELL population enrolled for the previous fiscal year; and, actual or anticipated ELL population growth based on the Department of Labor statistics. Determination of funding will be based on the program's ability to meet the 13 considerations used to assess the RFA that are listed in the program specific plan.
Programs that receive IEL/Civics Education grant funds must complete an annual report that includes the number of students served with funds (both ESL and ABE/ASE) and the lessons and materials used in the following areas:

*US History and government   *Agency Partnerships and Business & Industry
*Language instruction   *Rights and Responsibilities of citizenship
*Civic participation   *Naturalization procedures
*Employability skills

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

The term "integrated English literacy and civics education" means education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States.

IEL/CE program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities through Career Pathways and opportunities provided through the MS MiBEST Model, including partnerships with business and industry and other educational institutions, and language instruction to address local needs. Partnerships provide opportunity for students to participate in employment training through accelerated opportunities, internships, and apprenticeships. IEL/CE programs can actively and specifically engage students by hosting guest speakers from and organizing field trips to local agencies and businesses as well as guiding students through language, civic, and employment education.

Eligible providers must demonstrate in their application for funds the manner in which the program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities. These activities can be provided directly or through collaboration with WIOA or other community partners.

Describe how the program is designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Eligible providers will design programs that deliver the activities under WIOA including the integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers. Eligible providers must demonstrate their ability to prepare English language learners for unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and how they will integrate the program with the local workforce development system to carry out the activities of the program.

In order to prepare and place adult ELL in employment and integrate with the local workforce, IEL/CE courses must provide content-based and integrated instruction on topics proposed by UCIS, local workforce/employer needs and requests as well as ELL needs within Mississippi. Programs are highly encouraged to involve students in activities. The topics are as follows:

English Language Instruction	*Civics Activities*
Reading	4 Pillars of Civics
Writing	Naturalization & Citizenship
Listening	Civic Participation
Speaking	US History
	Government

Workforce Training Activities

Necessary Skills: Completing Employment Applications, Interview Techniques, Computer Literacy, Workplace Culture

Employability Certificates: CRC, WAGE™

Training Programs: MiBEST, Apprenticeships, Employer requested Training

In addition to classroom instruction, programs are encouraged to involve students in activities supported by IEL/CE funds, such as field trips to civic or historic related venues; guest speakers to expand and enhance classroom instruction; and, organized visits to local workplaces. Along with explicit content-based classroom instruction, partnerships with other agencies, such as Department of Employment Security and MS Rehabilitation Services, as well as Business and Industry should aim for ELLs to obtain, retain, and/or upgrade employment. Workforce training (Necessary Skills) should be developed based on student and local employment needs. These may include, but are not limited to, soft skill development internships, apprenticeships, or employer on-site training for employment and language skills.

The state has developed a prescribed list of topics and objectives based on UCIS guidelines and suggestions for Civics Education. Employment was added to be in accordance with WIOA guidelines regarding IEL/CE. Programs that are supported with IEL/CE grant funds should cover the following topics and objectives. Programs are encouraged to add or further develop these topics and objectives.

Topic	Objective
Consumer Economics	Banking/Finance: types of accounts, budgeting, check cashing, paychecks, taxes Consumer Rights: filing complaints Housing: types of housing, lease/rent, housing assistance, tenant rights, utility providers
Community Resources	Advocacy: civic- oriented organizations, community issues Directory: career services, important places and services available in the city, county, state, and national level (library, city hall, DMV) Education: post-secondary institutions, K-12 school system, parent involvement, organizations, job work training opportunities Family: childcare, parenting, senior services, family activities and resources in the community Immigrant Resources: rights, organizations, and services Safety/Security: emergency services, personal safety, household safety, victim rights, workplace safety
Health	Emergencies: emergency services, procedures

	Healthcare: nutrition, resources, providers, cost, insurance, drugstores, pharmacies, mental illness, substance abuse, patient rights
Employment	Employment Services: career centers, DWS, requirements, certifications/licenses, WAGE™
	Workplace Skills: job applications and interviews, job training programs, , workplace culture, computer skills
	Rights: worker rights, safety
Government and Law	Citizenship Preparation: structure and role of government on local, state, and federal levels, voting laws and rights
	Enforcement: role of police, how to speak and behave when interacting with police
	Identifications: obtaining a driver's license, state identification, permanent resident card
	Laws: domestic violence laws. child abuse laws, right to a lawyer

(e) <u>State Leadership</u>. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

The Office of Adult Education will use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the following adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State. Not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out State leadership activities under section 223.

A) *The alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners, including eligible providers, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.*

The Office of Adult Education will work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to provide comprehensive and wraparound services to program participants. Adult Education will provide resources and services through One-Stop Centers (including intake/orientation for Adult Education services, and transition resources), referral processes, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships. Adult Education will be responsible for the development and implementation of the Smart Start Pathway which will include assessment and instruction in basic skills, necessary skills and career exploration.

B) *The establishment and operation of high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to required local activities, including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel, and dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs.*

The Office of Adult Education (OAE) will provide targeted professional development based upon a statewide needs assessment, research regarding best practices, and federal recommendations. The Office of Adult Education will survey local providers to ascertain areas

in which there may be a gap in knowledge or a need for improvement. From these results, the OAE will coordinate and execute broad-based training through a variety of modalities to assist program leaders and teachers in areas such as program improvement, instructional techniques, integrated education and training, college and career readiness standards, transition to postsecondary education and employment, and the infusion of technology into instruction. Professional Development may include:

- An annual operations meeting, wherein local program administrators are given an overview of changes in policy and related practices, budget management, and reporting requirements;
- An annual statewide professional development conference for a variety of adult education personnel;
- Regional institutes to address instructional needs in the areas of adult education and literacy, ELA, EL/Civics, and more; and
- Webinars/Teleconferences.

C) *The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under this title, including—*
  1. *The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training;*
  2. *The role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services; and*
  3. *Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.*

The Office of Adult Education will deliver technical assistance to eligible providers to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner. The OAE will provide professional development/technical assistance via phone, webinar, teleconference, on-site training, and seminars. Targeted technical assistance will focus on areas of national interest such as recruitment and intake, student engagement, data management and reporting, testing procedures, and transition to postsecondary education and employment. To ensure that local providers are adequately equipped to foster continuous improvement and maintain an ability to meet the needs of Mississippi's workforce, OAE will:

a. Deliver technical assistance to increase the ability of instructors to provide impactful instruction and obtain desired results in key areas—including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, and distance education. Technical assistance will incorporate techniques gleaned from contemporary research and resources related to best practices in andragogy. Topics may include integrated education and training, and college and career readiness standards.
b. Provide state and local level information regarding the role of adult education as a key component in the delivery of one-stop center services. Training will include resources to enable a local provider to establish, build upon, or maintain effective relationships with other core providers within the local area. Topics may include referral systems, data sharing/reporting, integrating education with occupational training, and transition strategies for post-secondary enrollment or employment.
c. Provide training related to the use of technology to improve classroom effectiveness and program outcomes. Training may focus on National Reporting System (NRS) processes and

the effective use of the statewide data system in order to maintain accurate student data. The OAE may also provide technical assistance to prepare instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance classroom experiences.

D) *The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.*

The Office of Adult Education will engage in statewide program monitoring procedures to maintain sufficient knowledge and oversight of local adult education providers. Oversight will include continuous data monitoring, in addition to site visits and on-site reviews. Specific attention will be given to programs with low performance. OAE will develop targeted technical assistance to meet the specific needs of the program in need of improvement.

The Office of Adult Education will employ at least four methods to monitor programs and evaluate program improvement measures:
1. Data Reviews – OAE designated regional coordinators will conduct frequent and ongoing data reviews using the designated statewide MIS. Areas of review include overall performance and outcomes, assessment data, attendance, and compliance.
2. Monitoring Visits – OAE will establish a monitoring schedule for all programs. Lower-performing programs are more likely to experience a visitation from their designated regional coordinator. While making site-visits, team members will meet with program administrators and/or staff, observe classroom instruction, tour facilities, and meet with stakeholders. Areas of concern will be addressed with the program administrator either through informal feedback or in some cases, a formal plan.
3. Mid-Year Performance and Comparison Report – OAE will provide a Mid-Year Performance and Comparison Report to each local program halfway through the fiscal year. The report will include year-to-date performance for each of the WIOA performance outcomes. Comparisons to the prior year will be given for enrollment and number of students with a post-test. Local programs are asked to develop written action plans to address areas in need of improvement.
4. Self-Assessment – Each year local program administrators complete a self-assessment of program functions and performance. The rate their program against standards of performance in a variety of categories. Self-assessment data is analyzed for commonalities across regions and the state. Deficiencies are remediated through technical assistance or professional development. The self-assessment corresponds to the areas on the On-Site Program Review.

Any time a program is asked to correct or improve in a particular area, OAE personnel will provide technical assistance, professional development, and other support until it is no longer needed.

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

The Office of Adult Education reserves the right to use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the permissible State leadership activities outlined in section 223 (such as the

support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers; the development and implementation of technology applications; or the development and dissemination of curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction). Not more than 12.5% of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out these adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State.

(j) <u>Assessing Quality</u>. Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

Local eligible providers are responsible to meet all programmatic goals and outcomes that are required in their approved RFA. Performance outcomes for each provider will meet or exceed the levels of performance for each of the established National Reporting System benchmarks. OAE will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities through data reviews, monitoring visits and performance reports. If a program fails to meet performance goals or other programmatic requirements, specific actions will be taken to improve the quality of the program. OAE uses two plans to take action to improve the quality of the adult education and literacy activities.

1. Corrective Action Plan (CAP) - A CAP will be implemented with programs that are out of compliance with state and/or federal policies. OAE will provide technical assistance throughout the corrective process, and by the end of a designated timeframe, programs should be able to correct the identified issues and end their respective CAP.
2. Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) - A PIP will be required for programs which are identified as low-performing when compared to the state performance on federal or state benchmarks. The PIP will include specific action steps, such as student retention, post-testing and assessment, data analysis, training and professional development which will be designed to improve program performance.

As a part of both plans, OAE will provide ongoing technical assistance, professional development, and other support until the required steps of the plans are completed. The type of technical assistance, professional development, and other support will be based upon the specific area(s) of deficiency or need at an individual program.

Evaluating Professional Development
In order to promote continuous improvement of professional development activities and the impact on student learning outcomes, OAE will include ongoing and systematic needs assessment and evaluation processes to not only provide information about the impact of professional development, but to provide data for refining and adjusting professional development activities.

1. Participant evaluations/surveys will be collected for all professional development activities. These evaluations will reflect the response of participants to the objectives, material, presentation and the trainer providers.
2. Evaluations/surveys will be aggregated and evaluated to determine quality of training and adjustments will be made according to the results. These results will be analyzed for areas in need of improvement and changes will be made accordingly.

To support local programs and instructors, a cadre of Program Mentors/Lead Instructors will provide ongoing classroom observation, feedback and support to ensure that the objectives of professional development are being effectively implemented in the classroom. Data from the adult education management system will be utilized to evaluate and determine if the professional development activities impact student learning outcomes.

The Office of Adult Education is utilizing the model *5 Levels of Professional Development Evaluation* to collect and analyze data to assist in the process of evaluating the impact of training.

5 Levels of Professional Development Evaluation
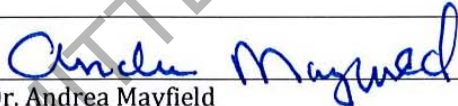
Evaluation Level	What Questions Addressed?	How Information is gathered?	What is Measured or Assessed?	How will Information be Used?
Participants' Response	Did they like it? Was their time well spent? Did the material make sense? Will it be useful? Was the leader knowledgeable and helpful?	Questionnaires/surveys at the end of each training.	Initial satisfaction with the experience.	To improve program design and delivery.
Participants' Learning	Did participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills?	Paper/pencil instruments Simulations Demonstrations Participant reflections Participant Portfolios	New knowledge and skills of participants.	To improve program content, format, and organization.
Organizational Support and Change	Was implantation advocated, facilitated and supported? Was the support public and overt? Were problems addressed quickly and efficiently? Were sufficient resources made available? Were successes recognized and shared? What was the impact on the organization? Did it affect the organization's climate and procedures?	Local program records Questionnaires Interviews with participants, instructors and administrators Participant portfolios	Organization's advocacy, support, accommodation, facilitation and recognition.	To Document and improve organization support. To inform future change efforts.
Participants' Use of Knowledge and Skills	Did participants effectively apply the new knowledge and skills?	Questionnaires Interviews, observations and feedback with mentors/lead teachers. Participant reflections (oral and/or written) Participant portfolios	Degree and quality of implementation.	To document and improve implementation of program content.

		Direct observations Video or audio tapes		
Student Learning Outcomes	What was the impact on the student? Did it affect student performance or achievement? Did it influence students' physical or emotional well-being? Are students more confident learners? Is student attendance improving? Are retention rates improving?	Measurable gains Evaluations/Surveys Interviews with students, instructors, and/or administrators Participant portfolios	Student learning outcomes: Cognitive (performance and achievement) Affective (attitudes and dispositions) Psychomotor (skills and behaviors)	To focus and improve all aspects of program design, implementation and follow-up. To demonstrate the overall impact of professional development.

Certifications and Assurances

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

	States must provide written and signed certifications that:
1.	The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;
2.	The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;
3.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;
4.	All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;
5.	A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;
6.	The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;
7.	The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and
8.	The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;
	The State Plan must include assurances that:
1.	The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions);
2.	The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;

3.	The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	
4.	The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities;	
5.	The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and	
6.	Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	

I do hereby certify that all statements made by me are true and correct, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, further, I understand that in the event that I have knowingly and willfully made any false statements, I will be liable for punishment in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and statues.

Signature	_Andrea Mayfield_ (signature)
Printed Name	Dr. Andrea Mayfield
Title of Signatory	Executive Director, Mississippi Community College Board
Date Signed	2-26-16

ASSURANCES - NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0040), Washington, DC 20503

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED BY THE SPONSORING AGENCY.

Note: Certain of these assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have questions, please contact the awarding agency. Further, certain Federal awarding agencies may require applicants to certify to additional assurances. If such is the case, you will be notified.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant I certify that the applicant:

1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance, and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management, and completion of the project described in this application.

2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States, and if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.

3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain.

4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency.

5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. §§4728-4763) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the 19 statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 C.F.R. 900, Subpart F).

6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. §§1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. §794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d)

the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) §§ 523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. §§ 290 dd-3 and 290 ee 3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. § 3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (i) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and (j) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.

7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases.

8. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§1501-1508 and 7324-7328) which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.

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9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. ᴣᴣ276a to 276a-7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. ᴣ276c and 18 U.S.C. ᴣᴣ874) and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. ᴣᴣ 327-333), regarding labor standards for federally assisted construction subagreements.

10. Will comply, if applicable, with flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is $10,000 or more.

11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. ᴣᴣ1451 et seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clear Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clear Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. ᴣᴣ7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended, (P.L. 93-523); and (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, (P.L. 93-205).

12. Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. ᴣᴣ1721 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.

13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. ᴣ470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. ᴣᴣ469a-1 et seq.).

14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.

15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. ᴣᴣ2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.

16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. ᴣᴣ4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.

17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, AAudits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.≡

18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations and policies governing this program.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL	TITLE Executive Director
APPLICANT ORGANIZATION Mississippi Community College Board	DATE SUBMITTED 1-21-16

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CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

* APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Community College Board

* PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

Prefix: Dr. * First Name: Andrea Middle Name:

* Last Name: Mayfield Suffix:

* Title: Executive Director

* SIGNATURE: *[signature]* * DATE: 1-21-16

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

Section A –Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

(1)   Input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

(2)   The Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

(3)   The designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

On August 7, 2015, a public hearing was held to address the VR Services Portion of the Mississippi Combined State Plan and explain to stakeholders the process the State is following to comply with the requirements of reauthorization and WIOA.

The Chairperson for the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provided the following comments:

- Recognized MDRS for holding the public hearing and explaining the fact that last year's plan will be utilized in FFY 2016 to the stakeholders across the state.
- Stated that the changes with WIOA and the Unified State Plan may still be confusing to some stakeholders.
- The manner that the VR State Plan remains on the MDRS website and was available in other formats at the State Office are also commendable.
- The manner that this public forum was carried out, holding many locations across the state with call-in capability, is a good format.
- Stated she was concerned when the public hearings for the Unified State Plan were announced because the dates were few without a great deal of notice. Plus the location was set with no teleconference capability.
- She asked that MDRS, in its participation in the Unified Plan, communicate to the partners that people with disabilities or other stakeholders won't always be able to make meetings such as those arranged this year and need to have advance notice, multiple locations across the state, and teleconference capabilities for best accessibility to all stakeholders.

SRC comments and/or recommendations for input into the MDRS service delivery system for VR and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (VRB):

- Statistics indicate that the service delivery system is successful.
- Based on employment outcomes and consumer satisfaction surveys, service delivery practices are working.
- I like the automatic e-mail (if client has Internet access) sent out to follow up with client to make sure they understand everything that was talked about. If client doesn't have Internet, please have counselor put in notes to call client back and set time   that is best for both.
- Consider the customer follow-up and Satisfaction Survey after each session.

- I think that a great deal of consideration is being given to evolving toward a more diverse scope of service delivery. That is great.
- We should keep trying to improve and examine what our consumers need.

SRC comments and/or recommendations concerning the results of consumer satisfaction surveys:

- Consumer satisfaction is very high as indicated by the external evaluator indicating that consumers' needs are being met by services.
- I strongly suggest that a client satisfaction survey should be taken at the point of entry into the service delivery process to determine what the client is expecting to receive from the service.
- Midway through the service delivery process, a progress survey should be taken to determine whether the client is on track with their expectations.
- At the end of the service delivery, a client survey should be taken. This process will give the program staff a better overview of program processes and program satisfaction.
- If there are certain types of services that you want to evaluate, ask these specific questions…for example, "Did AbilityWorks help you learn good work behaviors?"
- Consumer satisfaction is high. We should continue to listen to consumers' input.
- Attempt to determine which factors affect the lower (but still satisfactory) rates for service providers and employment benefits.

SRC comments and/or recommendations for input in terms of potential service providers or discussions on the performance of service providers currently being used by OVR/OVRB:

- Consumers are reporting a high level of satisfaction with service providers.
- Based on what appears in the client satisfaction survey, a review of service providers'
- Performance should be reported on a quarterly basis for input into the service delivery process.
- Try to utilize local small businesses in the communities. They may become employers for clients.
- Utilizing service providers with specialty areas is important.
- A question might be added relative to service providers on the client satisfaction questionnaire. Or leave off the "such as" and let clients list who they used to find out which agencies cause the lower ratings.
- We should continue to do outreach to find the best service providers in each area.

Do you have any comments or recommendations concerning the VR Policy, State Plan Development, and SRC Business?

- Very encouraging to see direct examples (i.e. MS chosen as one of four states to participate in the effective VR service delivery practices) of the impact this has had, is having and will continue to have for those in the State in need of the support! It is great to look at the Nation's history of identifying gaps and citizens in need and the progression of assessing these needs and then to fast forward to now and see that Mississippi is a benchmark of Best Practices of Support.
- The changes in the State Plan seem necessary and positive for the agency.
- The ODHH is very useful and necessary – It is impressive that nearly one-fourth of the closures come from the Deaf Program.

MDRS Response to the Comments

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended, empowers individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, inclusion and integration into society. Ensuring consumer satisfaction with VR services is one method of implementing both the spirit and letter of the Act.

VR and VRB continually strive to improve our relationship with consumers and their overall satisfaction with VR services. As suggested, a great deal of consideration is being given to consumer satisfaction surveys being completed while the consumer is receiving VR services. It is believed that this will give us the opportunity to increase consumer engagement and provide for more efficiency in the VR process. Asking the consumer for feedback while they are in the process of receiving services will increase our contact with the consumer and bring focus on how we facilitate that communication.

Our current consumer satisfaction survey indicates that a high percentage of our consumers are satisfied with VR services. By considering additional ways to assess consumer satisfaction, we will be able to continue providing evidence that VR/VRB is providing appropriate services and consumer needs are being met.

VR/VRB maintains high standards for the service providers who work with our consumers. We will continue to, and must give full consideration to, any service available that can provide for the needs of our consumers. VR/VRB continues to collaborate and have memoranda of understanding with various organizations interested in the competitive employment of individuals with disabilities. We will keep enhancing our business relationships with employers in our local communities with the goal of increasing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Section B – Request for Waiver of Statewideness

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

(1) *a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;*
(2) *the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and*
(3) *requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.*

Does not apply. MDRS has not requested a waiver of statewideness for any VR service.

Section C –Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the State Workforce System

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

(1)	*Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;*
(2)	*State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;*
(3)	*Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;*

(4) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and
(5) State use contracting programs

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) collaborates and coordinates services with federal, state and local employment and agencies that contribute to the vocational rehabilitation (VR) of Mississippians with disabilities.

MDRS has agreements with:

- MDE for the coordination of transition services and local school districts to carry out transition and youth career services plus implement a Transition Specialist in participating local school districts;
- Hinds Community College for the Deaf Services Program;
- Division of Medicaid to provide seamless, non-duplicated services to individuals who are eligible for both Medicaid and VR services and for maximum utilization of resources between the two agencies;
- Department of Mental Health (DMH) Planning and Advisory Council as federally mandated for advice and support;
- DMH to cover the costs for therapeutic medical services offered at secondary alcohol and drug treatment centers that have been approved by DMH;
- Department of Mental Health -Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to continue enhancing, expanding, and developing methods to support eligible persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities who express a desire for competitive integrated employment; establish a state-level work group to address system, policy and funding issues that impede the continuous provision of employment services by MDRS and DMH; engage MDRS staff and DMH providers and stakeholders at the local level in collaboration and cooperation in the accomplishment of the vision and desired outcomes; identify and disseminate best practices including training and funding strategies; and, provide individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities with quality employment services that lead to competitive integrated employment in a non-duplicated and seamless manner;
- Department of Human Services (DHS)-Division of Family and Children Services to assess foster care participants who are diagnosed as having physical and/or mental disabilities;
- DHS-Division of Field Operations to assist TANF recipients who are diagnosed with physical and/or mental disabilities;
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians for interagency referrals for vocational rehabilitation services, including transition planning, to Choctaw Indians;
- U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs to improve work opportunities for veterans with disabilities and coordinate a referral and service delivery process;
- Warren-Yazoo Mental Health Service-Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) to facilitate the most effective and efficient process to assist PACT recipients gain access to vocational rehabilitation services;
- Department of Transportation to coordinate transportation and related program resources and services at the state level wherever possible and promote maximum feasible coordination at the local level;
- Division of Medicaid, DHS, DMH, Department of Education, Department of Health, and MS Families as Allies in accordance with Sections 43-14-1, 43-14-3, and 43-14-5 of the Mississippi Code of 1972 annotated, (as amended), which establishes an Interagency Coordinating Council for Children and Youth (ICCCY) to implement a planning process for each child service agency to utilize Federal and State funds to coordinate services for children defined as eligible for services which are to be coordinated under this act;

- IDS to operate Project SEARCH for students with developmental disabilities, and to foster and facilitate the acquisition of jobs by people with disabilities; and,
- Mississippi State University, T.K. Martin Center to provide for evaluations pertaining to assistive technology, primarily related to seating, positioning and mobility; adaptive driving, including bioptic driving; vehicle modification, and, augmentative and alternative communication.

Assistive Technology
MDRS administers Mississippi Project START (Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology), the state program carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, for education awareness and access to Assistive Technology.

Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture
MDRS has developed a relationship with the local office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to gather information, build relationships, and develop cooperative efforts to provide services to Mississippians with a disability.

Out-of-school youth
Some of the non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth participate in Mississippi's statewide workforce system. Coordination between these agencies and MDRS is handled through the State's workforce development network.

Section D   Coordination with Education Officials
Describe:

(1)   *The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.*

(2)   *Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:*

(A)   *consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;*

(B)   *transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;*

(C)   *roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;*

(D)   *procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.*

One of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services major goals is to emphasize the employment potential if students with disabilities and to improve the outreach and outcomes for students and youth with disabilities. To accomplish this goal, MDRS will continue to work with local school officials to implement Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) and to facilitate a smooth transition from education to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and employment. This approach provides a continuum of services directed toward additional post-secondary education or direct entry into the workforce.

VRB works closely with the education system through the VR Transition and Youth Career Services Program. There are approximately 20 VRB Counselors throughout the state who work in preparing students with vision loss for entry into the world of work. They serve as informational resources for teachers and other educational staff as well as provide resources and information about blindness for parents and transitioning youth throughout development of the youth's individualized plan for employment (IPE). VRB Counselors work closely with parents, education staff, and community service providers to promote development of skills needed for students to become as independent as possible and competitive in terms of employment. In addition to training parents and students about the special education rights and responsibilities, VRB provides educational support by working with the VR Transition Team, school officials, and families to develop and implement the IPE. Goals developed in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) are included in the IPE to facilitate successful completion of those goals. The IPE is completed during the transition process so it is in place before students exit secondary education. Services prepare students to be confident and competent to maximize their potential to achieve success.

VR works closely with the education system throughout the state. There between 50 to 60 VR Counselors throughout the state who work in preparing students with disabilities for entry into the world of work. The goal is to help the youth and students with disabilities achieve a seamless transition from high school into the world of work, community, vocational or post-secondary education, and/or other planned outcomes. MDRS administers the VR Transition and Youth Career Services Program as specified in Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

District level VR offices and local education districts work together in maintaining local agreements between each VR district office and the local school districts as to how to carry out transition services. There are nearly 150 of these agreements with various school districts resulting in services to about 440 schools. These agreements are shared with other state agencies, family members, and consumer groups to ensure the seamless transition of services for students. The agreements do not include any specified financial agreement other than the implied cost for serving youth and students with disabilities.

Policies and procedure to facilitate the transition of students from school to receipt of VR services

Restructuring of the VR Transition and Youth Career Services Program has resulted in additional VR Counselors carrying transition and youth cases, which provides for more individualized services to each student in school. VR Counselors work with the students, parents, and school personnel as well as attend (IEP) meetings to help identify students that may be able to benefit from transition and youth career services. Prior to planning services, the VR Counselor uses school documentation, health records, and other pertinent information as deemed appropriate for determination of eligibility for the program. The VR Counselor may then collaborate with the student, family members, school district personnel, and others to provide pre-employment transition services (PETS). PETS are five required activities that must be provided for students between the ages of 16 to 21 years old. PETS include the following: a) job exploration counseling; b) work–based learning experiences; c) counseling on enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs; d) workplace readiness training; and, e) instruction in self-advocacy. PETS should be planned on an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) prior to implementation while the student is in school. Transition planning between MDRS and MDE ultimately helps with the successful development and implementation of both the IEP and the IPE.

Transition and youth career services include, but are not limited to, job search skills, work evaluation, development of an IPE, basic money management, social skills, and job readiness

training along with continuous counseling and guidance. These services may be performed solely by the VR Counselor, in collaboration with other service providers, or in coordination with an education teaching professional.

The VR Counselor also works together with the classroom teacher implementing PETS services. The VR Counselor is prepared to teach the PETS curriculum in conjunction with providing the classroom teacher with information, technical assistance, and/or curriculum materials as needed. The VR Counselor supervises the student in this program, documents the student's progress, and shares information with the classroom teacher on a regular basis.

MDRS continues to emphasize best practices in providing services to youth and students with disabilities in order to provide a seamless transition to subsequent work or other environments. This emphasis on best practices, in part, is achieved by continuous training of staff working with youth and students with disabilities.

MDRS assures that, with respect to students with disabilities, the state has developed and will implement strategies to address the needs identified in the FFY 2015 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs; strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the state to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and, has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services.

Formal interagency agreement with MDRS and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE)

In providing transition and youth career services, MDRS maintains a formal Interagency Agreement with MDE. This agreement addresses the following:

a. consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided by alternate meeting participation such as webinars and conference calls, to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of youth and students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation (VR) services;

b. transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;

c. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining lead state agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and

d. procedures for outreach to and identification of youth and students with disabilities who need transition services.

Section E - Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations
Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR services providers.

MDRS develops a formal fee for service contract with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers. The contract contains all necessary clauses and each contract is approved by the state's Assistant Attorney General assigned to MDRS. The contracts are executed by the MDRS Executive Director and the principal of the private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service provider.

MDRS has the following contracts (agreements) with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers:

1. Goodwill Industries of South Mississippi - an agreement to provide work evaluation and job readiness training.

2. Goodwill Industries of Jackson - an agreement to provide work evaluation and job readiness training.

3. Mississippi Industries for the Blind (MIB) - a summer program to provide clients with job seeking skills, assistance in preparation of job applications, provision of work experience/work adjustment training, and evaluation (with assistance of MDRS Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind staff) of client skill levels to identify marketable skills and potential outplacement.

4. TEAAM – an agreement to provide evaluation and staff consultation for clients with autism, intellectual or developmental disabilities, cognitive impairments, and/or mental illness.

MDRS has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities upon determination that such for-profit organization is better qualified to provide such rehabilitation services than non-profit agencies and organizations. However, MDRS does not currently have any such contracts in place with for-profit organizations.

Section F. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

MDRS administers the Supported Employment (SE) Program as specified in Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act and amended in WIOA. MDRS works extensively with other state agencies, private non-profit entities, employers, family members, and consumer groups to ensure quality SE services are provided to all eligible individuals throughout all phases of the SE service delivery system.

MDRS has entered into formal cooperative agreements with the Mississippi Division of Medicaid (Medicaid) and DMH, with respect to delivery of VR services, including extended services, for individuals with the most significant disabilities eligible for home and community-based services. MDRS also has in place with the Mississippi Partnership for Employment a Memorandum of Understanding that includes the following partners: 1) the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council), 2) IDS, 3) Disability Rights of Mississippi, 4) MDE, 5) DMH, 6) Mississippi Department of Employment Security (the administering authority for the state's workforce development system), and 7) two self-advocates. The partnership's intent is to build capacity across existing state systems to improve outcomes for youth and young adults with developmental disabilities including intellectual disabilities seeking competitive employment in integrated settings.

In addition to these formal documents, MDRS collaborates on a more informal basis with public and private entities to ensure a comprehensive program of services is provided to SE eligible individuals. Collaborative partners include local mental health facilities, Medicaid's Bridge to Independence Program to help people move from qualified institutions to homes in the community, local school districts, businesses and industries, local projects funded by the DD Council, workforce development one-stop career centers, advocacy groups, and other relevant third parties as well as parents of SE eligible individuals.

The collaboration with DMH has resulted in a formalized referral process between the two agencies to ensure an array of services is provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, opening up many new options for them. The MDRS SE Program Coordinator receives the referral from the DMH Mental Health Support Coordinator. After review, the SE Program Coordinator then forwards the referral to the SE Counselor in the appropriate MDRS district office for determination of VR services.

A large portion of the SE Counselor's job duties involves liaison activities among SE clients, family members, employers, and other service providers. SE staff members regularly attend joint staffings and Person Centered Planning meetings with third party service providers to ensure that SE services are provided to clients in a consistent, appropriate, continual, and ongoing nature from the time of the initial referral to supported employment into the extended support phase. These staffings often include family members and employers as well as service providers. Person Centered Planning and the development of natural supports for individual clients are an integral part of the SE staff members' activities.

Upon completion of the time-limited supported employment services, the ongoing job skills training assistance and other necessary long-term support is transitioned to a third party, group, or individual through a Cooperative Agreement or Extended Services Support Plan Agreement. The primary provider of extended services is the DMH-Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through its network of local community service programs. However, an increasing number of individuals and other community organizations are accepting this role. Employers are often willing to take on this responsibility and are encouraged to do so since it is the most natural arrangement for the client.

MDRS entered into 109 new Extended Service Support Plan Agreements from October 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015. These 109 new agreements are in addition to the agreements previously established and still ongoing.

WIOA increased the maximum amount of time for SE staff to provide time-limited supported employment services to 24 months. However, the rate of transitioning a client to extended services is dependent upon the needs of the individual, his/her family, the employer, the third party agency, and other involved individuals. Since SE staff members and the extended service provider will have been collaborating in the provision of SE services throughout an individual's vocational rehabilitation program, such transitions are normally smooth and do not cause job disruptions.

The Coordinator for the SE Program and the Coordinator for Transition and Youth Career Services will work together to ensure new policy is in place and the appropriate amount of funding is utilized for youth with the most significant disabilities.

Section G - Coordination with Employers

Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR Services; and
2. *Transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.*

With passage of WIOA, a greater emphasis is placed on the state's workforce development system to develop strategies to meet the employment needs of employers. WIOA specifically directs the VR program to work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment opportunities and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services, and transition services for youth with disabilities such as pre-employment transition services. MDRS will handle this coordination with employers through its Business Relations Services as well as the Addie McBryde Center for the Blind and AbilityWorks, Inc., which are both community rehabilitation programs.

Business Relations Services (BRS) was established to recruit employers interested in hiring people with disabilities, promote job ready clients of both the VR Program and the VRB Program to employers, and provide a variety of services to employers. BRS staff, referred to as Recruiters, builds employer relationships and develops career opportunities for individuals seeking competitive integrated employment. Recruiters are the point of contact to businesses for any assistance and support needed to hire and maintain employment. The main services provided by the Recruiters include the following:

- Train employers regarding employment of individuals with disabilities, disability awareness, requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act, work incentives, and laws related to employment opportunities;
- Provide consultation, technical assistance, and support to employers on workplace accommodations and assistive technology;
- Provide resources and support through collaboration with community partners and employers; and,
- Provide employer recruitment services, job matching, hiring, and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities.

MDRS also works with employers to help youth with disabilities and students with disabilities have more opportunities, explore career interests, acquire workplace skills, and enter into competitive integrated employment. Therefore, the Recruiters additionally provide the following services to employers related to youth:

- Coordinate work-based learning experiences, short-term employment, apprenticeships, and internships to individuals with disabilities;
- Participate on advisory committees to increase competitive integrated employment for individual with disabilities, including youth and student involvement; and,
- Provide vocational counseling, career exploration, and work-based learning to students and youth seeking competitive integrated employment.
- Provide Disability Sensitivity Training

The Addie McBryde Center for the Blind is the state comprehensive center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This center is a place where people who are blind can reside temporarily while they learn to lead productive, self-sufficient lives. The program incorporates instruction in a variety of independence skills as well as case management including home management, cooking, orientation and mobility, Braille, access to computer technology, college preparation, job readiness, adaptation to blindness and many other skills that contribute to independence and the confidence to seek the highest level of employment possible. The center provides PETS in conjunction with the independent skills classes on a daily basis. The Summer Internship Program is hosted by the Addie McBryde Center that connects clients with their first real world work experience.

AbilityWorks (AW) enables VR program staff and employers to work together to identify career exploration opportunities and competitive integrated employment opportunities for clients. Both activities are conducted mainly through AW's Linking Innovative Networks of Community Services (LINCS), a program that connects client abilities with employer opportunities.

AW considers career exploration as a comprehensive process that systematically utilizes work, either real or simulated, as the focal point for evaluation and vocational exploration, the purpose of which is to assist an individual with vocational development. When a client has an interest in a career but AW cannot provide the client with similar tasks or experiences related to that career, then the AW staff establishes a LINCS opportunity for the client in the community. The client gains exposure to and experience in the type of career in which he/she is interested, thereby either helping the client realize the career is not the right choice or reaffirming the client's interest in the career. The LINCS opportunity may additionally help the client and the VR Counselor understand what additional training is required as well as the skills and/or abilities that must be acquired to be successful in the selected career.

Section H. Interagency Cooperation
Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1) *The State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;*
2) *The State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and*
3) *The State agency responsible for providing mental health services.*

MDRS has entered into formal cooperative agreements with the Mississippi Division of Medicaid (Medicaid) and DMH-Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, with respect to delivery of VR services, including extended services, for individuals with the most significant disabilities eligible for home and community-based services. The collaboration with DMH has resulted in a formalized referral process between the two agencies to ensure an array of services is provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, opening up many new options for them.

In addition to the formal agreements with Medicaid and DMH, MDRS collaborates on a more informal basis with public and private entities to ensure a comprehensive program of services is provided to individuals eligible for supported employment services. Collaborative partners include local mental health facilities, Medicaid's Bridge to Independence Program to help people move from qualified institutions to homes in the community, local school districts, businesses and industries, local projects funded by the Mississippi Council on Development Disabilities (DD Council), workforce development one-stop career centers, advocacy groups, and other relevant third parties as well as parents of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

MDRS also has in place with the Mississippi Partnership for Employment a Memorandum of Understanding that includes the following partners: 1) DD Council, 2) The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies, 3) Disability Rights of Mississippi, 4) Mississippi Department of Education, 5) DMH, 6) Mississippi Department of Employment Security (the administering authority for the state's workforce development system), and 7) two self-advocates. The partnership's intent is to build capacity across existing state systems to improve outcomes for youth and young adults with developmental disabilities including intellectual disabilities seeking competitive employment in integrated settings.

<u>Section I. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development: Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development.</u>

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1) *Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development*
   a. *Qualified Personnel Needs. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:*
      i. *the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;*
      ii. *the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and*
      iii. *projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.*
   b. *Personnel Development. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:*
      i. *a list of institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;*
      ii. *the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and*
      iii. *the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category of which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.*

Qualified staff are an essential asset to the agency's ability to achieve its mission. Therefore, MDRS has established a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development to assure that staff are well-qualified, take part in ongoing training to maintain expertise in the field of vocational rehabilitation (VR), and are accountable through performance-based evaluations.

The projected ratio is 128 counselors, 69 counselor assistants, 6 interpreters, 5 psychometrists, 31 evaluators, 47 work adjustment instructors, and 20 instructors at the center for the blind to 20,707 applicants and eligible individuals served.

Job Title	Total Positions	Current Vacancies	Projected Vacancies over the next 5 years
Counselor	128	46	37
Counselor Assistant	69	17	16
Interpreters	6	2	3
Psychometrists	5	0	1
Evaluators	31	2	7
Work Adjustment Instructors	47	8	16
Instructors at the Center for the Blind	20	0	5

The projected requirements to meet the staffing needs of MDRS customers for the next five years are 180 counselors and a 25% increase in counselor assistants. An added increase of two staff interpreters and one staff psychometrist will be needed to insure quality services are provided in a timely manner.

An annual survey of the state's two university graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling determine the number of students enrolled, projected graduation dates, and the total number expected to complete the requirements for national certification in rehabilitation counseling. These two graduate programs accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE), one at Mississippi State University and the other at Jackson State University (a Historically Black College or University), are the only graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling in Mississippi. Jackson State currently has 75 students enrolled in its program and 11 students earned a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling during the calendar year 2014. Mississippi State currently has 17 students enrolled in its Master's Program in Rehabilitation Counseling and 8 students earned a Master's Degree in this program in 2014.

Institutions	Students Enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
Jackson State University	75	3	11	11
Mississippi State University	17	0		8

2) *Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel. Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare,*

and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

The VR Services Portion of the Combined State Plan continues to address the need to recruit and retain qualified staff, including those staff with minority backgrounds and individuals with disabilities. Since 1997 MDRS has had policy in place requiring managers seeking to hire new counselors to hire only those individuals who meet the qualifications for Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). Recognizing that there may be some locations in the state where qualified personnel would not be available, MDRS has not officially changed its required minimal education standard for counselors. If a manager determines that there is not a qualified rehabilitation professional available to fill a vacancy, the vacancy may be filled by an individual with lesser qualifications if the decision is approved by the VR Director or the VRB Director and the individual agrees in writing to participate in an approved Master's Degree Program as soon as available through MDRS.

MDRS works closely with the graduate program in rehabilitation counseling at both Mississippi State University and Jackson State University by establishing placement opportunities for intern and practicum students and actively participating in university career development activities, including participation in Career Days and Job Fairs. Representatives from MDRS meet with the graduate students from each program annually to explain career opportunities and the state employment application process. A VR Coordinator also serves on each program's Advisory Council. Working with Jackson State University provides significant opportunities for recruitment of minorities, and MDRS works closely with university support services on both campuses to recruit graduates with disabilities.

3) *Personnel Standards. Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B)and to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:*
   a. *standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and*
   b. *the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.*

MDRS continues to utilize the previous national certification standard of requiring, at a minimum, (1) a Master's Degree Program in Rehabilitation Counseling or (2) a Master's Degree in Counseling with a graduate course in the Theories and Techniques of Counseling and supervised work experience in the field of rehabilitation, which would enable an individual to be eligible to sit for the CRC exam. Currently, Mississippi has no registration or licensure requirements for Rehabilitation Counselors or Vocational Evaluators.

Applicants for counselor and vocational evaluator positions at MDRS who do not meet the requirements of a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) must meet the Mississippi State Personnel Board's minimum qualification for a DRS Counselor II or DRS Evaluator II. This minimum qualification is a Master's Degree from an accredited four-year college or university in Rehabilitation Counseling or a related field; or, a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited four-year college or university in Rehabilitation Counseling or a related field and one year of related experience. Before applicants who do not meet the CSPD requirements are hired, they are required to sign a contract stating that they will enroll in a Master's Degree Program within

one year, unless approved otherwise. MDRS counselors who need a Master's Degree to meet the requirements of the law and regulations are required to sign a contract specifying that they will complete this program in a three-year period from the inception of coursework. Exceptions in terms of the three-year time frame are only granted due to disability-related issues and are only provided with the approval of the Office Director, either for VR or VRB.

Long-term strategies for the retraining of any vocational rehabilitation counselor or vocational evaluator who is not a qualified rehabilitation professional and not currently in a program are to utilize accessible Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) CSPD funded stipend programs to the extent possible. Those not funded under a stipend program as funded by RSA CSPD will be sponsored by MDRS at available distance education or web-based Masters Programs in Rehabilitation Counseling such as those available through Auburn University, the University of Kentucky, the University of Wisconsin, Southern University, and the Georgia State University Consortium.   Employees who live within commuting distance of Jackson State University and Mississippi State University can access these universities' campus-based programs.

Employees sponsored by the agency in graduate training are eligible for reimbursement of tuition, book costs, and approved educational leave. State statute requires that the employee enter a contractual agreement with MDRS for service repayment. MDRS requires three years of continued employment in return for expense reimbursement and educational leave. Additionally, MDRS has created a job classification for rehabilitation counselors which require certification as a professional rehabilitation counselor plus two years of rehabilitation counseling experience. Promotion to this highest of four counselor salary levels provides an additional incentive for personnel to obtain a Master's Degree and to attain certification. Upon attainment of the Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or certification in rehabilitation counseling, the employee may also be eligible for an educational salary benchmark of five percent.

The current salary for vocational rehabilitation counselors in Mississippi remains below that of other southeastern states, but is now more competitive with other public and private agencies recruiting individuals with the required Master's Degree. In State Fiscal Year 1999 MDRS was successful in its efforts to gain approval by the Mississippi State Legislature and the Mississippi State Personnel Board to raise the entry-level salary for counselors and evaluators in order to successfully attract qualified personnel. In January 2003, July 2006, and again in July 2007 the salaries of vocational rehabilitation counselors and vocational evaluators were also realigned. Following a survey of the southeastern average, the salaries remain lower than that of neighboring states.

MDRS has established educational requirements of a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling with a continuing education component to address these issues.

4) *Staff Development. Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:*
    a. *a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and*
    b. *procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.*

MDRS has developed an ongoing training plan which provides training opportunities for all VR staff and appropriate VR support staff. The training is designed to meet the personal and career development needs of VR personnel, thus increasing retention among qualified personnel. The ongoing training plan for the VR Program includes four categories as provided below.

Annual Core Curriculum Training Series. New employee training begins with a program of orientation and basic training (Core Curriculum) for professional staff that includes the following:
1. History of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Foundations of Rehabilitation and the Law
2. Assistive Technology
3. Medical and Psychological Aspects of Disabilities
4. Job-Specific Automated Accessible Case Environment (AACE) Computer Training

New VR Counselor Training. New VR counselors also complete a structured and timely training at the local level. This training provides new staff task-specific training to promote quality service delivery to all VR consumers and promotes the timely performance of the counselor job duties. The training is completed in modules and includes instruction and hands-on training in overall case management. This training, with an accompanying training manual, is designed for counselors to use as a guide in making decisions and delivering quality VR services to consumers.

Annual Ongoing Staff Development Training Sessions. Ongoing staff development training can include a variety of topics but, generally, include the following:
1. Disability-Specific Topics
2. Case Management
3. Eligibility
4. Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) Development
5. Various Types of Caseloads including Supported Employment and Transition
6. Issues Regarding Work with Minority Populations, including Cultural Diversity
7. Other Areas Identified during Case Reviews conducted by MDRS Program Evaluation Staff

Additional Training Based on Need. Training sessions are held at the district level and in formal statewide training as needed.

In order to address the increasing percentage of retirement age employees and the need for knowledgeable managers and supervisors, the MDRS Executive Team established a formal leadership development program. This program, known as Leadership, Education, and Development for Rehabilitation Services (LEADRS), addresses the future loss of institutional memory and the transfer of accumulated wisdom through its development of employee management skills and technical competencies. LEADRS' mission is, "To educate, develop, and empower current and future leaders of MDRS to sustain and enhance the Department's holistic approach in meeting the needs of Mississippians with disabilities."

MDRS also promotes capacity building and leadership development through supervisory staff's participation in a Basic Supervisory Course and the Certified Public Manager Program available through the Mississippi State Personnel Board, and In-service Supervisor Training available through MDRS. In addition, staff members have participated in the National Executive Leadership Program at the University of Oklahoma; the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute at San Diego State University; the Community Rehabilitation Program Leadership Development Program and the Institute for New Supervisors through Georgia State University; the John C. Stennis State Executive Development Institute at Mississippi State University; and, the South Central Public Health Leadership Institute at the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

The staff development plan is based upon the assessed needs of the staff. The Performance Development System (PDS) was developed by the Mississippi State Personnel Board in November 2010 to replace the previous Performance Appraisal System and is applicable to all state service employees.

Also incorporated into the employee evaluation process is the employee's Individual Development Plan (IDP), which serves as an employee training needs assessment. IDPs are developed by the employee and evaluated by the supervisor to assure that the employee receives work-related training and training in other areas that the employee and supervisor agree will benefit the employee in the performance of his or her job.

The system of employee performance evaluation does not impede the accomplishment of specific mandates contained in Title I of the Rehabilitation Act. The system facilitates accomplishment by means of including in performance standards the responsibilities of MDRS and its employees under the Rehabilitation Act.

Information from case reviews conducted by the MDRS Program Evaluation Unit is analyzed to evaluate the knowledge and skill of employees as they relate to the policy of serving individuals with the most severe disabilities. Results of such evaluations are included in the development of objectives for the annual VR training plan. Information from annual client surveys is also used in determining training objectives and is incorporated into the VR training plan.

Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources
MDRS continues to identify current information from research, rehabilitation trends and professional resources. This information is provided to agency staff through a variety of methods, including training at the state, regional, and district levels. Most recently this training has been focused on Autism and customized employment. Additionally, this information is posted and available to staff on MDRS Connect, the agency intranet.

5) *Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs. Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.*

The need for counselors who are fluent in native languages other than English has not been established based on the current service population. This area is constantly monitored by MDRS and counselors who are fluent in other languages are recruited when a need arises. Due to the increasing Hispanic population, employees who are fluent in Spanish have been identified and are available to serve as interpreters. Also, MDRS has established fees for foreign language interpreters which may be authorized and paid by counselors when the need for their services occurs to provide rehabilitation services to non-English speaking individuals. All materials are provided to individuals who are visually impaired in Braille or on audiotape upon request. Also, VRB counselors participate in specialized in-service quarterly training and in-service training provided through the MDRS Assistive Technology Division which includes training on communication skills for individuals who are blind or deaf-blind. MDRS employs eight qualified sign language interpreters for the 10 districts that comprise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. The Office on Deaf and Hard of Hearing also employs one qualified sign language interpreter who is available to provide interpreter services. The community rehabilitation programs operated by MDRS employ individuals who are proficient in sign language skills and in-service training classes for employees are provided on a continuous basis in American Sign Language at the MDRS central office location in Madison, Mississippi. MDRS requires that all Counselors for the Deaf

achieve and maintain basic proficiency in American Sign Language. MDRS coordinates with post-secondary educational consortiums to provide proficiency testing of manual communication skills. Specialized training in deafness-related areas is provided for new counselors in the Deaf Program as well as quarterly training for all Counselors for the Deaf and Sign Language Interpreters.

6) *Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

MDRS pursues efforts to coordinate cross training with MDE that will address education and rehabilitation under the provision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Training conferences on transition services have been held and co-sponsored by MDRS and MDE. Specifically, regional training conferences bring together all VR counselors with transition caseloads, other agency personnel involved with transition services, and transition specialists, teachers, and special education coordinators from MDE. Available funds are utilized for tuition and related expenses for graduate training in Rehabilitation Counseling through Mississippi State University and Jackson State University, as well as the other masters-level distance learning and web-based programs in Rehabilitation Counseling that are utilized.

Section J. Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment
1. *Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:*
   a. *With the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;*
   b. *Who are minorities;*
   c. *Who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;*
   d. *Who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and*
   e. *Who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.*
2. *Identify the need to establish, development or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state; and*
3. *Include and assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

MDRS, in conjunction with the SRC, conducted two separate comprehensive statewide needs assessments to determine services required to meet specific VR needs in the state of Mississippi. In order to assess the needs, information was sought from the following individuals:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services
-
- Individuals with disabilities who are minorities
-
- Individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by VR programs
-

- Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system as identified by those individuals and personnel assisting those individuals through the components of the system
-
- Youth and students with disabilities regarding, if appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services

A web-based survey was conducted to collect responses from persons with disabilities, family members of a person with a disability, educators, and service providers. To reach the targeted audiences, a link to the survey was posted on the MDRS website for viewing and completion by the general public. Also invitations were sent by email to the following:

- Directors of drug treatment facilities for completion by persons who use their services
- All partners in the Mississippi Workforce System
- DMH's Certified Peer Support Specialists
- Director of the MS Band of Choctaw Indians' VR Program for completion by members that use their services
- Members of the SRC
- Current VR Clients
- VR Counselors
- VR Evaluators
- VR District Managers
- VR Regional Managers
- 17 AbilityWorks, Inc. (community rehabilitation program) facilities located throughout Mississippi – staff and clients
- All disability advocacy organizations, including those organizations that advocate for individuals who are blind
- Current VRB Clients
- VRB Counselors
- VRB Regional Managers

Identified Findings
Each respondent was asked to name the reasons he/she believes keep people with disabilities from working. The top five responses of all respondents are listed below:

1.	Transportation	30%
2.	Education	20%
3.	Job or vocational training	17%
4.	Public awareness of disability	14%
5.	Information about resources and services	13%

With the most significant disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment Services
A survey question posed to persons who identified themselves as an individual with a disability was whether or not they needed ongoing help (i.e. job coach, transportation, assistive technology, specialized job training, etc.) in order to work. Of the survey respondents, 53% answered "yes" to this question.

This question was followed up by requesting the respondents to identify which of the following services they need in order to work: 1) none; 2) assistive technology; 3) job coach; 4) specialized

job training;, 5) support from supervisors and co-workers; 6)transportation; and, 7) and/or other. The top three responses are listed below:

1.	Transportation	43%
2.	Support from supervisors and co-workers	34%
3.	Specialized job training	31%

Individuals with Disabilities Who are Minorities
Based on the FFY 2015 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Survey, respondents who identified themselves as a minority and also as an individual with a disability comprised 49% of the total persons who completed the survey, with 44% of this total reporting as being Black or African American. Additionally, less than 1% identified themselves as American Indian and less than 1% identified themselves as Asian. These percentages are ranked at or above the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau: State and County Facts, which show the Black population in Mississippi to be at 37% and the American Indian and also the Asian population in the state to be at 1%. Needs of these individuals were the same as the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services as reported in this attachment.

Individuals with Disabilities Who have been Unserved or Underserved
Attempts are made to collect data from populations who are unserved or underserved. However, many individuals are not served due to lack of awareness of available services and even lack of education regarding their disability. This lack of awareness and education is evident with the population that is Deafblind, since they tend to identify themselves as someone with multiple disabilities instead of someone who is Deafblind.   We rely on service providers and other community partners to help identify individuals who are Deafblind and in need of our services. Based on the individuals who are Deafblind that we do serve, the needed services include customized employment as well as services similar to those provided for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Who have been served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System
Another survey question asked participants if they have ever used the state's workforce investment network for help in finding a job or for receiving job training services. Of those respondents who identified themselves as an individual with a disability, 41% responded "yes" to the question. Of that 41%, approximately 71% reported receiving job search assistance.

Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and
All persons completing the survey were questioned on their knowledge of services provided at community rehabilitation centers (CRP) located across the state including AbilityWorks, Inc., Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, and Goodwill Industries. More than 87% of the respondents answered "yes" to this question. The respondents were then asked if they believe more centers are needed and what type of training or services should be offered. Of all the respondents, 86% answered "yes" regarding the need for more centers.

Listed below are some of the comments received from respondents regarding the types of training and services that should be offered by CRPs:

- Career Fairs/Career Exploration
- Cultural Diversity Training
- Desk job training or job training in clerical/office work/computer skills

- Facilities that actually train job skills and provide experience in actual work such as operating stores, food services, laundry, etc.
- Forklift training
- Job simulation training
- More training on how to get ready for a job and keep a job once you get a job
- On-the-Job Training and job specific training
- Training on living independently and budgeting
- More public awareness to employers about hiring individuals with disabilities
- Adequate Transportation

Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

A separate survey was conducted to assess the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition services and pre-employment transition services. Listed below are the results of the survey collected from respondents located throughout the state of Mississippi.

Age Range:
- 14-16   3%
- 17-19   75%
- 20-24   22%
- 25 or older   2%

Race:
- Black or African American   61.47%
- White   35.59%
- Multiple Races   2.06%
- American Indian or Alaskan Native   1.47%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander .88%
- Asian   .29%

Current Level of Education
- 11th and 12th grades   76.18%
- Not in School   17.65%
- College or Training Program   4.71%
- 9th and 10th grades   1.18%
- 7th and 8th grades   .29%

Of those not currently enrolled in school, future plans of the respondents include the following:
- Search for job   43.24%
- Continue to pursue high school Diploma or GED   41.18%
- Participate in Vocational or   Technical Training   15.29%
- Participate in Academic Training   5.59%
- Stay at Home   3.53%
- Travel or Move out of state   2.06%

Out of 340 respondents, 128 will be employed full time upon graduation from their current school or college.

Reasons survey respondents believe would prevent them from working include:

- Lack of transportation   25.48%
- Lack of jobs in the community   25.48%
- Lack of job skills   23.52%
- Limited family support   9.24%
- Loss of Social Security benefits   4.46%
- Lack of job related resources   1.91%
  (Job coach, AT, etc.)

Almost 90% of the respondents stated they were aware of services offered at AbilityWorks, Inc., Addie McBryde Center for the Blind, or Goodwill Industries.

Specific Results of Surveys for the VRB Program
Responses were reviewed by VRB staff to determine the specific needs for that program in order to improve services for the blind community. The top five identified needs are listed below:

1) Enhanced and expanded transportation options
2) Enhanced transition from high school to employment/post-secondary education
3) Technology support for individuals who are employed
4) An employment support system that follows the client
5) Blindness direct sensitivity training

Summary
The results of the FFY 2015 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment will be utilized in an effort to review a broad variety of methods to provide, expand, and improve VR services to individuals with severe/most severe disabilities in Mississippi.

Section K. Annual Estimates
Describe:
1) *The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services.*
2) *The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:*
   a. *The VR Program;*
   b. *The Supported Employment Program; and*
   c. *Each priority category, if under an order of selection.*
3) *The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and*
4) *The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.*

MDRS anticipates that the number of individuals determined eligible to receive VR services will decrease. This statement is based on a review of the number of individuals determined eligible to receive services in the last three (3) years using a trend analysis.

FFY	Number Determined Eligible	% Change from Previous Year
2012	8,414	
2013	8,386	(0.0%)
2014	7,232	(16.0%)

Based on the trend analysis, the number of individuals determined eligible to receive VR services will decrease. MDRS estimates that approximately 6,075 individuals with disabilities will be determined eligible to receive VR services during the period from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

MDRS estimates that 18,685 individuals will be served under Title I Part B for the period from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. This estimate is based on the three (3) year trend analysis that included all cases in which services were purchased in developing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and the number of cases where services were purchased in accordance with the IPE. The 2017 estimate indicates a 5% decrease in the number of individuals served compared to FFY 2014 (October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014).

FFY	Number Served	% Change from Previous Year
2012	21,547	
2013	21,544	0.0%
2014	20,707	(4.0%)

- *Supported Employment Program*

  MDRS estimates that 1,000 individuals will be served with Title VI – Supported Employment funds for the period from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. This estimate is based on the three (3) year trend analysis that included all cases in which services were purchased to develop the IPE and the number of cases where the services were purchased in accordance with the IPE. We also anticipate changes coming with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (partnering with Education and Mental Health, with an emphasis on serving youth with most significant disabilities and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities). This 2017 estimate indicates a 31% increase in the number of individuals served when comparing to FFY 2014 (October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014).

FFY	Number Served	% Change from Previous Year
2012	893	
2013	997	10.0%
2014	692	(44.0%)

- *Estimates in each priority category*,

MDRS estimates that 19,685 (18,685 in Title I Part B and 1,000 in Title VI) individuals with disabilities will be eligible to receive services in the following categories

Priority Category	Number of Individuals Served	Time Within Goals are to be achieved	Cost of Services
1	9,055	07/01/2016 to 06/30/2017	$32,209,685 8,055 x $3,867=$31,148,685 1,000 x $1,061=$1,061,000

2	8,465	07/01/2016 to 06/30/2017	$32,734,155
3	2,165	07/01/2016 to 06/30/2017	$8,372,055
Total	19,685	07/01/2016 to 06/30/2017	$73,315,895

- **_Number and cost of individuals eligible for VR services, but are not receiving services due to an order of selection_**

  The total projected available resources including the federal allotment, non-federal contributions, carryover, and program income for 2017 is $70,735,555. Based on this projection and the estimates provided above, MDRS will not be able to provide the full range of VR services to all eligible individuals in the state. Therefore, MDRS may implement an Order of Selection (OOS) in 2017 with Priority Category 3 being the first category to close if necessary.

Section (L). State Goals and Priorities
The designated State unit must:
1) *Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.*
2) *Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.*
3) *Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:*
   a. *The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;*
   b. *The State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and*
   c. *Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.*

MDRS in consultation with the SRC, consumers and other stakeholders continually assesses the vocational rehabilitation needs of Mississippians with disabilities and the success of VR/VRB in meeting these needs. The strategic plan developed from these consultations is a major component in the on-going program evaluation and planning as they relate to implementation of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA.

Through outreach, education and marketing efforts targeted to individuals with disabilities, VR/VRB will continue to broaden the population of individuals with disabilities being served. VR/VRB will continue to target individuals with disabilities who are already working to retain or progress in employment, previous VR/VRB consumers who may have lost employment to become reemployed, college students nearing completion of their academic programs, and:

- High school transition age youth with disabilities
- Individual with blindness and visual impairments
- Individuals with deafness and hearing impairments
- Youth and Adults with Most Significant Disabilities

Goals

Goal 1: Improve the employment, economic stability, and self-sufficiency of eligible individuals with disabilities

Goal 2: Improve the VR Service Delivery System to individuals with disabilities

Goal 3: Implement a statewide model for more effectively serving high school youth and students with disabilities including individuals with visual and/or hearing impairments

Goal 4: Implement identified improvements to increase statewide consistency and quality of consumer services

The goals and priorities are listed separately for the Supported Employment Program. See Section (n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI funds.

VR goals and priorities based on an analysis the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment
The goals and priorities listed above were developed after an analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment that the agency conducted in FFY 2015.

The six primary performance indicators for the core programs were analyzed and incorporated into developing the goals and priorities.

The listed goals and priorities have been discussed with and are a result of conversations with the SRC, and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 as applicable.

Section M. Order of Selection
Describe:
1) *The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.*
2) *The justification for the order.*
3) *The service and outcome goals.*
4) *The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.*
5) *How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and*
6) *If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.*

Policy on Order of Selection
Based on an assessment in each of the seven (7) functional capacity areas, an applicant's eligibility is assessed according to the significance of their disability, as defined in the Rehabilitation Act, section 7(21)(A):

..........the term "**individual with a significant disability**" means an individual with a disability –

i. who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities in the following areas: work tolerance, work skills, mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, and interpersonal skills,

ii. whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

iii.   who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disability, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage disease or other disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

(Authority: Section 7(21)(A) of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 705(21)(A))

Order to Be Followed In Selecting Eligible Individuals to Receive VR Services
Before applying the order of selection (OOS) and assigning the individual to a priority category, the VR counselor must determine the individual eligible for VR services.   After the eligibility determination is made, the VR Counselor must then identify the level of significance of the disability and which priority category the individual will be placed.   First priority, Priority Category I, will be given to individuals with the most significant disabilities. Second priority, Priority Category II, will be given to individuals with significant disabilities. Third priority, Priority Category III, will be given to all eligible individuals that do not meet the criteria for the first and second category, significant disability.

Priority Category Descriptions

I.   Priority Category 1. Most Significant Disability

Individuals who meet the definition of an individual with a significant disability(ies) which seriously limits three (3) or more functional capacities in the areas of mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills in terms of an employment outcome;

II.   Priority Category 2. Significant Disability

Individual who meets the definition of an individual with a significant disability (ies) that seriously limits one (1) or two (2) functional capacities in the areas of mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills in terms of an employment outcome;

III.   Priority Category 3. Non-Significant Disability

All other eligible individuals who have a physical or mental disability that seriously limits one (1) functional capacity in the area of mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills in terms of an employment outcome; and, the individual does not require multiple services over an extended period of time.

(Authority: Sections 7(21)(E)(i) and 101(a)(5)(C) of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 705(21)(E)(i) and 721(a)(5)(C))

Justification for Order of Selection
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) has established an Order of Selection to ensure that individuals with the Most significant disabilities are selected first

for VR services, those with Significant disabilities selected second, and those with non-Significant disabilities selected last. MDRS has determined that sufficient resources are currently available to provide VR services to all individuals with disabilities that apply, those determined eligible in all priority categories and those under and IPE. Due to the increase in service needs and the staff resources to provide the services, if the projected resources for funds and personnel change before the next state plan modification, MDRS will make a determination whether it may need to close one or more of its priority categories.

During 2015 – 2016, MDRS has still been able to serve all eligible individuals for each of its priority categories. MDRS will conduct reviews periodically during the year to help validate the order and assess the impact of unforeseen circumstances. MDRS will determine if it has sufficient funds and personnel resources to:
1. Continue to serve eligible individuals on an IPE
2. Serve all of the individuals who are expected to be determined eligible during the fiscal year for each of its priority categories.

When it is determined that MDRS does not have the resources to serve all eligible individuals in all priority categories, MDRS administration will make the decision to begin closing priority categories, first beginning with Priority Category 3, non-Significant disability. However, regardless of any established order of selection, MDRS will elect to continue serving individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

Continuity of Service Provision When an Order of Selection is in Effect
When an OOS is in effect, MDRS continues to accept applications and make determinations of eligibility while notifying all eligible individuals of the priority category they are assigned. When an individual is assigned to a category that is closed, the individual will be placed on a waiting list to be served in the chronological order in which he or she applied. Individuals having an active individualized plan for employment prior to the implementation of the OOS will continue to receive services uninterrupted.

The OOS does not discriminate against any eligible individual on the basis of gender, age, race, creed, color, religion, national origin, citizenship, type of disability, duration of residence in Mississippi, public assistance status, source of referral, expected employment outcome, need for specific services, anticipated cost of services required, or income level of an individual or his/her family.

MDRS in consultation with the SRC will close the Priority Categories designated to be closed, which includes individuals with disabilities who do not meet the definitions of "individuals with most significant disabilities." Any individual currently under an approved IPE at the time his/her priority category is closed will continue with his/her IPE, including the provision of Post-Employment Services. Priority Category 1 will remain open and available for new cases meeting the criteria for this category, individuals with the most significant disabilities. Individuals placed in deferred status will be notified of their priority category, process for reclassification, their right to appeal, and the availability of CAP.

If an OOS is implemented, MDRS will provide the following information:

○ Show the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services
○ Provide justification for the order

- Identify the services and outcome goals
- Identify the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order

When an OOS is in effect, individuals meeting eligibility requirements but are in a closed priority category have access to information and referral services. VR will provide all eligible individuals with disabilities who do not meet the OOS criteria with information about, and referral to, other Federal or State programs (including to Workforce Investment Network Job Centers for training and placement) that can assist them with obtaining or retaining employment. MDRS will elect to provide services, regardless of any established order of selection, to eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

Service and outcome goals and the time within which the goals will be achieved

The estimated number for service and outcome goals by OOS priority categories for July 1, 2016 ending June 30, 2017, is listed below:

	Service	Employment
Priority 1	9,055	1,804
Priority 2	8,465	1,640
Priority 3	2,165	656
Total	19,685	4,100

Priority Category	Number of Individuals Served	Time Within Goals are to be achieved	Cost of Services
1	9,055	07/01/2016 – 06/30/2017	$32,209,685
2	8,465	07/01/2016-06/30/2017	$32,734,155
3	2,165	07/01/2016-06/30/2017	$8,372,055
TOTAL	19,685	07/01/2016-06/30/2017	$73,315,895,

Section N.   Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds.

1) Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.
2) Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:
   a. The provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and
   b. How the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

In order to meet the expectations and intent of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA and to achieve maximum utilization of available funds, certain priority areas are being emphasized by MDRS in the SE Program. Those priority areas are described as follows:

- SE staff members continue to make every effort to identify and facilitate natural supports that occur in the workplace in order to maximize utilization of funds. These natural supports do not replace the one-on-one intensive support provided to clients by the SE Counselors. However, when properly identified and utilized, these natural supports do result in decreased direct service costs and increased quality of support.

- Cooperative arrangements will continue to be developed with other provider agencies and organizations, both public and private, to expand the SE Program to unserved and underserved populations. The focus of these arrangements is on promoting and enabling SE Counselors and service provider personnel from other agencies to work as teams to share expertise, provide technical support in specific disability areas, and conduct joint training.

- The SE Program will continue to emphasize individual employment placements. Other models will remain an option for clients and may be utilized when feasible. However, when given a choice, clients prefer individual placements by an overwhelming majority. Individual placement is the preferred option of MDRS as well as the clients because it achieves integration in the work environment, it is competitive integrated employment, and it provides more opportunities for career pathways and better quality jobs with more benefits.

- MDRS also works with extended services providers, when feasible, as a means to provide additional resources and services to individuals needing and choosing these specialized services as an interim step to the rehabilitation process of achieving a successful employment outcome. SE Counselors will continue to primarily focus on successful employment outcomes in competitive integrated work settings.

- Person Centered Planning and Customized Employment as integral parts of service provision continue to be high priorities. These service approaches have been embraced by mental health providers, the DD Council, and other service providers in the state as accepted best practices for model service delivery. SE staff also participates in both practices in coordinating services for SE clients in the education system throughout the state. These practices have proven to be successful for clients because of the enhanced teamwork with other agencies. Under WIOA customized employment is included in the definition of supported employment and MDRS is including it as a VR service that the SE client can choose to include in his/her IPE. Therefore, MDRS is expanding customized employment training to the majority of its direct service staff. These service approaches will continue to be made available to clients during the intake process and will be utilized when deemed appropriate and when chosen by the client.

Goals and Priorities
To support the priority areas listed above, the following goals have been set in the SE Program:

Goal I:
Implement a referral process between MDRS and MDE to identify "youth with the most significant disabilities" who will require SE services. This referral process will be similar to the process currently in place to refer individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to MDRS by mental health providers. By submitting referrals to the SE Coordinator first for review before being assigned to district VR staff ensures that appropriate referrals are being made to the SE Program.

Goal II:
Provide training to all SE staff by a highly experienced professional in the area of customized employment

Goal III:
Expand to include youth with the most significant disabilities up to age 24. Per Goal I, youth referred to the SE Coordinator for consideration and inclusion in the SE Program will be reported through the MDRS case management system in order to track expenditures of the SE allotment on youth with the most significant disabilities.

Goal IV:
Utilize the Job Trainer Handbook recently developed by the SE Coordinator to train all Job Coaches. Before any new Job Coaches are hired, MDRS now requires applicants to undergo a fingerprint background check and drug testing.

Goal V:
Train all Transition staff and SE staff on the new policies and guidelines for SE Services.

Activities with funds reserved for youth with the most significant disabilities
Under WIOA the new law requires that half of the allotment received under Title VI be used for provision of SE services, including extended services, to youth with the most significant disabilities (up to age 24), with administrative costs limited to 2.5% of the allotment. These youth may receive extended services (i.e., ongoing supports to maintain an individual in supported employment) for up to four (4) years. MDRS will invest all Title VI allocations to fund the purchase of job training services and other allowable vocational rehabilitation services as needed by clients served in the SE Program. The Coordinator for the SE Program and the Coordinator for Transition and Youth Career Services will work together to ensure new policy is in place and the appropriate amount of funding is utilized for youth with the most significant disabilities.

Leverage of other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth
MDRS expects to continue supplementing Title VI funds as supplemental funds are available and, if possible, continue the level of Title I monies committed to the SE Program.

MDRS occasionally supplements Title VI funds with Social Security Reimbursement funds as there is a need for additional funds for program expenditures. MDRS plans to continue this process when Title I funds are not available. Additionally, MDRS will continue its efforts to increase the funds available for use by the SE program by development and submission of

proposals for grants that may become available. MDRS will also explore ways to utilize available funds more efficiently by entering into cooperative agreements with other entities who may participate in the cost of providing services to SE clients. It is anticipated that SE Counselors will utilize all of the Title VI allotment.

Section O   Strategies to support innovation and expansion activities

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1) *The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.*
2) *How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.*
3) *The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.*
4) *The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate transition of such students from school to postsecondary life(including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).*
5) *If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.*
6) *Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.*
7) *Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.*
8) *How the agency's strategies will be used to:*
   a. *Achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;*
   b. *Support innovation and expansion activities; and*
   c. *Overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.*

Strategies to Achieve Goals – Title 1

The following strategies will be required to achieve the goals and priorities as listed in (l) State Goals and Priorities and (n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of title I Funds:

Goal 1: Improve the employment, economic stability, and self-sufficiency of eligible individuals with disabilities

Strategies:

1. Develop a job placement culture by providing on-going training in the job development and placement process

2. Incorporate the Business Relations Specialist into the job placement culture in each VR district

3. Re-design and improve Business Relations Services that will target services to businesses

4. Designate a VR Program Coordinator who is responsible for development of the Business Relations Services (BRS) program

5. BRS Program Coordinator will provide assistance in supervising, coordinating and/or providing training for Business Relations Specialist

6. Business Relations Specialist will provide information to VR staff in the following areas:
   - Services BRS provides to employers
   - Training and information regarding work incentives
   - Job analysis and job matching
   - Career opportunities in the local area
   - On-going disability etiquette training

7. Refer those consumers receiving Social Security Income/Social Security Disability Income cash benefits who are interested in earnings that will eliminate their reliance on Social Security Administration cash benefits for work incentives benefits analysis and counseling

8. Coordinate and conduct in partnership with the Governor's Job Fair the Annual MDRS EmployAbility Job Fair for individuals with disabilities

Goal 2: Improve the VR Service Delivery System to individuals with disabilities

Strategies:

1. Provide input to assure appropriate inclusion of VR activities in agency public service announcements, the agency website, and agency publications

2. Update and distribute vocational rehabilitation brochures to appropriate referral sources

3. Designate and train specific staff members in each district to handle referrals and provide information to the public

Goal 3: Implement a statewide model for more effectively serving high school youth and students with disabilities including individuals with visual and/or hearing impairments

Strategies:

1. Co-develop a formal interagency cooperative agreement with officials from MDE, local school districts, and local high schools

2. Develop and implement the use of a VR Transition Manual designed to assist staff in the delivery of transition services

3. Develop a Youth Transition Handbook designed to assist VR staff, teachers, students and their families in the delivery of transition services

4. Annually identify Special Education staff for each school plus coordinators for each school who work with students that are not likely to be receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Special Education

5. Develop public relations materials that describe transition services

6. Co-develop and implement self-identification tool identifying youth with disabilities who could possibly benefit from transition services

7. Establish relationships with parent training and information groups, advocacy groups and other service providers to encourage referral and parental participation in the development and provision of transition services

8. Establish comprehensive guidelines and indicators for assessing the individual transition needs of students

9. Work with other core partners in the state's workforce system to provide employment related services so that services will not be duplicated

Goal 4: Implement identified improvements to increase statewide consistency and quality of consumer services

Strategies:

1. Use results of the annual case review to determine where additional guidance and training are required
2. Utilize the new counselor training process for mentoring, training, and leadership development for all VR counselors
3. Utilize and continue to develop consistent training processes for key VR staff that deliver direct client services
4. Conduct annual statewide case record reviews of case service practices to determine consistency and adherence with federal/state requirements
5. Survey VR staff on practices and provide refresher training to assure consistent and quality service delivery
6. Deliver high quality training and support to provide staff with the knowledge and skills needed to perform effectively
7. Recognize and appreciate staff members throughout VR for their contributions to the program's success
8. Continue to update and deliver advanced best practices training to field staff statewide to provide ongoing skill development in key service delivery operations and practices, including a strong focus on customer service, cultural sensitivity, and better addressing each consumer's impediments to employment

9. Play stronger roles on state and local workforce boards to assure that VR consumers and other individuals with disabilities are better served by the One-Stop System
10. Increase collaboration with community colleges to improve coordination of VR services with community college programs and Adult Basic Education programs

11. Implement written agreements with providers of services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disability programs to affirm their roles and responsibilities for jointly serving VR consumers, including their capacity for providing long-term employment supports to individuals after the VR case is closed rehabilitated

Methods to expand and improve services
1. Designate staff in each MDRS district to be responsible for conducting outreach and orientation sessions on a regular basis
2. Utilize our relationships with workforce partners at the state and local levels in order to have more options and resources available for job placement and training.
3. Share specific agency expertise to facilitate interagency knowledge to improve services to all participants with disabilities served by any agency within the workforce system
4. Annually evaluate physical location of VR staff to assure that all geographic areas of the state are covered with appropriate service delivery staff
5. Administer a consumer satisfaction survey while the consumer's case is open with VR
6. Administer a consumer satisfaction survey with the consumer regarding services received from vendors/providers of VR services
7. Use case review results to identify and implement improvements in quality and consistency of services
8. Increase collaboration within the state's workforce system to improve services to unemployed workers with disabilities who are eligible for VR services by better leveraging services with other workforce development programs

How assistive technology services and devices will be provided at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis
Through the MDRS Assistive Technology (AT) Program, nine Rehabilitation Technologists and two Rehabilitation Engineers are strategically located throughout the state to provide consultation on all AT referrals as well as perform initial evaluations and assessments; procure and set up AT equipment; provide follow-up evaluations; design and fabricate original items; and, provide specifications and final inspections for AT services. VR Counselors evaluate the need for AT services throughout the rehabilitation process.

Outreach procedures that will identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.
MDRS has a Cultural Diversity Taskforce that develops strategies to reach minority populations, including those with the most significant disabilities. The taskforce members make

recommendations for service delivery and outreach to minority groups. The taskforce creates plans for facilitated activities in the area of cultural diversity specific to each geographical area.

Methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities
- Engage with key partners such as MDE, the SRC, local school districts, community colleges, and other training and education programs in designing an improved service delivery model that will develop stronger partnerships to place increased emphasis on serving transition high school students with disabilities
- Community outreach and orientation will establish relationships with parent training and information groups, advocacy groups, and other service providers to encourage referral and parental participation in the development and provision of transition services
- Increase collaboration with Community Colleges to improve coordination of VR services with community college programs and Adult Basic Education programs to facilitate transition from secondary to post-secondary activities
- Develop and implement on-campus work experience training in order to provide work experience to students who cannot get into a vocational training program or opportunities for vocational training are not readily available in a community based setting
- Summer Internship Program for high school students with blindness and visual impairments, and deafness and hard of hearing
- Engage with key partners such as MDE, SRC, high schools, community colleges, and other training and education programs in designing an improved service delivery model that will develop stronger partnerships to place increased emphasis on serving transition high school students who are in special education
- Engage with key partners such as MDE, SRC, high schools, community colleges, and other training and education programs in designing an improved service delivery model that will develop stronger partnerships to place increased emphasis on serving transition high school students who are not in special education
- Plan and coordinate with the MDE Special Education Director to conduct at least annual training and semi-annual work groups for the purpose of cross-training in understanding the services offered by VR
- When developing the Youth Transition Handbook the design should be complementary to the MDE Special Education Transition Handbook

Plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs
Plans for improving community rehabilitation programs (private and agency-supported) include training staff to provide PETS, customized employment services, and on-the-job tryout services which facilitate the agency's ability to achieve the changes in WIOA.

Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.
MDRS is collaborating with workforce partners through the State Workforce Development Board to integrate our agency's computer system with the workforce computer system, MS Works, to facilitate common intake, data sharing, transmission of performance measures and other appropriate data

Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
The VR/VRB partnership within Mississippi's one-stop system is clarified through Memoranda of Understanding with the State and each of the four local workforce development areas. The partnership is further enhanced through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the

Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), the lead state workforce agency designated to disburse federal workforce funds and the main operator of the WIN Job Centers, to continually improve the lifestyle, acceptance and accessibility of persons with disabilities within Mississippi's WIN. These MOUs include language to provide for intercomponent staff training and technical assistance on availability of benefits and information on eligibility standards for VR services, and promotion of equal, effective and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities in workforce development activities in the state through the promotion of program accessibility (including programmatic accessibility and physical accessibility), the use of nondiscriminatory policies and procedures, provision of reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids and services, and rehabilitation technology.

MDRS has considered the results of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (as stated in (j) Statewide Assessment) in developing strategies to achieve the goals and priorities stated in this plan.

Our relationships with our workforce partners will enhance our ability to achieve the following innovation and expansion activities through closer working relationships and introductions to employers:

- VR/VRB Summer Internship Program with specific focus on students who are blind and students who are deaf
- MDRS EmployAbility Job Fair in partnership with the Governor's Job Fair network that highlights the On-the-Job training initiatives for employers that hire a person with a disability
- Outreach and Orientation sessions to target unserved and underserved individuals with disabilities in rural communities

Continue to work with WIOA partners to identify barriers relating to equitable access and to ensure participation of individuals with disabilities.

Section P   Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals.
Describe:
1) *An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:*
    a. *Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.*
    b. *Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.*
2) *An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:*
    a. *Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.*
    b. *Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.*
3) *The VR Program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.*
4) *How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.*

Report of Progress
Goal I: Improve Access to Transportation for Employment for Individuals with Disabilities.

1. MDRS staff identified 152 formal transportation resources.

2. The Community Transportation Resource Guide compiled by MDRS is published and updated on the MDRS website for wide distribution and easy access to information by consumers.
3. In August 2013 MDRS signed a contract with LeFleur Transportation to join the MS Department of Mental Health in the Greenwood Transportation Pilot Project as initiated by the Mississippi Transportation Coalition. The intent of this project was to improve access to reliable transportation in one of the more rural parts of the state and to increase ridership in the program to drive down transportation costs for everyone. From November 2013 when the first trip was provided to September 30, 2014, 5,438 trips were provided at a cost of $35,480. The project ended in February 2015 at the request of LeFleur Transportation due to commitment of time and resources in another state.
4. MDRS staff actively participated on transportation-related planning groups, advisory committees, and initiatives during the period October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014 for a total of 31 meetings. Staff members will be encouraged to increase this participation in the upcoming FFY due to transportation being listed as the biggest barrier to employment in Mississippi according to the Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs.
5. Counselors discuss transportation support networks with consumers during the application process. This discussion draws awareness for VR/VRB staff regarding transportation needs of the consumers. Based on these discussions VR/VRB staff members were able to plan transportation services on 204 IPEs, including almost 2,000 trips provided by AbilityWorks, Inc., a statewide community rehabilitation program operated by MDRS.

Goal II: Increase Training Opportunities for VR Consumers, Including Community Rehabilitation Program Services, Customized Employment, Apprenticeships, and Internships.

1. MDRS staff attended 61 trainings that addressed available training resources for clients.
2. VR staff planned training opportunities on 1,966 IPEs during the period October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014. This total represents an increase of 206 IPEs that included training opportunities for VR consumers over the same period during the prior FFY.
3. The state's personal adjustment center for the blind, the Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center (AMRC) for the Blind, experienced some changes in the number of consumers served during the same time period as listed above for the VR Program. AMRC served 178 consumers, which is an increase of 9 over the same period during the prior FFY. Consumers interested in attending a structured discovery center are being referred to centers located outside the state of Mississippi for those services.

Goal III: Improve Public Awareness of Disability to the General Public, Employers, and Other Stakeholders.

1. MDRS staff conducted a focused awareness campaign which included staff distributing 13,900 brochures related to VR and VRB services, presenting at 80 events, and networking at 216 events. The MDRS Office of Communications and Consumer Relations (OCCR) also developed and started implementing communication strategies that included production of videos, agency website updating, social media and texting campaigns, production of public service announcements and commercials, and public engagement initiatives.
2. The Affordable Care Act was signed by the President in 2010 and upheld by the U. S. Supreme Court in 2012. Since passage of this act, referrals to the VR Program and the VRB Program have declined. MDRS staff believes the Affordable Care Act had a direct

impact on the decrease in referrals. However, with changes brought about by WIOA we anticipate an increase in referrals, especially with transitioning youth. Additionally, the public engagement campaign initiated by OCCR in FFY 2014 should have a positive impact on referrals in FFY 2015 and FFY 2016.

NOTE: In FFY 2014 specific goals were not established for the Supported Employment Program, but priority areas were identified. Below is an evaluation of those SE priority areas for FFY 2014. MDRS hired a new program coordinator for the SE Program with a more experienced background in the field of intellectual disabilities. Based on this new hire, MDRS is implementing changes in the SE Program to provide a smoother transition for the clients.

Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals
Priority Area I: Supported Employment Staff Members Make Every Effort to Identify and Facilitate Natural Supports that Occur in the Workplace.

MDRS requires each SE Counselor to work on natural supports with the clients. SE Counselors continued to identify and facilitate natural supports in the workplace.

Priority Area II: Develop Cooperative Arrangements with Other Provider Agencies and Organizations to Expand the Program to Unserved and Underserved Populations.

Early in FFY 2013 MDRS entered into an agreement with the MS Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council) to join the Customized Employment Demonstration Project with The Arc of MS, MDRS and Sheltered Workshop Agencies. The Arc of MS manages the project. The agreement is scheduled to terminate in 2016. MDRS is also continuing to work with the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) to design a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a statewide system of coordinated, cost efficient vocational/employment service for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities with minimal overlap of responsibility and maximum utilization of resources between MDRS and DMH.   SE Counselors continued to expand cooperative arrangements with other provider agencies and organizations, both public and private.

Priority Area III: The Supported Employment Program will continue emphasis on individual employment placements.

MDRS has made it a priority for SE Counselors to utilize the concepts behind Customized Employment, which makes job seeker placements more individualized based on the individual's interests and abilities. SE Counselors utilized Customized Employment and Discovery to help with employment placements for the job seekers.

Priority Area IV: Work with Extended Employment Providers.
MDRS staff established 52 new Extended Service Agreements to provide ongoing support systems needed to maintain employment for the job seekers. SE Counselors were encouraged to work with the job seekers and their families as well as other interested parties to establish Extended Service Agreements.

Priority Area V: Person Centered Planning and Customized Employment as Integral Parts of Service Provision Continue to Be High Priorities.

MDRS developed Customized Employment Training for Counselors to achieve this goal. Customized Employment Training as developed and implemented in FFY 2013 continued in FFY 2014 with technical assistance provided by the Southeast TACE.

Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Priority Area I:
Periodically, SE Counselors face challenges in setting up natural supports with family, church members, communities, and employers.

Priority Area II:
Cooperative agreements are still being negotiated.

Priority Area III:
Some individuals/family members refused to participate in the Customized Employment process. Also, the process can be lengthy at times and the individual needs a job as soon as possible.

Priority Area IV:
Unfortunately, an extended service provider cannot always be identified.

Priority Area V:
Not applicable.

An analysis of standards and indicators for FFY 2014 indicates that MDRS exceeded each category.

In working with businesses to hire people with disabilities, MDRS identified a soft skills gap with VR and VRB clients that, if addressed, would potentially help them get and keep a job. Therefore, MDRS developed a Smart Work Ethics training curriculum to be delivered through AbilityWorks, the agency's network of community rehabilitation programs, which included a set of soft skills employers are looking for in potential hires that make someone compatible to work with and a good employee. In FFY 2014 the agency expended $64,979 in Title I funds for Smart Work Ethics.

MDRS has made it a priority to expand service delivery of training opportunities to VR and VRB consumers. In FFY 2014 the agency expended $32,133 in Title I funds to the DORE Program for consumers with learning difficulties to participate in a highly personalized exercise program to stimulate the cerebellum, making it easier for them to learn and develop new skills.

MDRS conducted a job fair in coordination with the Governor's Office specifically for people with disabilities. VRB sponsored all VRB Transition Students to attend this event, many of whom were able to secure employment.

MDRS expends funds annually towards the professional development of agency personnel as discussed in (i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development. In FFY 2014 MDRS expended funds on disability specific training for staff. MDRS also expended funds on the Regional Training Teams to provide orientation training to new employees and training on policy changes to existing employees, and training for Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD) for the Mentor Program. However, funds for the Regional Training Teams and RCD Mentor Program came from the Quality Training Grant and, therefore, are not reported in this Attachment.

In order for MDRS to participate in Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), which were developed with the state's one-stop partners, funds were expended, as appropriate, for cost-allocation aspects of the operation of the centers where VR and VRB staff is physically located. This participation assured that MDRS is a full partner in the centers, services to eligible VR/VRB clients are available, and that partnerships with other one-stop members resulted in networking to assure the individuals with a disability are involved in a seamless system. MDRS expended $29,990 in allocated costs associated with the centers where VR/VRB staff was physically located in FFY 2014.

The ability of VR clients to access and use assistive technology is critical in the overall vocational rehabilitation process. It is essential to expanding successful employment outcomes. Recognizing the importance of assistive technology to client success, MDRS spent $151,019 in these efforts during FFY 2014.

In accordance with current regulations, MDRS utilized funds to support funding of the State Rehabilitation Council and the State Independent Living Council. MDRS spent a total of $18,574 in support of the State Rehabilitation Council ($16,892) and the State Independent Living Council ($1,682).

Section Q. Quality, Scope and Extent of Supported Employment Services
Include the following:
1) *The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.*
2) *The timing of transition to extended services.*

The SE Program provides services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who require intensive support to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment. The services are designed to meet the current and future needs of these individuals whose disabilities are of such a nature that they need continuous, on-going support and extended services in order to engage in and maintain gainful employment. SE services include evaluation, assessment, job matching, job development, job placement, job coaching, brokering and training for natural supports to include extended services and other comprehensive follow along supports.

Under WIOA the new law requires that half of the allotment received under Title VI be used for provision of SE services, including extended services, to youth with the most significant disabilities (up to age 24), with administrative costs limited to 2.5% of the allotment. These youth may receive extended services (i.e., ongoing supports to maintain an individual in supported employment) for up to four (4) years. MDRS will invest all Title VI allocations to fund the purchase of job training services and other allowable vocational rehabilitation services as needed by clients served in the SE Program. Additionally, the Coordinator for the SE Program and the Coordinator for Transition and Youth Career Services will work together to ensure new policy is in place and the appropriate amount of funding is utilized for youth with the most significant disabilities.

Eligible individuals are those who are determined to be "most significantly" disabled, which means they meet the following criteria:

- individual has a "significant disability"
- individual's physical or mental impairments seriously limit three (3) or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome

- individual will require vocational rehabilitation services in order to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment

MDRS employs a unique strategy for delivery of SE services. The SE Program's structure and service delivery mechanism are integrated into that of the general agency service delivery system. The services are authorized, coordinated and, in most instances, delivered by staff of the state unit. Counselors who specialize in SE perform the functions of case management, job development, and supervision of overall SE service delivery in their respective districts. They are assisted by Vocational Training Instructors (VTIs) who perform a variety of functions including assessment, job development and placement, job training, job coach supervision, and facilitation of natural supports. Job coaches are employed on an "as needed" basis. Counselors are assigned to serve SE eligible individuals in each of the 10 districts in order to ensure statewide coverage. The SE staff includes 11 Counselors, 12 VTIs, and a pool of available Job Coaches who are assigned to work with an SE client as needed. Additionally, this staff works with the statewide community rehabilitation program, AbilityWorks, Inc., a division of MDRS.

MDRS contends that its responsibility regarding SE is the same as its responsibility for the general program. The SE programs for both VR and VRB have been combined into one program serving all eligible individuals. SE counselors have the same duties and responsibilities as those in the VR and VRB programs. However, the caseloads of the SE counselors consist of only those clients who meet Title VI eligibility criteria. Therefore, in addition to general agency policy and procedures, SE staff members must be knowledgeable about Title VI regulations and the unique requirements for SE eligibility. Additionally, SE staff members are provided clerical support in the same proportion as the VR program staff.

Administration and implementation of the SE Program is assigned to the Bureau of Client Services within VR. SE personnel are trained in general VR case management techniques and Title I regulations, and are held to the same procedures and standards of performance as are the general counselors.

MDRS designates a SE statewide program coordinator whose duties include the following:
- monitor issues developing in the field of SE
- serve as a resource person to staff
- serve as advisor to administrative staff in implementing programmatic policies in accordance with federal dictates
- develop effective programmatic procedures
- recommend training of SE staff
- other typical functions of a coordinating and liaison nature

MDRS maintains formal agreements with the MDE and DMH as well as other public and private entities, which identify areas of collaboration to ensure a comprehensive program of services to SE eligible individuals. Staff members collaborate intensively with local mental health centers, school districts, SE businesses and industries, the DD Council, parents, advocacy groups and other relevant third parties.

The service approach for SE eligible clients emulates the nationally accepted "best practices" models of SE service delivery which include individual job placement, mobile crews, and temporary employment placement (TEP) for individuals with chronic mental illness. Central to each of these approaches is an emphasis on person centered planning and facilitation of natural supports. Individualized job development is conducted by SE staff based on job matching assessment information and client's informed choice. SE clients are assisted with employment

planning and placement by VTIs and job skills training is provided at the job site either by job coaches or through natural supports.

To fulfill the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, regarding transitional employment for individuals with chronic mental illness, MDRS utilizes the TEP model. This model involves placement in a series of temporary jobs that lead to permanent employment as an outcome. This service approach is implemented through coordination with local mental health centers.

Timing of transition to extended services.
Upon completion of time-limited SE services, the ongoing job skills training assistance and other necessary long-term support is transitioned to a third party, group or individual through a Cooperative Agreement or Extended Services Support Plan Agreement. MDRS entered into 109 new Extended Services Support Plan Agreements from October 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015. These 109 new agreements are in addition to the agreements previously established and still ongoing. WIOA increased the maximum amount of time for SE staff to provide time-limited supported employment services to 24 months. However, the rate of transitioning a client to extended services is dependent upon the needs of the individual, his/her family, the employer, the third party agency, and other involved individuals. Since SE staff members and the extended service provider will have been collaborating in the provision of SE services throughout an individual's VR program, such transitions are normally smooth and do not cause job disruptions.

MDRS will continue to cooperate in the networking of services with entities that have supported employment facets or other applicable and/or similar resources, such as the state's workforce development one-stop system. Such collaborative efforts are essential for effective planning, development, implementation and continuation of SE arrangements. Service networking will involve developing and identifying appropriate job sites, tapping existing or future job training resources, utilizing concurrent staffing opportunities, and other occasions for programmatic and budgetary interfacing.

Expansion of the SE Program is expected as a result of extensive outreach, staff development, interagency training, dissemination of information, identification and dissemination of information about best practices, technical assistance, and an emphasis on interagency collaboration for identification of potentially eligible individuals and service delivery to clients. MDRS continues to emphasize person centered planning by partnering with the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities, MDE, and other entities in promotion of this service provision.

Certifications

1.   The **Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA,[8] and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act[9] ;

2.   As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services**[10] agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan,[11] the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations,[12] policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

3.   As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan,[13] the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations,[14] policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

4.   The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

5.   The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.

6.   All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.

7.   The **Executive Director** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

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[8] Public Law 113-128.
[9]   Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.
[10]   All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.
[11]   No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act .
[1212]   Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.
[13]   No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.
[14]   Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 13.

8.   The **Executive Director** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;

9.   The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

Signature _____

Name of Signatory __Chris Howard_____

Title of Signatory ___Executive Director__

Date Signed ___3/11/16_____

Signed by: Chris Howard, Executive Director, 3/11/2016

Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:

1. **Public Comment on Policies and Procedures**: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. **Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement**: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. **Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan**: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
   a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act..

b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable
(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. the non-Federal share, as described in 34 CFR 361.60.

d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).

e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (No)

f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act . Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs,   (No)

g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (No)

h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act .

j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.

k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.

m. submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

4. **Administration of the Provision of VR Services**: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act .

c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?

d. comply with all required available comparable services and benefits, determined to be available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act and.

e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act .

f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.

g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.

h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as required by section 101(a)(14)of the Rehabilitation Act

i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs

j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,
   i. has developed and will implement,
      (A) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
      (B) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
   ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transitional services (section 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25))

5. **Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement**:
   a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
   b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.

c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

6. **Financial Administration**:
    a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.
    b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

7. **Provision of Supported Employment Services**
    a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
    b. The designated State agency assures that:
        i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act
        ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Program-Specific Requirements for Combined State Plan Partner Programs

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program— and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined

State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.[15]   If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on www.regulations.gov *for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at* http://www.regulations.gov *by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.*

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF)

(OMB Control Number: 0970-0145)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

(a) *Conduct a program designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner) that provides assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children and provides parents with job preparation, work, and support services to enable them to leave the program, specifically cash assistance, and become self-sufficient (section 402(a)(1)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act).*

Mississippi will conduct a program designed to provide allowable work activities that will serve all political subdivisions (counties) in the State with emphasis on providing assistance to needy families with children and providing parents with job preparation, work, and support services to enable them to leave the program and become self-sufficient to the degree that State and local resources allow.

Mississippi will continue to provide financial assistance to needy families determined eligible under the currently established policies and the Standard of Need and maximum payment level for that size family. "Needy Families" are identified according to ongoing income, resources, and deprivation criteria. The money payment level set by State law at 43-17-5(1), is $110 for the first person, $36 for the second person and $24 for additional persons, except as restricted by the Family Benefit Cap. A "Needy Family" is defined as a family with a dependent child(ren) and an average annual income at or below 350 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

 A child or children under 18 years of age and their parent(s) or other caretaker relative must meet all technical and financial eligibility requirements in order to qualify for a TANF benefit.

The child or children must be deprived of one or both parents due to:
1. Incapacity.
2. Death.

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[15] *States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.*

3. Continued absence. Continued absence includes, but is not limited to, absences by reason of:
        a. Divorce.
        b. Desertion or non-support of legal parent.
        c. Illegitimacy.
        d. Hospitalization for more than a temporary period.
        e. Imprisonment.
        f. Court sentence to perform unpaid public work or service while living at home.
        g. Removal of the child from the home by court order.
        h. Legal adoption by a single parent.
4. Unemployment of the principal wage earner (PWE)

The TANF Program is administered by the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the single State agency designated by State law for eligibility determination and spending authority. The organization is State administered with at least one full service office for intake and client service delivery located in each county with structured supervisory and regional administrative levels.

Mississippi will operate a statewide work program mandated by State law and TANF to provide work activities and supportive services (child care, work stipend, and work related expense payments) focused on enabling families to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency.

In Mississippi, TANF monthly benefits and supportive service payments provided to individuals participating in allowable work activities or transitional programs are provided to the family by means of a Mississippi Debit MasterCard® card account. TANF supportive service payments issued to providers are paid by check or by vouchers redeemable for services.

Deny TANF Assistance
a. According to the TANF prohibitions/requirements in Title I, Section 408, Mississippi will, except for individuals and families specifically exempt or excluded for good cause, deny TANF assistance to:

- Families without a minor child residing with the parent or adult caretaker relative;
- Families including an adult head-of-household or spouse of the head-of-household, pregnant minor head-of-household or spouse of such head-of-household, a minor parent head-of-household or spouse of such minor parent head-of-household who has received assistance under TANF for 60 months (cumulative but not necessarily consecutive);
- Families not assigning certain support rights to the State;
- Families who fail to cooperate in establishing paternity or obtaining child support;
- Teenage parents without a high-school education or equivalent, who are not employed and do not attend school or an equivalent training program;
- Minor parents not living in an adult-supervised setting;
- Minor children who are absent from the home for a significant period (30 days or more). NOTE: A relative who fails to report the absence of a child within five days will be disqualified;
- Families who fail to complete up-front job search or vocational rehabilitation requirements, whichever is required;
- Families who fail to comply with the Employability Development Plan signed by the individual, to cooperate with the TANF Work Program, or to participate satisfactorily in the assigned work activity;

- Families who fail to submit to a written substance abuse screening questionnaire;
- Fleeing felons and parole violators; and
- Ineligible aliens.

b. In accordance with 21 USC 862a, Mississippi shall deny TANF assistance to a convicted felon.

c. Recipients of SSI are excluded from the TANF assistance Unit.

Mississippi will coordinate services, where available, with public and private entities (i.e., Mississippi Departments of Rehabilitation Services, Employment Security and Mental Health, and the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, etc.) to allow TANF families with barriers (i.e., little or no work experience, domestic violence, limited English proficiency, learning disabilities, mental, physical disabilities and/or substance abuse) an opportunity to gain access to services and resources needed to obtain the highest level of self-sufficiency within the constraints of the TANF time-limits. Special screening and referral procedures will be used to identify and refer the individual for the appropriate service. Mississippi will deny benefits to individuals who fail to comply with the activities provided by these entities.

Hardships will be assessed starting at forty (40) months and continued eligibility determined at the end of the individual's five (5) year time limit. The following individuals, as approved, may continue to receive benefits beyond the five-year time limit so long as the State does not exceed the 20% exemption criteria:

- Adults who are determined to be temporarily or permanently incapacitated and the household income does not exceed the TANF Basic 100% Requirement.

- Parents who are required to provide full-time care for an ill or incapacitated child or adult in the home and the household income does not exceed the TANF Basic 100% Requirement.

Mississippi will not deny assistance to a minor parent with a child under the age of 12 weeks for failure to attend school, but will permit the minor parent to voluntarily participate in educational activities as medically appropriate.

Mississippi requires regular school attendance and regular immunizations for all dependent children served under TANF. This is in accordance with State Law at 43-17-5. A 25% monthly benefit reduction is imposed for failure to comply without good cause.

Mississippi will impose a family benefit cap to prevent increases in assistance for new children coming into the family after the initial ten months of benefits, with certain exceptions (State Law 43-17-5).

Mississippi will also deny assistance for ten years to an individual convicted in Federal or State court of having made a fraudulent statement or representation, with respect to the individual's place of residence in order to receive TANF assistance simultaneously from two or more states.

Mississippi will deny benefits to all adult TANF applicants who do not meet an exemption from work requirements and fail to comply with job search or vocational rehabilitation activities during the 30-day TANF application processing period.

Mississippi will deny benefits to all adult TANF applicants age 18 and older who fail to submit to

a written drug screening questionnaire.

State law provides for an individual sanction of TANF until compliance for an adult recipient age 18 or older who fails, without good cause, to submit to a required drug test or declines to enter into required treatment for a substance abuse disorder or fails to meet the requirements of his/her treatment plan, including refusal to take or testing positive to a required drug test.

Mississippi will provide a one-time total earned income disregard opportunity for six months to TANF adults who find a job working at least 35 hours per week, at or above the federal minimum wage either: within 30 days after authorization for new TANF approvals on or after July 1, 1997; or within 30 days after the initial start date of the job readiness/job search work activity. The six-month total disregard of earnings will be available only once for new TANF approvals and ongoing cases beginning July 1, 1997, and thereafter.

A three-month total earned income disregard will be available when the TANF case is subject to closure because of increased earnings and the individual is employed at least 25 hours per week at or above the federal minimum wage. The three-month disregard cannot be claimed in combination with the six-month disregard. The three-month disregard can be claimed again after a 12-month consecutive break in assistance.

If available, funds shall be used by the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) for the assessment, enrollment, certification, follow-up and performance standards as they relate to career-related training of TANF Work Program (TWP) participants. Training may be established based on employer needs in a particular area of the State. Training may also be established on an individual basis based on the individual's career goal(s)/objective(s) and training needs in conjunction with employer needs.

The goal of the program is to end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.

The work program emphasizes unsubsidized jobs with supportive services following employment and/or transitional services following termination of the TANF grant because of increased earnings or loss of earned income disregards. The family also receives supportive services during the training and transitional services when benefits are terminated after employment

(b) Require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to engage in work (defined by the State) once the State determines the parent or caretaker is ready to engage in work, or once he or she has received 24 months of assistance, whichever is earlier, consistent with the child care exception at 407(e)(2) (section 402(a)(1)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act)

Mississippi will require a work eligible individual (an adult or minor head of household or a non-recipient parent) receiving assistance under the Program to engage in an allowable work activity once the State determines the parent or caretaker is work eligible, or once the work eligible individual has received assistance under the program for 24 months (whether or not consecutive), whichever is earlier.

Mississippi will not issue assistance payments to a family that includes an adult head-of-household, minor head-of-household, minor parent head-of-household, spouse of such head-of-

household or a non-recipient parent who has received TANF funding for 60 months (whether consecutive or not), except as allowed by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 in regard to the 20% exemption.

The adults in the TANF case will participate in one or more of the following work activities as defined below:

a. Job Search and Job Readiness

Job search and job readiness assistance is defined as the act of seeking or obtaining employment, preparation to seek or obtain employment, including life skills training, and substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, or rehabilitation activities for those who are otherwise employable.

Such treatment or therapy must be determined to be necessary and certified by a qualified medical, substance abuse or mental health professional. A qualified professional is defined as any individual who is licensed or certified. Job search and job readiness assistance activities are supervised daily by the case manager and/or job readiness trainer.

Job readiness and job search activities are considered one activity by Federal law. The maximum number of hours that can be included in the State's participation rate calculation for any 12-month period is limited to:

- a maximum of 120 hours for a single custodial parent whose youngest child is under age six; and

- 180 hours for a single custodial parent whose youngest child is age six or older.

A maximum of four consecutive weeks may be counted and reported as participation. After four consecutive weeks are reported, there must be at least a one week break (seven consecutive days) before additional participation can be included in the participation rate calculation process.

b. Unsubsidized Employment

Unsubsidized employment is full or part-time employment in the public or private sector for which the state does not furnish aid or support to the employer for wages paid to the TANF recipient. Types may include:

- **Regular employment** in the public or private sector for which a person receives unsubsidized wages on an hourly, weekly, or monthly basis.

- **Self-employment** is work for which a person earns income directly from one's own business, trade or profession rather than a specified salary or wages from an employer. Income may be verified by a W2 form, check stubs or written statements from customers.

c. Subsidized Employment

Subsidized employment is defined as employment in the private or public sector for which the employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds to offset some or all of the wages and costs of employing a recipient. Subsidized employment includes the following employment models:

- Work supplementation where TANF funds that would otherwise be paid as assistance are paid to the employer;

- A third-party contractor, like a temporary staffing agency, serves as employer of record and is paid a fee to cover salary, expenses and success in placing employees;

- Work study programs which involve paid employment provided by an educational institution if the student's earnings are subsidized by the educational institution; and

- Supported work for individuals with disabilities in an integrated setting, e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation AbilityWorks. Workers with disabilities may receive individualized services such as, but not limited to, transportation, family support or additional supervision.

Employers participating in a subsidy program must submit monthly documentation to verify participant attendance data. Agency staff will monitor and review employer reports to determine whether sufficient documentation exists to substantiate reported time and to warrant a subsidy payment. This auditing process will ensure the agency only pays for and reports actual and allowable hours of participation.

Work Study

Work study is also defined as subsidized employment. Work study is an approved employment plan at an accredited college, frequently granted in addition to other student financial aid. Various public funding sources may be utilized to pay earnings for hours worked. Earnings may be paid directly to the student or applied toward the student's tuition fees.

Temporary Employment with the U.S. Census

Certain temporary employment with the U.S. Census is defined as subsidized employment. This specifically refers to temporary census workers who are hired part-time during a census campaign. The employment is not expected to last longer than three months and the income received is totally disregarded in establishing TANF eligibility and the TANF benefit amount. Employment will be verified, by the case manager, via employer wage verification forms or check stubs. Countable work hours must be based on employer reports (wage forms) or check stubs and will be projected forward up to three months.

d. Work Experience

Alternative Work Experience Program (AWEP) placements are only made with private non-profit or for-profit entities for no cash payment in order to improve work skills by offering training and experience for a better understanding of the work world so the individual may move more quickly into full-time employment. Individuals participating in these programs are subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements and cannot be required to participate for more hours than the total welfare benefits divided by the federal minimum wage (FMW). The maximum

number of hours in any month that a participant may be required to participate in AWEP is based upon the family's combined value of TANF assistance (monthly grant and work stipend) and SNAP benefits divided by the federal minimum wage. The TANF benefit amount, net out child support, will be determined during the TANF application process and at each TANF redetermination appointment for all TANF cases that are subject to TANF Work Program requirements.

TANF recipients assigned to this activity cannot displace regular workers. Based on certain criteria private, for-profit entities may be used for AWEP placements. For example, a certain type of placement may be necessary for the participant to gain needed skills to successfully accomplish his/her career goals. Such entities must be approved in writing by the Work Programs Unit.

e. Community Service Programs

Community Service placements are only made with public entities and are limited to projects that serve a useful public purpose in fields such as health, social service, environmental protection, education, urban and rural development and redevelopment, welfare, recreation, public facilities, public safety, and child care. The main objective of assigning the TANF Work Program (TWP) participant to a community service activity is to improve work skills by offering training and experience for a better understanding of the work world so the individual may move more quickly into full-time employment. Individuals participating in these programs are subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements and cannot be required to participate for more hours than the total welfare benefits divided by the federal minimum wage (FMW). The maximum number of hours in any month that a participant may be required to participate in AWEP is based upon the family's combined value of TANF assistance (monthly grant and work stipend) and SNAP benefits divided by the federal minimum wage. The TANF benefit amount, net out child support, will be determined during the TANF application process and at each TANF redetermination appointment for all TANF cases that are subject to TANF Work Program requirements. TANF recipients assigned to this activity cannot displace regular workers.

AmeriCorps (VISTA) Volunteers

AmeriCorps work activities are defined as community service. **AmeriCorps** recruits and trains individuals who are willing to devote at least a year to serving in their community to meet specific needs. AmeriCorps includes two programs, AmeriCorps*VISTA and AmeriCorps*NCCC.

f. Vocational Educational Training

Vocational education is defined as an organized educational program which offers a sequence of courses directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations that do not require an advanced degree. Such programs shall include competency-based applied learning which contributes in an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, general employability skills, and the occupational-specific knowledge and skills that prepare participants for a specific trade, occupation, or vocation.

Vocational education programs must be provided by education or training organizations, such as vocational-technical schools, community colleges, post-secondary institutions, proprietary schools, nonprofit organizations, and secondary schools that offer vocational education.

Limitation on Vocational Educational Training and Teens in School

Vocational educational training cannot exceed 12 months for any individual. No more than 30% of the individuals counting toward the participation rate in a month may meet the work requirement by participating in vocational educational training. A teen parent head-of household attending secondary school or in an educational activity directly related to employment will be included in the 30%.

g. Education Directly Related to Employment

Education directly related to employment is defined as educational activities related to a specific occupation, job or job offer for individuals who have not received a high school diploma or a certificate of high school equivalency. This includes educational courses designed to provide the knowledge and skills for specific occupations or work settings, but may also include adult basic education, English as a second language (ESL), literacy skills, GED prep classes, and supervised study sessions.

h. Secondary School Attendance

Satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence is an allowable "non-core" activity for individuals age twenty and older who do not have a high school diploma or GED. Participation in this activity is not restricted to individuals for whom obtaining a GED is a prerequisite for employment. Minor parents, under age twenty, who have not completed secondary school or received a GED will be encouraged to pursue a diploma or GED. Educational activities for individuals under the age of twenty are considered "core" activities and are countable in the participation rate calculation. Educational activities for individuals age twenty and older are considered "non-core" activities and only count after the individual participates for an average of twenty (20) hours per week in a "core" activity.

i. On-the-Job Training

On-the-Job Training is defined as paid employment provided by a public or private employer through a contractual arrangement in which the employer provides training and skills essential to perform the job and the employer is reimbursed for the added costs associated with training. While engaged in productive work, the participant is provided additional daily supervision and training which will provide the knowledge or skills essential to fully and adequately perform the job. The participant is compensated at a rate (including benefits) comparable to that of other employees performing the same or similar jobs.
The state reimburses the employer up to 50 percent of the wages paid to the participant utilizing federal funds to offset the cost of training and supervision given to the participant. The employer is expected to retain the participant as a permanent, unsubsidized employee at the end of the training period.

j. Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment

Job skills training directly related to employment is training or education for job skills required by an employer to provide an individual with the ability to obtain employment or to advance or adapt to the changing demands of the workplace. Job skills training can include customized

training to meet the needs of a specific employer or training that prepares an individual for employment, including literacy and language instruction, if necessary, to enable the participant to perform a specific job or engage in a specific job training program.

(c) *Ensure that parents and caretakers receiving assistance engage in work in accordance with section 407 (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act). Consistent with the required strategic elements discussed in section II (a)(2) herein, provide a specific analysis of how the State's workforce development activities are addressing employment and training services for parents or caretakers receiving assistance.*

Mississippi will ensure that a work eligible individual (an adult head of household or a needy caretaker relative) receiving assistance under the Program will engage in work activities in accordance with Section 407 of Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (reauthorized by DRA of 2005). Work requirements and activities are defined in the Combined State Plan, TANF section (b) above. This document will be open for public review and comment according to the Administrative Procedures Act. The work requirements and activities are tracked through the system (MAVERICS and JAWS) interface throughout the period of assistance to ensure compliance is met, appropriate penalties imposed, and time limits not exceeded.

Exemptions: TANF mandates participation in approved work activities for all adult recipients who do not meet specific exemption criteria. All adults who are not specifically exempt will be referred for work activities. When appropriate, reasonable accommodations and language assistance will be provided to recipients to ensure meaningful access and effective communication. An adult included in the TANF grant assistance unit may be exempt from the mandatory work requirements for one of the following reasons:

- Incapacitated and not eligible for vocational rehabilitation services
- Temporary illness or injury
- Pregnancy in third trimester if there are verified complications with the pregnancy
- Caretaker of a child under 12 months old (up to 12 months)
- Caretaker of an ill or incapacitated person
- Age (over 60 and under 18)
- Domestic violence victim (up to 12 months)
- Caretaker in two-parent family of a child who is mentally retarded or physically handicapped

The State may exempt a TANF recipient from work requirements while receiving treatment for substance abuse, as long as the recipient is in compliance with the treatment plan. If certain criteria are met, the recipient's treatment plan may be defined and countable under the TWP job readiness activity.

State law and Public Law 104-193 provide for a full benefit sanction of TANF and comparable SNAP sanctions until compliance for families in which the non-exempt individual refuses, without good cause, to participate.

Sanctions: If any adult in a household refuses without good cause to participate in work as required under TANF, the following full benefit sanction will apply. When appropriate, reasonable

accommodations and language assistance will be provided to recipients to ensure meaningful access and effective communication to assist them in the conciliation process. If necessary and appropriate, the need for disability and language related accommodations are bases for good cause.

VIOLATION	PENALTY (WHICHEVER IS LONGER)
1st Violation	2 Months Minimum or Until Compliance
2nd Violation	6 Months Minimum or Until Compliance
3rd Violation	12 Months Minimum or Until Compliance
4th Violation	Permanent Disqualification

NOTE: For a two-parent family, the parent who was meeting work requirements, but lost TANF benefits due to the other parent's non-cooperation, may open his/her own case with the dependent children after six months.

Mississippi will comply with the mandatory work requirements and strive to meet the participation rates required. In fiscal Year 2000, 40% of all families receiving assistance must be in a countable work activity. The percentage increased to 45% in Fiscal Year 2001 and 50% in Fiscal Year 2002 and the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2003. Currently, the rate remains at 50% under the TANF program reauthorization. Participation rate requirements may be adjusted based on reduction in the caseload. Beginning October 1, 2001, State funds were used for cash assistance payments for two-parent families. The State does not claim these expenditures against the Maintenance of Effort requirement. Therefore, federal mandatory work requirements and participation rates do not apply to the State's two-parent families.

The State will not reduce or terminate assistance to a single custodial parent caring for a child under age six (6) for refusing to engage in work, if the parent demonstrates an inability to obtain appropriate, quality childcare. The parent's demonstrated inability must be for one of the following reasons:

a. Appropriate childcare is unavailable and/or unaffordable. Appropriate childcare is defined as a licensed childcare center or a family day care (home or an individual) chosen by the parent/caretaker relative to care for the child. The childcare provider must be 18 years old or older.
   - Appropriate childcare must be within a reasonable distance (within a 20-mile radius) of the parent/caretaker relative's home or worksite.

   - Appropriate childcare must be affordable. Affordable formal childcare is childcare that is equal to or less than the established rates for the type of care according to the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development.

b. Informal childcare by a relative or under other arrangements is unavailable or unsuitable. Unavailable or unsuitable childcare shall be defined as a situation involving child abuse, neglect or an unsafe environment.

If the parent/caretaker relative refuses to take the child to a particular day care center, he/she must inform the case manager of the reason for the refusal. The case manager must investigate to verify and substantiate the parent's claim of unsuitable childcare. Complaints involving child abuse, neglect or an unsafe environment will be reported to the MS State Health Department, Division of Child Care Facilities Licensure. The case manager must contact the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD) representative to discuss the problem and determine what other childcare services are available in the area. The case manager will determine good cause for non-participation based on the investigation and information gathered.

Parental complaints regarding a breakdown in receiving childcare services or against a DECCD representative must be submitted in writing to the Director, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development, Mississippi Department of Human Services, Post Office Box 352, Jackson, MS 39205. The parent/caretaker relative may also contact the DECCD Resource and Referral telephone line (1-800-877-7882).

(d) Take such reasonable steps as the State deems necessary to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iv) of the Social Security Act).

Mississippi will take reasonable and necessary steps to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the federal government. Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, at 43-1-19, restricts disclosure of recipient information pursuant to federal regulations and to laws regarding use of electronically exchanged data. MDHS also provides staff training upon entry and annually thereafter with a Confidential Information Agreement setting forth policy and penalties for safeguarding information in accordance with requirements for the exchange of information received form the Social Security Administration and Internal Revenue Service.

(e) Establish goals and take action to prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies (section 402(a)(1)(A)(v) of the Social Security Act).

Mississippi established a task force consisting of public and private organizations and individuals to review the incidence and circumstance of out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Based on these findings, goals were established and recommendations made to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies. The State established numerical goals for reducing the illegitimacy ratio of the State (as defined in Section 403(a)(2)(B)) for federal fiscal year 1997 through calendar year 2005. The goals were:

Year	Reduction form 1995 Ratio	Ratio Goal
1998	2.5%	42.9%
1999	3.0%	42.4%
2000	4.9%	40.5%
2001	6.0%	39.4%
2002	7.8%	37.6%
2003	10.3%	35.1%
2004	11.4%	34.0%
2005	12.6%	32.8%

These findings and recommendations were provided to the Governor and the State Legislature first in January 1998 and again in January 1999. These documents have been published and are distributed to interested groups, to other organizations, and to the State Departments of Education and Health. As a result of the task force reports, new legislation was passed into law to raise the age of consent, strengthen the statutory rape laws and to establish abstinence training in the public school. Mississippi has set a goal to reduce the State's teen pregnancy rate by one-third between 2006-2017.

MDHS established an Abstinence/Youth Development Program within the Foundation for Families Unit to provide information and coordinate activities to promote abstinence, reduce the teen and out-of-wedlock births, and develop teen leadership throughout the State by working with public and private organizations, schools, churches and interested groups. This unit will continue an aggressive public service campaign including billboards and radio and television announcements. A video targeting teens was developed using actual teenagers and is available for viewing by groups.

MDHS will continue to work with related organizations and individuals to develop a program designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system and relevant counseling services that provide education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded in scope to include men.

(f) *Conduct a program designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system, and relevant counseling services, that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded to include men (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vi) of the Social Security Act)*

MDHS established an Abstinence/Youth Development Program within the Foundation for Families Unit as described above in section (e).
MDHS will continue to work with related organizations and individuals to develop a program designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system and relevant counseling services that provide education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded in scope to include men.

In deciding how to best use Federal TANF funds for low-income families, MDHS developed strong collaborative relationships with businesses, local agencies, faith-based groups, and community organizations for the delivery of services. Continuation and/or expansion of these initiatives are subject to availability of funding and the justification of need. MDHS may contract with public and private entities to provide services under TANF initiatives to assist families end welfare dependency and become self-sufficient. The initiatives are:

a. Child Care Enhancements

To end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage, MDHS may provide quality, comprehensive childcare services for children in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program and income-eligible, working families at risk of going onto TANF who meet Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) eligibility.

b. Responsible Fatherhood Initiative

To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families and prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, MDHS may provide comprehensive services that support and educate fathers on the importance of responsible parenthood.

The program goals are to:

- increase public awareness concerning the impact of a father's absence;
- assist fathers in becoming "Team Parents" and to share the legal, financial and emotional responsibilities of parenthood with the mother(s) of their child(ren),
- improve the self-image of fathers and their families;
- increase fathers' parental involvement in their child(ren)'s education;
- improve academic performance and graduation rate and reduce the dropout rate of their children;
- decrease the teenage pregnancy rate;
- decrease juvenile crime;
- promote two-parent families and the father's role in the family; and
- recruit fathers and expectant fathers to volunteer as mentors to other fathers.

Financial eligibility determination is not required for the program.

c. Post-Employment Assistance Programs

To end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation and work, MDHS may provide post-employment assistance services to current and former TANF recipients who are employed. Where appropriate, case managers will work with employers to ensure reasonable accommodations are provided to employees with disabilities. Individuals with language barriers shall be referred to an English as a Second Language (ESL) activity prior to job placement. Case management will also work with potential employers to ensure reasonable accommodations and language assistance are available at the work site to ensure meaningful access and effective communication. The goals of the initiative are to increase job retention, job advancement, and self-sufficiency for former and current TANF recipients. Families eligible for this program are not required to be TANF eligible, but must be at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

d. TANF Prevention/Intervention Program

To develop projects in community-based settings to prevent and reduce at-risk behaviors among youth and their families to prevent, or break the cycle of welfare dependence, MDHS may provide the following services/activities to:

- reduce and prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies,
- prevent/reduce substance abuse (use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco products), and
- prevent/reduce other behaviors that prevent the attainment of a high school diploma or GED.

Financial eligibility determination is not required for the program.

e. "Healthy Choices, Brighter Future" Initiative

To involve community, faith-based organizations, schools and families within the State's four congressional districts (counties) in the establishment of educational and training programs on youth leadership development and teenage pregnancy prevention MDHS may provide the following activities:

- develop and implement a community-wide abstinence-till-marriage curriculum that teaches the social, psychological and physical effects of engaging in sexual activities,
- teach that abstinence from sexual activity before marriage, and fidelity within marriage is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and related health problems,
- conduct multimedia marketing campaign to reach a wide audience with the abstinence-till-marriage message,
- develop workshops in community settings that address at-risk behaviors (i.e., dropping out of school; alcohol and substance abuse/use; teen pregnancy),
- develop and maintain resources that will promote the abstinence-till-marriage message and allow the program to be replicated statewide, and
- reinforce abstinence and second-time abstinence.

The goal is to reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and prevent other at-risk teen behavior. Financial eligibility determination is not required for the program.

f.   Intensive Youth Supervision Programs

To provide a diversionary, community based intensive supervision program for youth offenders who have been referred to the court and have not been adjudicated as a delinquent or child in need of supervision, the program goals are to:

- reduce criminal activity,
- encourage the youth to attend school,
- reduce alcohol and drug abuse,
- reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies,
- facilitate goal development toward employment,
- promote reunification of families,
- develop communication and socialization skills, and
- recognize and implement alternative methods of dealing with anger, as well as inspire youths to be more positive and effective individuals.

Individuals eligible for this program are not required to be TANF eligible, but must be at or below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

g.   Adolescent Offender Program

The program shall utilize role-model counselors to safely divert adolescent offenders from further contact with the criminal justice system. The program is designed to ensure that children remain in the home, prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, improve school attendance, and facilitate goal development that will lead to gainful employment. Individuals eligible for this program are not required to be TANF eligible, but must be at or below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

If funds are available, MDHS may enter into a contract(s)/agreement(s), using Federal TANF funds, with public, private or private nonprofit entities to serve as a fiscal administrator(s) for the TANF Summer Enrichment Program in the county or counties within the State. The fiscal administrator will be responsible for managing and administering the operation of the Summer Enrichment Program in the counties within its designated service area(s). The Summer Enrichment Program is designed to fund projects in community-based settings to prevent and reduce at-risk behaviors (i.e., dropping out of school; substance abuse-use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco products; teen pregnancy; dependency on welfare, etc.) among youth between the ages of 10 and 17.

MDHS may contract, using Federal TANF funds, with public, private or private nonprofit entities to provide TANF Work Program services as needed statewide. All contractual services used will be procured in accordance with State Laws. The subgrant will contain performance measures that will assure TANF Work Program goals are achieved. The strategy for accomplishing the goals and objectives outlined for the work program must include utilizing the case management approach.

To provide assistance, using Federal TANF funds, to low-income families in resolving barriers to self-sufficiency the State may establish a Crisis Intervention Program. The program will use TANF funds to:

- Meet a TANF family's ongoing basic needs (i.e., food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, personal care items, and general incidental expenses.)

- Provide assistance to families experiencing an emergent need (i.e., utility payments) that cannot be met with their own income and resources. This program is designed to deal with a specific situation or an episode of need and is not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs. These services will not extend beyond four months. Families are not required to be TANF eligible but must be below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

The goals of the program are to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; and end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, and work.

Based on availability of TANF funds, the following programs may be implemented through legislative appropriation:

a. Funds may be made available to the Attorney General to implement programs that serve unmet needs of "at risk" youth in the state. The programs shall be designed to:

- Provide assistance to needy families so that the children may be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives;

- End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation and work. These programs provide safe and stable environments which help children succeed and allow their parents to work;

- Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and

- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

b. TANF funds may be used for temporary care (not to exceed 45 days) of children in foster care. The placements are through emergency shelter facilities and normally do not exceed 45 days. TANF funds will not be used to duplicate Federal foster care payments. Families eligible for this program are not required to be TANF eligible, but must be below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. The goal of the program is to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

c. TANF funds may be used for the expansion of the Families First Resource Centers. To establish resource centers that would not be possible through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Grant, MDHS will advance the development, expansion and enhancement of a statewide network of community-based, prevention focused, parent resource centers that offer assistance to families. To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies the centers will:

- provide early comprehensive support for parents,
- promote the development of parenting skills,
- promote the independence of families,
- increase family stability,
- improve family access to resources and opportunities for assistance,
- focus on prevention of teenage pregnancy while supporting teen parents,
- support the needs of families with children with disabilities, and
- provide a safe place for supervised visitation.

Families eligible for this program are not required to be TANF eligible, but must be at or below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

d. TANF funds may be used to provide family preservation services to families, with dependent children, earning at or below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Social workers and homemakers provide supportive services to promote the safety and well-being of children and their families, promote stability and permanency, and preserve family unity. The goal of the program is to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

e. TANF funds may be made available to the State Coalition of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) for the purpose of developing and implementing statewide programs that serve the unmet needs of youth by way of Adolescent Offenders and Teen Leadership programs. The program is designed to ensure that children remain in the home, prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families, improve school attendance, and facilitate goal development that will lead to gainful employment. Individuals eligible for this program are not required to be TANF eligible, but must be at or below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

The MDHS will create a referral process through our Family and Children Services (FCS) division to contact state and local law enforcement, the education system, and counseling services for recipients requiring assistance with statutory rape, domestic violence issues, mental health concerns, and drug/alcohol treatment. The counselors and educators can focus on problems that

may be an underlying problem other than statutory rape. Individuals referred will complete an assessment, discuss educational barriers, and receive life skill strategies.

MDHS established the Healthy Marriage Initiative, using Federal TANF funds, to promote the well-being of children in Mississippi by encouraging the involvement of mothers and fathers in their lives. The initiative will:

- Encourage stable family formation and healthy marriages,
- Promote responsible fathering,
- Increase paternity and child support objectives,
- Encourage community support for marriage, and
- Prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

The Healthy Marriage Unit will collaborate with community organizations, educational institutions, and faith-based groups to provide the appropriate skills-based relationship education and services to youth and unmarried couples and to:

- Support healthy marriage and family development/formation,
- Prevent family disruption, and
- Secure permanent families for children

The MDHS shall implement a TANF Up-Front Diversion Program to provide assistance, using Federal TANF funds, to families with emergency circumstances. As an alternative to TANF cash assistance, a family with an emergency circumstance may be eligible for a one-time short-term cash assistance payment.

To receive the diversion program assistance:

- Family units must include an adult and a dependent child(ren) less than 18 years of age.
- Family members must have lived in the designated disaster areas at the time the disaster occurred.
- Family members must currently live together in Mississippi.
- Family members must not be current recipients of regular TANF, including Transitional Transportation or Transitional Child Care.
- Family's primary individual must sign an agreement restricting any member of their household from receiving TANF for a period of three (3) months.

Households will be required to pass the gross income limits standard (200% of the Federal Poverty Level). The maximum amount of resources the family may retain to be eligible is $3000.

In addition to the above, the adult(s) in the family must:

- be employed an average of 25 or more hours per week at or above the federal minimum wage;
- have documentation of the promise of a job starting within 14 days from the application date, working an average of 25 or more hours per week at or above the federal minimum wage; or
- be currently participating in a short-term work-related training program.

A $1000 payment will be issued directly to the family (parent/caretaker relative and child) to assist in resolving any short-term financial issues related to basic needs (i.e., childcare, transportation, rent and relocation expenses).

The MDHS does not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, national origin, color, marital status, handicap, or political beliefs. Mississippi will follow the nondiscrimination provisions in Title I, Section 408, for any program or activity receiving funds under Public Law 104 - 193, provision in State Law and Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

State Law, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated at 43-17-5(f), prohibits the displacement of regular workers by TANF recipients. No adult in a work activity shall be employed or assigned when another individual is on layoff from the same or any substantially equivalent job within six months, before the date of the TANF recipient's employment or assignment; or if the employer has terminated the employment of any regular employee or otherwise caused an involuntary reduction of its work force in order to fill the vacancy created with an adult receiving TANF assistance. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security as established under Section 71-5-101 will appoint one or more impartial hearing officers to hear and decide claims by employees of violations.

(g) *Implement policies and procedures as necessary to prevent access to assistance provided under the State program funded under this part through any electronic fund transaction in an automated teller machine or point-of-sale device located in a place described in section 408(a)(12), including a plan to ensure that recipients of the assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vii) of the Social Security Act).*

Pursuant to Section 4004 of Public Law 112-96, this section describes Mississippi's policies and procedures to prevent access to TANF assistance through electronic fund transactions at casinos, liquor stores, and establishments providing adult-oriented entertainment. This section also explains how the state ensures that recipients have adequate access to their TANF assistance, and can withdraw the TANF assistance with minimal fess or charges, including the opportunity to access the TANF assistance with no fee or charge and how information on fees are communicated to recipients.

Mississippi law follows the Federal Statues to prohibit the use or acceptance of an electronic benefit transfer card at the following locations:

- Liquor or package stores that sell intoxicating liquor, either exclusively or primarily;
- Gambling establishments that offer, as its primary services, casino, gambling or gaming activities; and
- All retail establishments that provide adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment.

In order for Mississippi to prevent EBT transactions at the above-defined locations, agency staff will discuss with TANF applicants/recipients the proper use of their TANF benefits at initial application and redetermination. All county offices are required to display a poster with the TANF restrictions and penalties in a prominent location.

When it is determined that such unauthorized transactions have occurred, TANF households will face a 50% reduction in the monthly assistance unit payment. Benefits will be reduced for each month such a transaction occurred, with the penalty being imposed as soon as possible after

advance notice of the reduction. Penalties for misuse of TANF funds shall not be imposed in conjunction with another disqualification/sanction. It will be imposed the month after the disqualification concludes.

(h) Ensure that recipients of assistance provided under the State program funded under this part have the ability to use or withdraw assistance with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance, and that such information is made publicly available (section 402(a)(1)(A)(viii) of the Social Security Act).

Mississippi delivers TANF benefits via the Mississippi Debit MasterCard Program ePayment/EPPICard. Mississippi also delivers other benefits via the EPPICard including child support, adoption subsidy and foster board payments.

TANF assistance may be accessed worldwide at any commercial point-of-sale (POS) machine that displays the Maestro or MasterCard logo. Cash may be accessed at any automated teller machine (ATM) that displays MasterCard or Cirrus or a teller in a bank location that displays the MasterCard logo. Recipients may also receive cash back with a purchase at a vender that accepts Maestro or MasterCard.

Transactions performed at ATMs and some POS machine venders are subject to surcharges by the financial institution or owner.

The cardholder can use their EPPICard at vendor and bank locations worldwide that displays the Maestro or MasterCard logo.

Form MDHS-EA-303A, Mississippi Debit MasterCard Program ePayment/EPPICard Customer Information Sheet, is provided to and discussed with the TANF recipient during the interview at application and redetermination. The MDHS-EA-303A also informs the recipient of merchant and bank locations where cash benefits may be redeemed.
The card carrier mailed with the EPPICard also provides this information, as well as, EPPICard account access, card use and customer service information. Recipients may also access this information via the internet at https://www.eppicard.com/.

Fees:

Purchase	No fee
Cash-back or Bank Teller Window	No fee
ATM Cash Withdrawal	$1.75 each time
ATM Balance Inquiry	$.75 each time
Card Replacement	$5.00
Expedited Card Delivery	$15.00
ATM Denial for Insufficient Funds	$.50 after 3 requests (each call, each calendar month)
Monthly Account Access by Calling Customer Service	$.50 after 5 calls (each call, each calendar month)

Surcharges:

A surcharge is an additional fee that may be charged for using a card at an ATM, or for withdrawing cash only at some point-of-sale machines in retail stores. The surcharge is charged by the owner of the equipment or financial institution supporting the ATM.

Banks and other retailers may have varying surcharges. Recipients may avoid the surcharge by accessing benefits at any Hancock, Trustmark or Regions Bank ATM.

TANF recipients are informed of benefit prohibitions by use of posters displayed in all MDHS county offices. In addition to the MDHS-EA-303A noted above, benefit use prohibitions are provided to all TANF households via the MDHS-EA-300, TANF Rights and Responsibilities, and the MDHS-EA-312, Personal Responsibility Contact. Benefit use prohibitions are also included in the TANF Approval Notice, the MDHS website, the EPPICard website, and through the recipient's online account "My MDHS Account". In addition, County and Regional Directors randomly observe TANF client interviews to ensure that eligibility workers are complying with requirements to explain benefit use and restrictions with TANF households.

(i) *Indicate whether it intends to treat families moving from another State differently from other families under the program, and if so how (section 402(a)(1)(B)(i) of the Social Security Act).*

Mississippi will not treat families moving into the State differently than other families under the TANF program. To treat families differently would create an unfair advantage to person moving into the State with higher benefits.

(j) *Indicate whether it intends to provide assistance to non-citizens, and if so include an overview of the assistance (section 402(a)(1)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act).*

Mississippi will provide assistance to individuals who are not citizens of the United States only in accordance with the provisions outlined in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, State Law and subsequent amendments to the Social Security Act.

The following qualified aliens are eligible:

- For five years after obtaining the designated alien status:
    - An alien admitted under Section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA): - An alien who is granted asylum under Section 208 of the INA;
    - An alien whose deportation is being withheld under Section 243(h) of the INA, or whose removal is being withheld under Section 241(b)(3) of the INA;
    - An alien who is a Cuban or Haitian entrant as defined in Section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980; or
    - An alien admitted as an Amerasian immigrant pursuant to Section 584 of the Foreign Operations Act, as amended.

- For an unlimited period, the following qualified aliens lawfully admitted for permanent residence:
    - Veterans (honorably discharged for reasons other than alienage); active duty personnel (other than active duty for training), and their spouses and unmarried dependent children; and
    - Aliens who are lawfully admitted for permanent residence and have worked for 40 qualifying quarters of coverage under Title II of the SSA or can be credited

with such quarters as provided for by section 435 of PRWORA (SUSC 1645), not including quarters beginning January 1, 1997 in which the alien received any Federal means-tested public benefit.

Mississippi will provide assistance to victims of sever forms of trafficking to the same extent as aliens.

(k) *Set forth objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and the determination of eligibility and for fair and equitable treatment, including an explanation of how it will provide opportunities for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State administrative or appeal process (section 402(a)(1)(B)(iii) of the Social Security Act).*

Mississippi has established objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and the determination of eligibility and for fair and equitable treatment, including the opportunity for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State administrative or appeal process. The State will administer the due process notification of adverse action with an opportunity for a fair hearing handled independently of the county office eligibility and/or benefit level decision to resolve any recipient benefit decreases, terminations, or related issues. Basic assistance program eligibility criteria and benefit levels are the same statewide.

CRITERIA or BASIS FOR A HEARING

An applicant or recipient has a right to appeal decisions regarding eligibility for assistance including the following issues:

1. Decisions regarding eligibility for or amount of TANF benefits
2. Conditions of payment or repayment
3. Denial of opportunity to make application or reapplication of benefits
4. Undue delay in determining eligibility for TANF and in making TANF benefits available
5. Suspension or discontinuance of TANF benefits in whole or in part
6. Assignment or participation issues in the TANF Work Program, including work exemptions, supportive services, good cause, etc.
7. Decisions regarding cooperation with the Division of Child Support Enforcement and good cause claims
8. Application of penalties which results in rejection of application, case closure, or reduction of benefits

NOTE: Some issues that are established by law are not subject to the fair hearing process, such as the maximum TANF benefit level.

REQUESTING A HEARING

The applicant or recipient has the choice of either an agency conference or a state hearing to appeal any decision made on his case. The individual may bypass the agency conference and request a state hearing, or if he chooses to request an agency conference and is dissatisfied with the result, a state hearing may then be requested.

The individual must make the request for a hearing in writing and sign the request. The claimant may be represented by any one he designates; however, he must give the designation in writing.

The request for a hearing may be made by:

1. Checking in the space provided on any of the notification forms

2. Writing a letter indicating his request for a hearing
3. Completing form **MDHS-EA-305, Request for a Hearing**

The individual may make the request orally, but this must be followed by a formal written request. The worker will assist the individual by explaining how to request a hearing, sending the form **MDHS-EA-305** to the individual who does not wish to write a letter and lacks a notification form, or helping to fill out a request form when the individual comes to the office of the Department of Human Services and requests a hearing. The request for a hearing may be sent to the county office or to the Administrative Hearings Unit. The worker may give the individual an addressed envelope when the individual prefers to mail the request himself.

State Hearing Request after Local Hearing

When the individual has had a local hearing and is not satisfied with the outcome, he must request a state hearing within 90 days, following the expiration of the advance notice of case change or closure.
NOTE: If the 10th day falls on a weekend or holiday, the individual must always be given until the first working day following the weekend or holiday to prevent the action or to request continued benefits.

(l) *Indicate whether the State intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment (Section 402(a)(1)(B)(v) of the Social Security Act)—*
    (1) *providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or*
    (2) *in other occupations related to elder care, high-demand occupations, or occupations expected to experience labor shortages as, determined appropriate by the State for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.*

If TANF funding is available, Mississippi will assist TANF Work Program participants to train for, seek, and maintain employment

- providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or
- in other occupations related to elder care determined appropriate by the State for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Field Operations (DFO) shall partner with the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) and/or other entities to provide short-term training (e.g., Certified Nurses Assistance (CNA) training for placement in a nursing home, etc.) for TANF Work Program (TWP) participants who seek employment in the eldercare workforce. Training shall be established on an individual basis based on the individual's career goal(s)/objective(s) and training needs in conjunction with employer needs.

(m) *Provide for all MOE-funded services the following information: the name of the program benefit or service, and the financial eligibility criteria that families must meet in order to receive that benefit or service. In addition, for TANF MOE-funded services (co-mingled or segregated MOE) describe the program benefit provided to eligible families (SSP services do not have to include a description*

but the Department of Health and Human Services encourages it) (§263.2(b)(3) & §263.2(c) preamble pages 17826-7).

The State shall establish a Segregated State program for the following state-funded programs. These programs shall count towards the State's MOE:

- State funded scholarship programs for needy families with dependent children that began after 1995. [Mississippi Code of 1972 Sections 37-106-29, 37-106-31, and 37-157-1 amended by Senate Bill 2231(1997) and House Bill 1273(1998)]

  Eligible population: A needy family is defined as a family with a dependent child(ren) and an average annual income at or below 350 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. The eligible child is defined as anyone who has not yet attained their 24th birthday, continuously enrolled in a program of post-secondary education [Attorney General's Opinion (September 6, 2002)]. The eligible child is not a veteran, not a graduate or professional student, not married, not an orphan or ward of the court, and does not have legal dependents. The eligible child is living in the home; however, he/she may be absent from the home for periods while attending the post-secondary program.

  The cost of a scholarship provided to the head of household and/or his/her spouse in an income eligible family shall also count toward the State's MOE requirement.

- State funded programs to increase the likelihood of school success of preschool and school age children in needy families.

  Eligible population: Preschool and school age children from families with an income at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Mississippi established new programs to assist needy families with educational opportunities. The Mississippi Department of Education developed state funded programs for 3 and 4 year olds whose families are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. However, the Reading and Intervention Program was established for school age child who has scored low on state tests and this program does not have a financial eligibility criteria. Pamphlets, brochures, and posters are provided to local MDHS offices ensuring the public is aware of all available services funded by the Mississippi Department of Education.

  The TANF goals of these programs/activities are to:
  - Provide assistance to needy families so that the children may be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives;
  - End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation and work. These programs provide safe and stable environments which help children succeed and allow their parents to work;
  - Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
  - Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families

Effective October 1, 2001, the State established a separate state program to serve needy two-parent families. State funds are used for cash assistance payments. This program will not count toward the state's MOE requirements.

Although two able-bodied parents are in the home, a dependent child is considered deprived of parental care or support when the natural or adoptive parent is unemployed.

Two-parent families are only eligible if the parent is designated as the "principal wage earner."
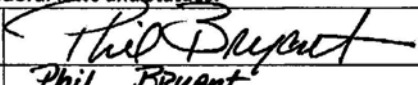
- Meets the state's definition of "unemployed," which means that he or she is not currently working or has not worked full-time for at least thirty (30) days prior to receipt of TANF benefits,
- Works less than 100 hours per month,
- Has not refused a bona fide offer of employment or training, without good cause, within the 30-day period prior to receipt of TANF benefits, and
- Is not on strike.

All other eligibility requirements for the two-parent family are the same as the TANF (Basic) case.

To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families:

- When the TANF recipient marries, the new spouse's income will be disregarded for six months. This will allow the single parent who marries an employed person the opportunity to continue TANF cash assistance and work preparation activities without immediately losing benefits because of the spouse's income. (One time disregard for the first marriage of the PI on or after October 1, 1999.)
- Recent work history requirements will be waived for two-parent families when the parents are under 21 years of age to allow these young families to qualify for the TANF Unemployed Parent program.

Certifications

	STATEMENTS OF CERTIFICATION
	I certify that during the fiscal year, Mississippi will:
1.	Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);
2.	Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);
3.	Authorize the Mississippi Department of Human Services (hereinafter referred to as "MDHS") to administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)— (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;
4.	Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);
5.	Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);
6.	Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act)--. (i) screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals; (ii) refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and (iii) waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.

I do hereby certify that all statements made by me are true and correct, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, further, I understand that in the event that I have knowingly and willfully made any false statements, I will be liable for punishment in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and statues.

Signature of State's Chief Executive Officer:	*Phil Bryant*
Printed Name:	Phil Bryant
Title of Signatory:	Governor, State of Mississippi
Date Signed:	2-26-16

Jobs for Veterans State Grants

(OMB Control Number: 1225-0086)

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported (VETS-200 Series Reports) quarterly (using four "rolling quarters") on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a five-year (FY 2015-2019), multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

(a)   How the State intends to provide employment, training and job placement services to veterans and eligible persons under the JVSG;

MDES plans to assign and utilize DVOP Specialists and other agency employees trained in case management to metropolitan WIN Job Centers throughout the state where the need of intensive services is greatest. DVOP Specialists will provide intensive services, through the case management framework, and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing services to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor. The DVOP Specialist, Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC), will continue to work with the Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR & E) program. DVOP specialists will provide intensive services through the case management approach, including completion of an assessment and a written employability development plan.

LVER staff trained in networking will be assigned and utilized within workforce areas. LVER staff will conduct outreach to employers within the workforce area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans served by the WIN Job Centers.

MDES plans to fill grant-funded vacancies expeditiously despite State budget problems, hiring freezes and furloughs. MDES plans to identify projected losses and retirements early when possible. Applicants will be given the following order of priority: qualified service-connected disabled veterans; qualified eligible veterans; and qualified eligible persons.

MDES utilizes temporary staff agencies for veteran applicants to fill vacant JVSG-funded positions. Also, veteran (non-JVSG) staff in the agency may be considered for assignment to the program.

(b) *The duties assigned to DVOP specialists and LVER staff by the State; specifically implementing DVOP and LVER duties or roles and responsibilities as outlined in 38 U.S.C. § 4103A and 4104. These duties must be consistent with current guidance;*

DVOP Specialists

In accordance with Veterans' Program Letter (VPL) 03-14, VPL 04-14 or most recent guidance, MDES Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) will provide intensive services, following the case management framework, and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor.

In the event that a DVOP specialist does not have a full case-load of eligible veterans and eligible spouses, the DVOP specialist may perform additional activities, in the order specified below:

- Review all open case files of current participants with a SBE or in a priority category and perform case management duties.
- Conduct relationship building, outreach and recruitment activities with other service providers in the local area, to enroll SBE and priority category veterans in the WIN Job Center employment system.

DVOP specialists will target their services to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and veterans age 18 to 24. DVOP Specialists are integrated into the WIN Job Center service delivery system at the local office level. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses with significant barriers to employment are referred to or assigned to DVOP Specialists after other WIN Job Center staff complete initial core services. To better serve this target group, DVOP Specialists will continue to be oriented in all WIN Job Center programs, i.e., WIOA qualifications. WIN Job Center staff, WIOA and Wagner-Peyser, will identify eligible veterans or eligible spouses at the point of entry through the use of the intake form and complete initial assessments. Those identified (self-attest) as having a SBE will be referred or assigned to the DVOP specialists or, in instances where a DVOP specialist is not available or has reached the predetermined caseload, another WIN Job Center staff will provide services, including intensive services, to veterans and eligible spouses as appropriate under the programs the staff administer.

LVER Staff

In accordance with Veterans' Program Letter 07-10, 03-14 or most recent guidance, MDES Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) will conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups, and facilitating employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans within WIN Job Centers.

Although MDES does not have a Business Services Team (BST), the LVERs will work with the local area management team to coordinate and conduct employer outreach activities.

LVERs will advocate for all veterans served by the WIN Job Centers with business, industry, and other community-based organizations by participating in appropriate activities such as:

- Planning and participating in job and career fairs;
- Conducting employer outreach;

- Educating all WIN Job Center staff and partners with current employment initiatives and programs for veterans;
- Conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups, in conjunction with employers;
- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans;
- Informing Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans;
- Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; and
- Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts.

MDES will use LVER staff to facilitate job-driven employment, training, and placement services on behalf of veterans.

On behalf of all veterans, MDES LVER staff will conduct outreach to businesses and industries by email, text, phone, mail, employer forums, and face to face office visits.

The expected outcomes are enhanced employability and placement of veterans who seek employment; increased employers awareness of the benefits to hire veterans and increased knowledge of services offered by WIN Job Centers.

(c) *The manner in which DVOP specialists and LVER staff are integrated into the State's employment service delivery system or one-stop delivery system partner network;*

Program Integration and Leveraging Resources

DVOP specialists and LVERs are an essential part of and fully integrated into the WIN Job Center network. They are included among the WIN Job Center partner staff, which consists of all staff employed by programs or activities operated by job center partners that provide job-driven online and/or in-person workforce development or related support services as part of the workforce development system. Other WIN Job Center partner staff members include staff of WIOA, WP, and other network partner programs.

LVER staff will continue to be viable and effective in the WIN Job Center delivery system, e.g., facilitating and participating in employer marketing services, employer job fairs, etc. MDES does not have a Business Services Team (BST) but LVER staff will continue to be considered key players and team participants in business development activities and employer marketing efforts, developing jobs for WIN Job Centers, marketing veteran services to employers, assisting employers at job fairs and facilitating employer recruitments. Veterans with significant barriers to employment are referred to or assigned to the DVOP after initial core services. All of these activities translate into a fully integrated system with positive benefits and productivity for the WIN Job Centers and also subsequently result in the development of seamless employment opportunities for veterans.

MDES DVOP and WIN Job Center staff will continue to identify service providers in the state and establish linkages to leverage and enhance employability and placement of veterans. MDES LVER and WIN Job Center staff will continue to seek out and partner with other economic stakeholders regarding the employment of veterans, i.e. Chambers of Commerce, economic development units, human resource associations, professional organizations, educational institutions, training providers and others, by attending meetings and through outreach.

MDES LVER will conduct outreach to other organizations that provide employment services to veterans. MDES will negotiate future Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with service providers as appropriate to bring additional services as part of the overall service delivery strategy. Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) will partner to create an electronic means through which offenders nearing release from the custody of MDOC have an opportunity to place an employment application with MDES.

The MDES website provides information about available employment and training-related services. MDES plans to use service brochures to convey information on employment and training opportunities to veterans during the initial core services. Information may also be provided by phone, mail, or electronically through the agency workforce technology system.

To better meet the needs of employers wishing to hire veterans, a coordinated approach to marketing and service delivery will include the LVER and other WIN Job Center staff. Chambers of Commerce, economic development units, veterans' organizations and colleges/community colleges will be invited to play a key role in marketing a job-driven campaign to help veterans make decisions based on their individual employment needs coupled with the projected labor market. MDES plans to continue using marketing brochures and tools to target veterans and employers (on behalf of veterans) resulting in increased job opportunities for veterans.

(d)   *The Incentive Award program implemented using the 1% grant allocation set aside for this purpose, as applicable;*

Performance Incentive Awards

MDES intends to use up to one percent ($16,000) of the annual JVSG allocation for Performance Incentive Awards. In accordance with Veterans Program Letter Number 02-07, MDES has established a performance incentive awards program to recognize individuals for quality employment outreach and placement services to veterans. Individuals must provide a recognizable service that exceeds their ordinary job duties and that clearly demonstrates extraordinary and commendable efforts on behalf of veterans and eligible spouses. It includes outstanding outreach and placement efforts on behalf of veterans, or extraordinary community relations efforts to increase the awareness of veterans' issues.

MDES expects an increase in services to veterans by our partners, innovative approaches to servicing veterans, expanded program integration, increases in performance outcomes and increased advocacy within the employer community. MDES also expects that staff will:

- Improve the employment status of veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE);
- Improve policies and procedures related to veterans' services;
- Improve the promotion of services to veterans by rewarding innovative outreach strategies, supportive services, case management and job development; and
- Improve procedures that will increase collaboration and improve performance outcomes.

The incentive program will bring attention to veterans as a group with special employment needs and will reinforce the special federal regulations that support priority of services to veterans.

Selection criteria for award recipients will be based on performance standards and activities accomplished during the fiscal year for which the award is given. Attitude, motivation, program improvement and positive feedback will also be considered.

The Director of the Office of Job Connections, the Deputy Director of the Office of Job Connections, and the Department Chief of Workforce Services, with input from local management, will administer monetary awards among:

- Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff;
- Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists; and
- WIN Job Center WIOA, WP, and partner programs employees.

In the event the demand for incentive exceeds available funds the top performer in each category will receive $1,000, the next 10 staff on performance will receive $500 each, the next 20 will receive $250 each and the remaining eligible staff will receive an equal share not to exceed $100 each.

Award Categories include:

- OUTSTANDING PLACEMENTS OF VETERANS – the award will recognize a qualified employee for exceptional performance that clearly exceeds ordinary job duties, exceeds their performance goals, and demonstrates extraordinary and commendable efforts resulting in employment for veterans. (DVOP/WIN Job Center Staff)
- OUTSTANDING OUTREACH TO EMPLOYERS – award to recognize a qualified employee for exceptional outreach services to employers that clearly exceeds their ordinary job duties on behalf of veterans. (LVER/WIN Job Center Staff)

MDES does not plan to award other forms of non-cash recognition. Selection of recipients and presentation of incentives will be made by the end of the fourth quarter of each year. Incentive award funds will be obligated by September 30th of each year and liquidated by December 31st of the same year. An Incentive Award Report will be submitted with the quarterly report due mid-November.

(e) *The populations of veterans to be served, including any additional populations designated by the Secretary as eligible for services, and any additional populations specifically targeted by the State Workforce Agency for services from one-stop delivery system partners (e.g., Native American veterans; veterans in remote rural counties or parishes);*

Targeting Services to Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employments (SBE)

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4103A, Veterans' Program Letters 03-14 , 04-14, or most recent policies, the DVOP Specialists will provide intensive services to eligible veterans and eligible persons with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) through the case management approach. An eligible veteran or eligible person is determined to have an SBE if he or she attests to belonging to at least one of the six criteria below:

- A special disabled or disabled veteran, who is entitled to VA compensation or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability;
- Homeless;
- A recently-separated service member who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks;
- An offender who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months;
- Lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate; or
- Low-income, as defined by WIOA.

In accordance with Veterans' Program Letters 03-14 and 04-14, or most recent policies, MDES DVOP Specialists will target services to other special populations of veterans with SBE:

- Veterans age 18-24;
- Former Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Participants;
- U.S. Military members receiving treatment at a military treatment facility and spouse or family caregiver of a member of the U.S. Military who is receiving treatment at a military treatment facility. Services to these populations is contingent upon an authorized extension past FY 2014; or
- Most recent populations as designated by the Secretary of Labor.

DVOP Specialists will conduct the following outreach activities to locate and assist veterans and eligible persons, with the primary purpose of delivering intensive services:

- Veterans Rehabilitation & Employment Centers;
- Vet Centers, VA Medical Centers and Outpatient Clinics;
- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) Projects and Homeless Shelters;
- Community-based and Civic Organizations;
- Veterans' Service Organizations;
- Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Offices;
- Workforce Partners and Service Providers;
- Veterans' Affairs Coordinators at Colleges/Community Colleges to promote services to veterans and solicit VA Work-Study Assistants;
- Faith-Based Organizations;
- Reserve and National Guard units;
- Military Base Family Service/Support Centers; and
- Military Treatment Facilities (MTF). Services to these populations is contingent upon an authorized extension past FY 2014; and
- Other venues and locations where veterans congregate.

MDES Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) will continue to coordinate with all WIN Job Center partners to optimize employment outcomes for special populations. MDES Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) and WIN Job Center staff have on-going relationships with Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services and community colleges for direct services to veteran participants.

MDES Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) and WIN Job Center staff have will work closely with the reserves, the National Guard, and active duty family readiness coordinators, to help identify those military spouses who need assistance. DVOP Specialists will continue to work with the Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR & E) program.

MDES Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) and WIN Job Center staff will work with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide information to veterans on opportunities in federal contracting. This will assist service-disabled business owners to receive information on sole-source and set-aside procurement opportunities and benefits. LVER staff will continue outreach efforts to federal contractors.

At the local level, WIN Job Centers' management will utilize the Manager's Report on Services to Veterans, the DVOP's Outreach and Recruitment Activity Report, the DVOP Case Management Log and the Personnel Development Assessments (PDA) to monitor and assess the productivity and quality of services provided to veterans.

At the state level, the State Veterans Coordinator (lead LVER) will continue to conduct WIN Job Center assistance visits to ensure guidelines set forth in the DVOP Specialists/LVER Roles and Responsibilities VPLs, State Plan, Special Grant Provisions for Jobs for Veterans Grants, Title 38, USC, Chapters 41 and 42, and other applicable compliance requirements are followed. Performance reports will be analyzed quarterly.

MDES Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) and WIN Job Center staff plan to conduct outreach and provide services to Native American veterans with significant barriers living on tribal lands to include the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. MDES will maintain contact with local tribal representatives as well as contact with national representatives. MDES will ensure that continued approval from the tribal leadership is received for services and outreach activities.

(f)   *How the State implements and monitors the administration of priority of service to covered persons;*

To ensure veterans receive consideration for all opportunities for which they qualify, MDES ensures covered persons are aware of (1) their entitlement to priority of service, (2) the full array of employment, training, and placement services available through the WIN Job Centers and all service points, and (3) that all applicable eligibility requirements for these programs are understood and applied.

MDES will also utilize the following as means of providing priority of service:

- Referral of qualified veterans to new job openings, especially Federal Contractor job orders, prior to all non-veteran job referral activity; and
- Veterans placed at the top of WIOA waiting lists (ITAs and OJT) for limited training funds.

MDES management will monitor priority of service by reviewing quarterly performance reports, Managers' Report and Online Employment Service System (OESS) special reports.

MDES management will monitor priority of service in covered programs at two levels. WIN Job Centers will continue to use established protocol of identifying targeted groups. At the state level, management will continue to analyze performance reports, Managers' Report and OESS special reports.

WIN Job Center services are made available and provided to eligible veterans, transitioning service members, VA VR & E Chapter 31 veterans, Native American Veterans and other groups targeted for special consideration, veterans with significant barriers to employment through outreach activities performed by DVOP Specialists. MDES does have an agreement with the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) for direct services and/or to coordinate services provided to target groups. MDES will continue to encourage non-DOL program partners to focus on providing priority of service to targeted groups for special consideration.

(g)   *How the State provides or intends to provide and measure, through both the DVOP and one-stop delivery system partner staff: (1) job and job training individualized career services, (2)*

employment placement services, and (3) job-driven training and subsequent placement service program for eligible veterans and eligible persons;

DVOP provide and measure:

(1) Job services -

To identify the appropriate career services needed by individual veterans, DVOPs use the Case Management process. They assess the job or job training needs of the veterans referred to them that have been identified by WIN Job Center staff as having a significant barriers to employment. If training is needed, DVOPs refer veterans to the appropriate WIN Job Center staff.

(2) Employment placement services -

DVOPs refer veterans to jobs based on job orders within the MDES on-line technology system. If no job orders are available for the skill-set desired by the veterans, the DVOP works with the LVER and WIN Job Center staff to locate employers in the community.

(3) Job-driven training and subsequent placement service program for eligible veterans and eligible persons

DVOPs refer those veterans with significant barriers to the appropriate program within the WIN Job Center for job-driven training and placement services.

DVOP job services, career services, and placement services are measured through the MDES on-line technology system and manual tools, i.e., managers' reports and logs.

(h) *The hire date along with mandatory training completion dates for all DVOP specialists and LVER staff; and,*

Hire date and training information is provided in the "Addendum for Mandatory Training Requirements" form provided in Appendix I7A.

(i) *Such additional information as the Secretary may require.*

At the time of plan submission, no addition information was requested by the Secretary.

Unemployment Insurance

(OMB Control Number: 1205-0132)

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program requires a State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) on a 2-year planning cycle that is a condition of receipt of administrative funding to administer the program. The SQSP is the State's UI performance management and planning process that allows for an exchange of information between Federal and State partners to enhance the UI program's ability to reflect their joint commitment to performance excellence and client-centered services. A formal two-year SQSP is submitted biennially. On the off years, States may be required to modify the SQSP with additional corrective action plans and narrative if they are failing any new performance measures, and they are required to provide updated budget documents, certifications, and assurances. ETA Handbook No. 336, 18th Edition provides detailed guidance for the preparation and submittal of the SQSP and supplemental guidance is provided in an annual UIPL, issued as UIPL 21-14 for the FY 2015 SQSP. The Social Security Act (SSA) sections 302 and 303 authorize the Secretary of Labor to provide funds to administer the UI program and govern the expenditure of those funds. States that choose the option to include UI in a WIOA Combined State Plan will be required to submit their SQSP through the Combined State Plan process. The SQSP must be prepared in accordance to the instructions in ET Handbook 336, 18th Edition and there are no changes to the established SQSP cycle if a State chose to submit their SQSP through the Combined State Plan process.

(a) Contents of a complete UI SQSP package: A complete UI SQSP package includes the following documents, as described in Chapter 1, ETA Handbook 336, 18th Edition:

A complete SQSP package is provided in Appendices I8A-I8I.

> *(1) Transmittal Letter: A cover letter to the appropriate Regional Office (RO) transmitting all the required SQSP documents.*
>
> The requisite transmittal letter for the SQSP is presented in Appendix I8A.
>
> *(2) Budget Worksheets/Forms: Budget worksheets/forms and plan for program administration based on projected allocations received from the Federal partner. These forms include Worksheet UI-1 and SF 424, SF 424A and SF 424B. The SF 424A is only required if the State vary the quarterly distribution of base claims activity staff years.*
>
> Worksheet UI-1 is provided in Appendix I8B
>
> Worksheet SF 424 is provided in Appendix I8F
>
> Worksheet SF 424A is provided in Appendix I8G
>
> *(3) The State Plan Narrative: The State Plan Narrative is a vital element of the SQSP that provides a vehicle for sharing with the Federal partner State-specific efforts that affect the administration of the UI Program. The State Plan Narrative allows the State to describe in a single narrative: a) State performance in comparison to the Government Performance Review Act goals; b) actions planned to correct deficiencies regarding UI programs, UI program reviews and reporting requirements; and c) results of customer satisfaction surveys (optional).*
>
> The State's SQSP Narrative is provided in Appendix I8C.

(4) *Corrective Action Plans (CAPs): CAPs are expected as a part of the SQSP when State's annual performance does not meet the established criteria for core measures, Secretary's Standards, UI program, assurances, and other program deficiencies identified in the annual SQSP guidance provided by the Department.*

The State's SQSP CAPS and Quarterly Report are provided in Appendix I8D.

The State's SQSP Assurances are provided in Appendix I8E.

(5) *UI Program Integrity Action Plan (UI IAP): The UI IAP outlines the strategies the State will undertake during the planning period regarding the prevention reduction and recovery of UI improper payments.*

The State's UI IAP is provided in Appendix I8D.

(6) *Organizational Chart: The organization chart must conform to the requirement for delivery of service through public employment offices, or such other designated providers as the Secretary may authorize; show the State's configuration from the Governor of the State down to the point of Employment Service and UI customer service delivery; and provide sufficient detail to show each organizational unit involved and the title of the unit manager.*

The organizational chart indicating the State's configuration form the Governor of the State down to the point of Employment Service and UI customer service delivery, including details on each organizational unit is presented in Appendix I8H.

(7) *SQSP Signature Page. The State administrator must sign and date the SQSP Signature Page. By signing the Signature Page, the State administrator certifies that the State will comply with all the assurances and activities contained in the SQSP guidelines.*

The SQSP Signature Page is provided in Appendix I8I.

Though a State needs to submit the complete SQSP package on a 2-year cycle, there are certain documents contained in the SQSP package which are required to be submitted by States annually as part of the off-year submission. The documents which are required to be submitted annually are considered a modification to the complete SQSP submitted the previous year. Since funds for State UI operations are appropriated each year, each State is required to annually submit the transmittal letter, budget worksheets, organizational chart and the signature page. The modification may also include CAPs for new identified performance deficiencies, and any required modifications to existing CAPs.

Since the UI program is a required one-stop partner, States have the option of including UI in the Combined State Plan authorized by WIOA sec. 103.

(b) *Requirements for States electing to include UI in the Combined State Plan: States that elect to include UI in the Combined State Plan must:*

(1) *Submit an SQSP in the following manner depending on their timing in the SQSP cycle:*

(A) *If a State is in the first year of their 2-year cycle, a complete SQSP package must be submitted. A complete SQSP package will include the Transmittal Letter, Budget Worksheets/Forms, State Plan Narrative, CAPs, the UI IAP, Organizational Chart,*

and the SQSP Signature Page. One of the key goals for the UI program is to ensure that claimants are able to successfully return to work. As such, the SQSP State Plan Narrative must provide a discussion of the plan coordination with other WIOA Combined Plan programs to ensure a coordinated effort and integrated service delivery.

The SQSP for FY 2016 (the first year of the 2-year cycle) was submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor/ETA on August 25th.

(B) If a State is in the second year of the 2-year cycle, the State is required to submit the most recently approved complete SQSP package with a modification that must include the Transmittal Letter, Budget Worksheets/Forms, Organizational Chart, and the SQSP Signature page. The modification may also include CAPs for new identified performance deficiencies, and any required modifications to existing CAPs

N/A

(2) Submit the required off-year SQSP components as a modification to the Combined State Plan on the same cycle as the regular SQSP process which must be approved by September 30th each year.

The required off year components will be submitted as a modification to the Combined State Plan by September 30th, 2017

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

(OMB Control No. 1205-0040)

(A) *Economic Projections and Impact*
- *(1)* *Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d)) (May alternatively be discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan.)*
- *(2)* *Discuss how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skill training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))*
- *(3)* *Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR 641.325(c))*

Mississippi is a predominantly rural state with only three metropolitan areas and a population of 2,967,297. From 2000 to 2010, Mississippi's overall population grew by 122,639. The following population groups experienced the greatest percentage growth in the previous decade: American Indian and Alaska Native, 41.42 percent, Asian, 39.02 percent; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 124.87 percent; and two or more races, 88.23 percent. This demographic change has led to a more diverse Mississippi. The state also has a larger potential workforce in 2010 than it did in 2000, as Mississippi's population over 18 years old grew by 142,000 to a total potential workforce of 2,219,538.

The population over 55 grew by 138,386 to a potential older workforce of 727,732. Mississippi's unemployment rate rose to 11.6 percent in July 2011 at the peak of the Great Recession and has lowered to 7.7 percent as of September 2014. This is still higher than the pre-recession rate 5.9 percent in January 2000. Unemployment rates by county currently range from 4.8 to 15.1 percent. Mississippi private-sector employers have added 46,200 jobs (an increase of 5.5 percent) since February 2010. The largest job gains have been in professional and business services (14,000 jobs), leisure and hospitality (9,100 jobs) and education and health services (8,600 jobs). These three sectors provide many employment options for seniors.

The projected growth trends for Mississippi's economy are in the Healthcare and Energy sectors. Healthcare is an industry of necessity. As Mississippi population ages, the need for quality, accessible medical care will increase. Nationally, healthcare jobs growth rose 18.3 percent between 2009 and 2013. This growth requires more Direct Service Workers in both patient care and ancillary healthcare jobs from housekeeping to medical records. This is an employment area that the Mississippi SCSEP will target for unsubsidized employment.

**Mississippi NonFarm Employment, September 2014 (not seasonally adjusted)**
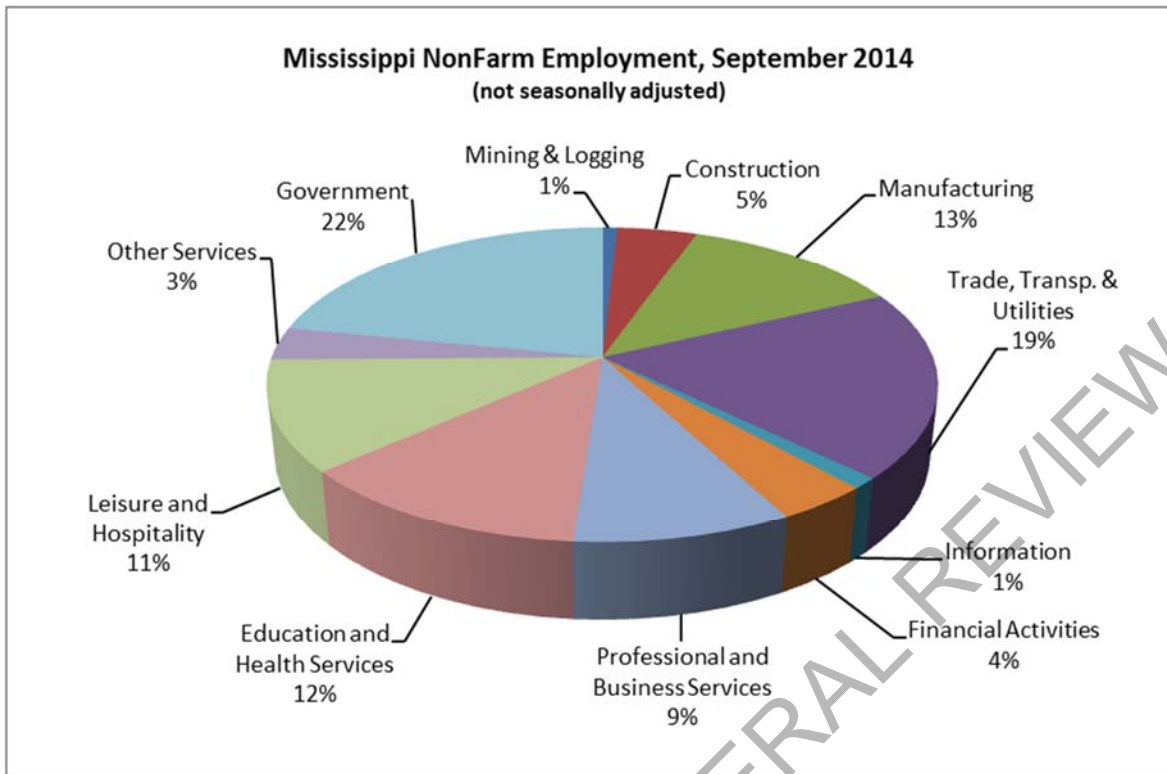
As the chart above indicates, Mississippi's economy is dominated by six sectors. The largest sector as of September 2014 was Government; followed by Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; Manufacturing; and Education and Health Services.

The data below compare Mississippi's employment by industry sector at September 14, 2014, to employment at March 31, 2012. Leisure and Hospitality and Professional and Business Services show robust growth and are areas that have significant employment potential for senior workers.

INDUSTRY SECTOR	September 2014	March 2012	Number Change	Percent Change
Mining & Logging	9,700	9,300	400	4.30%
Construction	51,100	47,400	3,700	7.81%
Manufacturing	142,000	135,400	6,600	4.87%
Trade, Transp. & Utilities	217,000	211,800	5,200	2.46%
Information	12,400	11,600	800	6.90%
Financial Activities	43,400	44,600	(1,200)	-2.69%
Professional and Business Services	101,200	93,300	7,900	8.47%
Education and Health Services	139,000	137,800	1,200	0.87%
Leisure and Hospitality	127,100	115,600	11,500	9.95%
Other Services	38,000	34,200	3,800	11.11%
Government	246,600	249,200	(2,600)	-1.04%
Total	1,127,500	1,090,200	37,300	3.42%

The charts below indicate that Mississippi is losing certain population groups while the population of those over 55 years of age is growing. The total population over 55 from the 2000 census was 589,346 and will nearly double to 1,011,768 by 2030.

Census 2010 - Population by Age and Gender

	Males	Age	Females	
	13,046	85+	31,313	
	19,366	80-84	32,337	
	28,913	75-79	40,963	
	42,228	70-74	51,718	
	56,200	65-69	64,323	
	77,111	60-64	83,645	
	89,321	55-59	97,248	
	100,994	50-54	107,613	
	101,271	45-49	107,098	
	91,664	40-44	95,915	
	91,364	35-39	96,004	
	92,461	30-34	95,710	
	98,610	25-29	100,472	
	105,433	20-24	105,461	
	114,145	15-19	110,474	
	106,606	10-14	101,642	
	105,042	5-9	100,630	
	107,465	<5	103,491	

■ Males ■ Females

Census 2030 - Population by Age and Gender

	Males	Age	Females	
	24,439	85+	49,207	
	33,124	80-84	49,001	
	52,511	75-79	70,390	
	74,648	70-74	91,398	
	87,832	65-69	101,517	
	88,789	60-64	96,688	
	93,031	55-59	99,193	
	99,092	50-54	101,894	
	97,377	45-49	98,745	
	88,631	40-44	89,963	
	87,767	35-39	88,566	
	83,898	30-34	82,813	
	90,980	25-29	88,571	
	97,980	20-24	91,695	
	105,658	15-19	96,392	
	102,839	10-14	94,250	
	100,227	5-9	93,922	
	101,732	<5	97,650	

■ Males ■ Females

Individuals with Disabilities make up the following percentages in Mississippi:

Disability Status Of The Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population		
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (CNP)	2,902,907	
CNP with a disability	472,835	16.3%
Under 18 years - total	751,985	
Under 18 with a disability	37,696	5.0%
18 to 64 years - total	1,781,118	
18 to 64 with a disability	266,903	15.0%
65 years and over - total	369,804	
65 and over with a disability	168,236	45.5%

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey for 2010

More importantly, the prevalence of disability and the need for assistance increases dramatically with age:

Figure 2.
Disability Prevalence and the Need for Assistance by Age: 2010
(Percent)
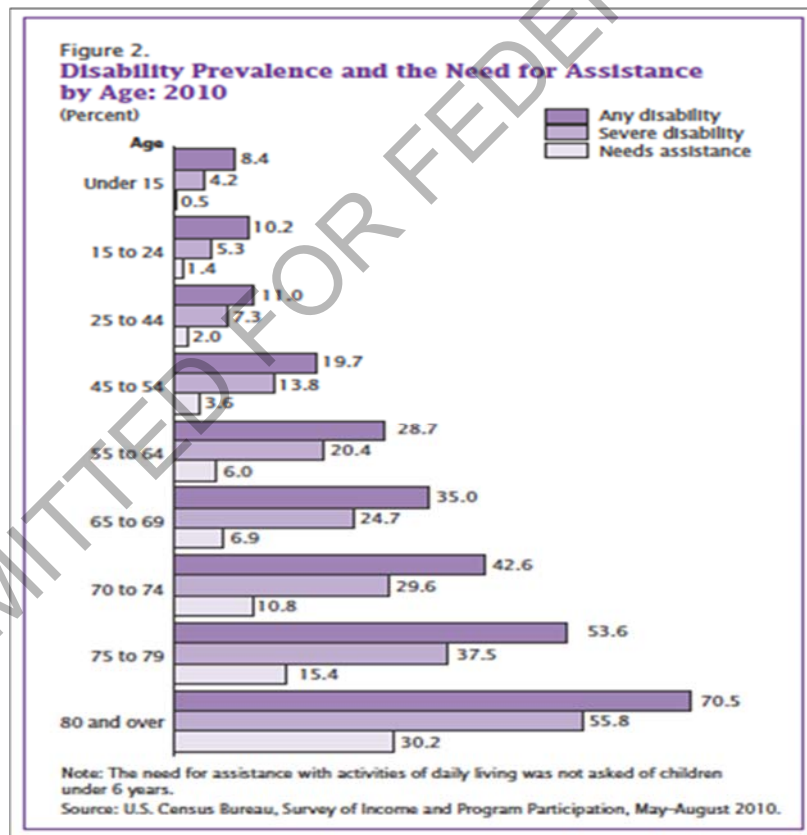
Data from the US Census Bureau also indicate that:

- Among men age 55 and older, 37.25 percent are veterans, and 1.33 percent of women age 55 and older are veterans;

- 50.72 percent of the overall population of Mississippi live in rural counties;

- 1.6 percent of Mississippians speak English less than "very well";
- Of the total population in Mississippi of 2,967,297:
    - Whites number 1,789,391 or 60.3 percent
    - Black or African American number 1,103,101 or 37.18 percent
    - American Indian and Alaska Native number 16,837 or 0.57 percent
    - Asian number 26,477 or 0.89 percent
    - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander number 1,700 or 0.06 percent, and
    - Two or more races number 29,791 or 1.0 percent.

Educational attainment statistics from the 2010 census are only available for the total population over 25, not specifically for those over 55, but show the following:

Population 25 years and over	1,890,674	
Less than 12th grade, no diploma	368,681	19.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	576,656	30.5%
Some college or Associate's degree	574,765	30.4%
Bachelor's degree	238,225	12.6%
Graduate or professional degree	132,347	7.0%
Percent high school graduate or higher	1,521,993	80.5%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	370,572	19.6%

(B) *Service Delivery and Coordination*
    (1) *A description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs. This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:*

    (A) *Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))*

In July 1, 2012, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) was designated as the SCSEP State Grantee. Since MDES is the state agency that operates the state workforce system, coordination of SCSEP with other workforce programs in the state should increase greatly.

Coordination with State's Title I WIOA Activities.

MDES is the agency that oversees WIOA in Mississippi. MDES staff members are liaisons to the Local Workforce Development Areas and track the use of WIOA funding. The WIOA in Mississippi and the LWAs are important partners to SCSEP. The SCSEP Managers rely on MDES and the LWAs for labor market information, training, and job search assistance.

SCSEP participants register with the WIN Job Centers (One-Stop Centers) to research the available jobs in their area and jobs of interest to them. Participant training plans are based on the employment opportunities for which they are interested. Employment specific training is usually coordinated through the WIOA course offerings.

Coordination with Title I WIOA is further enhanced through The WIN Job Centers' participation as host agencies. All grantees in the state place participants in local WIN Job Centers as a host agency. Placing participants in the WIN Job Centers serves many purposes such as:

- having a senior on site provides a more comfortable setting, thereby attracting other seniors;
- provides an opportunity for the older worker to network with potential businesses and locate unsubsidized employment;
- provides an opportunity for the older work to recruit eligible individuals into the SCSEP program; and,
- provides an opportunity to research jobs regularly.

(B) *Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the State under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h))*

The Department of Labor provides funds to operate SCSEP to States and other national sponsor organizations. Governor Bryant has designated the Mississippi Department of Employment Security as the State SCSEP Grantee. Currently, the MDES subgrants funds to the ten (10) planning and service areas designated as Area Agencies on Aging for the administration of the SCSEP. The Area Agencies on Aging are experienced providers of services for the senior population. In Mississippi, the Area Agencies on Aging are subordinate agencies within the nonprofit economic development organizations known as Planning and Development Districts.

Activities Carried out Under Other Titles of the Older Americans Act.

i. Transportation.

Transportation is offered to older adults as an option to assist in continuing their independence. SCSEP participants that cannot drive may take advantage of local Area Agency on Aging transportation services. The state and National Grantees target transportation providers with a goal of benefiting SCSEP participants interested in training – with the transportation providers acting in a host agency capacity.

ii. Nutrition.

The Nutrition Program serves a dual purpose; it provides a well-balanced meal for SCSEP participants and it provides host agencies that train participants at their congregate meal sites. Training at the Nutrition Program congregate meal sites offers skills training in food handling and preparation, management skills, and recreation development. SCSEP Managers' goals are to continue partnering with the Nutrition Program congregate meal sites as host agency sites.

iii.   Aging and Disability Resource Center.

The state and National Grantees plan to partner with the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), an online database of resources. The Aging and Disability Resource Center Program (ADRC), a collaborative effort of AoA and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), is designed to streamline access to long-term care. The ADRC program provides states with an opportunity to effectively integrate the full range of long-term supports and services into a single, coordinated system. The ADRC provides a single entry point for resources that can assist SCSEP participants to meet their personal and family needs. Additionally, the ADRC will identify eligible participants for SCSEP.

iv.   Adult Day Care.

The Adult Day Care program is beneficial for the SCSEP participants that are also caregivers. The Adult Day Care program allows participants to continue training at host agencies with the reassurance their family member is taken care of. The state and National Grantees also benefit from the Adult Day Care Program in a host agency capacity. Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) are needed in Adult Day Care centers; CNA Training is an opportunity for participants interested in furthering their careers or entering the medical field.

v.   Family Caregiver Support Program.

The Family Caregiver Support Program provides information about services, assistance in gaining access to services, counseling, respite care, and supplemental services to complement the care provided by the caregivers. The program can support the needs of SCSEP participants that are caregivers needing to be training for unsubsidized employment.

(C)   *Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))*

National Sponsors

Mississippi has three (3) national sponsor organizations operating SCSEP. The following is a list of the national sponsors and the contact person for each of those agencies.

Experience Works Inc.
Christy Manning, State Program Director
1126 South Ash
PO Box 414
Buffalo, Missouri 65622
 (501) 436-0227
Email: christy_manning@experienceworks.org
www.experienceworks.org

National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc.
Chester A. Johnson, Program Manager
Post Office Box 545
Cleveland, MS 38732
(662) 846-6992
Email: cjohnson@myncba.com

Senior Service America, Inc.
Chris Garland, National SCSEP Director
8403 Colesville Road, Suite 1200
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-578-8932
cgarland@ssa-i.org
www.seniorserviceamerica.org

Service Organizations and Community Based Organizations

The state's sub-grantees, the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), utilize the services of or directly contract with the service organizations that serve the aging population, such as elder abuse prevention services, legal services, and transportation services. Many of these services are provided by community based organizations. Due to the direct contractual relationship, AAA staff members remain in constant contact with the service provider staff from which participant and host agency referrals are made. The SCSEP Managers, through the AAAs, work with homemakers, transportation, nutrition providers, and community action organizations. Service providers and community action agencies are invited to the public hearings held annually to discuss aging programs, including the SCSEP.

Collaboration with Other Public and Private Entities and Programs that Provide Services to Older Americans.

Community Based Organizations.

The state subgrants SCSEP to the 10 AAAs in the state; the AAAs have a direct contractual relationship with community based organizations as service providers. Local community action agencies work closely with the state grantee to collaborate on the SCSEP.

Transportation Programs.

Transportation providers are generally non-profit organizations that partner with Area Agencies on Aging. The rural nature of the state is compounded by the lack of an entity with mandated responsibility for providing transportation assistance to citizens in need. To combat transportation problems:

- the Mississippi Department of Transportation is actively involved in leading the United We Ride campaign in the state;

- the AAAs Planning and Development Districts either sponsor or closely partner with the Regional Transportation Councils.

(D)   *Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))*

Labor Market Effects on Employment Opportunities and Host Agencies.

Employment opportunities for SCSEP participants vary greatly based on the jobs available in the local labor market. Data on the local jobs, such as type, availability, and potential growth should determine the types of host agencies and the how many are needed to support SCSEP participant training. Also, each SCSEP participant's Individual Employment Plan is developed based on the skills needed for the available jobs in the region and should guide the training he or she receives. The labor market data needed to drive these decisions comes from the MDES Labor Market Information unit and is provided in partnership with the WIBs through board meetings, conferences, the Workforce Investment Act State Plan, and local Workforce Development Network Job Centers.

Collaboration with Other Labor Market and Job Training Initiatives.

MDES is the State Grantee for SCSEP and developed the 5-Year SCSEP State Plan. MDES is also the designated state workforce agency, and as such, provided Governor Phil Bryant's five-year Integrated Workforce Plan to the Department of Labor for WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and other DOL funded workforce programs. The integrated plan is centered on an effective and efficient state workforce development system that meets the demands of Mississippi's businesses and job seekers by creating a *Work-Ready Mississippi*. This system will integrate state and local resources to create a seamless system to serve the business community and the individuals who use the system. The SCSEP plan will coordinate with, support, and benefit from the Integrated Workforce Plan and the Governor's workforce initiatives.

As a demonstration of his commitment to transform the system, Governor Bryant directed a commission of workforce and education partner agencies to develop a statewide plan that establishes a more coordinated and accountable workforce development system with greater emphasis on training, increasing job skills, and certifications. The Governor has also created a statewide economic development plan, "Mississippi Works," that will be aligned with the redesigned workforce development system. This will be an industry-focused, demand-driven workforce development system.

Governor Phil Bryant's economic priorities for Mississippi over the next four years will guide the strategic and operational workforce planning for state agencies. The priorities include providing an attractive economic climate for current and emerging industries that foster economic opportunity, job creation, capital investment and infrastructure development by developing a well-trained, educated, and productive workforce. The initial emphasis will be placed on two growth sectors, Health Care and Energy, which were the focus of important pieces of legislation passed in the 2012 legislative session. Of equal importance is the retention and expansion of existing industries such as advanced manufacturing, including automotive, shipbuilding, and aerospace; tourism; and defense and homeland security.

Mississippi passed the Mississippi Health Care Industry Zone Act which expands the health care industry. This Bill advocates centralizing health care and encouraging health care-related businesses to create high-paying jobs and to locate within qualified Health Care Zones. Businesses that create jobs in the research, development, manufacturing or processing of pharmaceuticals, biologics, biotechnology, medical supplies and medical equipment, diagnostic imaging and other shared services would be eligible for incentives.

As Mississippi's population ages, the need for quality, accessible medical care will increase. This increase in need for medical care will require an increase in the number of healthcare jobs, as evidenced by the national growth in this sector of twenty-one percent between 2001 and 2010. Mississippi jobs in healthcare pay 40 percent more than the statewide average. This is an area in which older Mississippians can also be placed in unsubsidized employment after SCSEP job training.

At the heart of Mississippi's economy are our existing businesses and industries. Developing a workforce for the growth and sustainability of Mississippi businesses large and small - from tourism on the Mississippi Blues Trail to the high tech and advanced manufacturing of military drones - must remain a priority. The vision is simple: to help our state attract, keep, and grow businesses that create good jobs.

The Governor understands that Mississippi's economic growth is dependent on a comprehensive statewide workforce system that integrates education, industry, employment and economic development into a unified enterprise with a shared vision and common goal. This system will be employer-focused and demand-driven. The growth of high wage employment is dependent upon Mississippi having a trained workforce, a continued supply of skilled Mississippians who are ready, willing and able to fill jobs, regardless of their age. Mississippi has identified five keys to meet the shortage a high-quality workforce:

- A *high quality education* for all citizens is a key tenet of competitiveness that makes Mississippi an attractive place to create, locate and grow a business;

- High wage jobs must be filled by *highly skilled workers* possessing the appropriate skills to do the job and further business growth. Unfilled job positions are wasted opportunities in the short and long term causing employers to look outside Mississippi for talent;

- An *information system that supports data-driven planning and decision making* for state and local workforce stakeholders;

- An increase in *post-secondary credentials and certifications* that help jobseekers access the high-skill, high-growth jobs of the future; and

- A *pipeline for workforce development* must be advanced through *strategic partnerships* with a common vision among K-12, community colleges, universities, state agencies and other stakeholders devoted to workforce training and retraining.

Each of these five keys is as critical in helping seniors fill a part of the shortage in skilled workforce as they are for other workers.

Leveraging Resources from Key Partners to Support SCSEP.

Area Agencies on Aging work with community colleges to provide training to SCSEP participants at a reduced cost; many provide tuition waivers for SCSEP participants. Community colleges are an integral component of the Workforce Investment Act programs offered through the WIN Job Centers. SCSEP participants are encouraged to dual enroll in WIOA with the WIN Job Centers for job search assistance and training classes.

(E)   *Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)*

Collaboration with State Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, like SCSEP, is a required partner in the Workforce Investment Act programs. SCSEP and Vocational Rehabilitation will collaborate with the WIN Job Centers for employment assistance for aging and disabled individuals through training modules. SCSEP and Vocational Rehabilitation partnered to develop and maintain the web-based resource director, the Aging and Disability Resource Center, located at http://www.mississippigethelp.org/.

Collaboration with Adult Education and Literacy Providers.

SCSEP participants complete an initial assessment upon entrance into the program to determine their employment plan. For participants that are interested in completing their High School Equivalency Diploma (HSE), SCSEP partners with the Adult Basic Education program administered by the Mississippi Community College Board. The Adult Basic Education program is designed to offer opportunities to enhance the skills and abilities of individuals preparing for the workforce. SCSEP participants are encouraged to prepare themselves in the areas of math, reading, writing, communication, and computer skills to become employment ready. The Adult Education program provides assistance in developing these skills based on the individual's skill level and learning capacity.

The Adult Basic Education program is available statewide through community colleges, public schools, and other resources. SCSEP participants can test at any of the 28 GED testing sites across the state.

Collaboration with Education and Training Providers.

The SCSEP program collaborates with the WIN System to offer SCSEP participants access to training using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) through the state's Eligible Training Provider System. Available courses include, but are not limited to:

- Accounting;
- Administrative Services;

- Animal Husbandry;
- Auto Mechanics;
- Banking and Finance;
- Building Maintenance;
- Clerical;
- Computer;
- Data Word Processing;
- Forestry;
- Health Services;
- Industrial;
- Landscaping;
- Manicuring;
- Medical Coding;
- Pharmacy Tech;
- Retail Sales;
- Teacher Assistant; and,
- Welding.

(F)   *Efforts to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.*

Local Governments.

Area Agencies on Aging are also directly linked to the economic development of the region and receive funds from local cities, counties and local governments. Area Agencies on Aging have direct relationships with cities, counties and local governments; many are host agencies for SCSEP participants. The following are government agencies that SCSEP works with on an ongoing basis:

- Board of Supervisors;
- Cities;
- Towns;
- Libraries;
- Local Chambers of Commerce; and,
- State Chamber of Commerce.

SCSEP staff from all grantees and subgrantees will continue to foster these relationships to increase their participation as host agencies. These entities may potentially hire participants into unsubsidized employment.

Business Organizations.

State sub-grantees and their SCSEP managers work with business organizations such as the Mississippi Manufacturers Association and local chambers of commerce to develop job opportunities. They collaborate with Medicaid and regional transportation and economic assistance providers to access services to SCSEP participants in need. They also solicit advice and recommendations from support service organizations through public hearings and joint conferences.

Mississippi Chambers of Commerce.

The mission of a Chamber of Commerce is to provide leadership in economic development activities, support existing businesses, attract new businesses, and promote civic, cultural, and recreational activities that improve the quality of life for businesses and residents. There are about one hundred (100) Chambers of Commerce in Mississippi.

Strategy for Collaborating with Chambers of Commerce.

SCSEP Managers will contact the chambers to educate them on the benefits of hiring older workers. The mission of the chambers supports the goals of SCSEP; working together will strengthen the case for targeting older workers when meeting new and existing businesses. Additionally, the chambers will be avenues that SCSEP Managers can use to identify industry appropriate training opportunities for SCSEP participants interested in the local labor market opportunities.

Strategy for Seeking Advice and Recommendations

The state and National grantees will meet with the Chambers of Commerce at Workforce Investment Board meetings, conferences and individually to seek their advice and recommendation on improving SCSEP. The chambers can provide important information on the local economy and ensure that SCSEP Managers meet with and partner with existing and new businesses interested in hiring and/or training older workers.

Partnering with chambers as host agencies and providing a SCSEP participant to train onsite brings recognition to SCSEP while providing valuable training to participants. Chambers of Commerce that are host agency sites provide skills training in clerical, phone skills, record keeping, etc.

Economic Development Agencies.

Economic development is a focus on the state level as well as at the local community level. SCSEP grantees and subgrantees in the state will target economic development agencies for partnership opportunities.

Strategy for Collaborating with Economic Development Agencies.

The state and National Grantees will work with economic development agencies at the state and local level to network and educate on employment training opportunities for older workers that new and existing businesses can utilize to hire skilled older workers. Collaboration with the

economic development agencies through the Mississippi Economic Development Council allows SCSEP a single point of entry to providing education on older workers to the more than 3,100 manufacturing entities that drive the state's economy. The Mississippi Economic Development Council organizes two conferences a year. SCSEP Managers will attend the conferences to network with businesses.

Strategy for Seeking Advice and Recommendations.

The state and National grantees will network with the economic development agencies and attend their meetings and conferences. SCSEP Managers will present the benefits of hiring older workers at local Workforce Development Board meetings and conferences, such as the Governor's Conference on Workforce Development, to increase the entered employment rate for SCSEP participants. The state and National grantees will glean information from the economic development agencies on ways to improve participant's individual employment plans to ensure that participants are receiving the training needed to be job ready in the industries that support our economy.

Labor Organizations.

Labor unions for business organizations in Mississippi can assist SCSEP Managers by providing information for the design of individual employment plans for participants, as they best know the skills needed for worker safety and career advancement.

(2) The State's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(e)) (May alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of strategic plan.)

Major Employers.

The state and National grantees will target the major employers with an educational campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of hiring older workers. The goals are to increase the rate of entered employment of exited SCSEP participants and increase the number of higher paying jobs (with benefits) for SCSEP participants.

- o Strategy for Collaborating with Major Employers
  The top 100 businesses in Mississippi will provide SCSEP Managers businesses to target and education on hiring older workers, thereby increasing the rate of entered employment for exited SCSEP participants. SCSEP Managers have a sample letter, provided by the USDOL, which will be customized and sent to businesses to introduce SCSEP and request a face-to-face meeting. Additionally, the USDOL provided SCSEP Mangers with sample presentations they can customize and present to businesses.

- o Strategy for Seeking Advice and Recommendations
  Seeking advice and recommendations from local businesses is beneficial to SCSEP. Businesses can provide information on the skills needed for employment to assist in the development of the SSEP participant's individual employment plan. Another possibility is to increase the number of On-the-Job Training contracts that SCSEP Managers can enter into with businesses to ensure that SCSEP participants received the training needed for

hiring by the business. SCSEP Managers will attend job fairs and will require all participants to attend as part of their training.

- o Engaging and Developing Partnerships with Businesses.
  The state and National Grantee SCSEP managers will coordinate with the Local WIBs to show businesses the benefits of hiring older workers. Older workers in general have low turnover rates, are flexible and open to change, are interested in learning new skills, have low absentee rates, have experience and knowledge, and are willing to work. Therefore, hiring older workers is a solution to the shortage of workers in the state.

SCSEP Managers will work with the LWAs to develop partnerships with businesses by utilizing recruitment efforts such as sending brochures and fact sheets on the older workers, sending letters to businesses outlining the benefits of older workers and following up with a presentation to the Human Resources Director and/or President, and where applicable recruit them to become a host agency. Developing partnerships with businesses creates the opportunity to share success stories from other businesses that hire older workers.

To increase partnerships with businesses, SCSEP Managers are encouraged to:

- increase contacts with local businesses;
- promote On-the-Job Training contracts with businesses;
- make presentations to businesses; and,
- assist local businesses with training needs.

Retention Activities for Participants in Unsubsidized Employment.

Once an SCSEP participant is trained and placed in unsubsidized employment, the SCSEP Manager continues to follow the participant for one year to ensure he/she has the support needed to remain employed. SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment may need additional training and support to keep up with the demands of the changing workforce. Support will be provided in the form of tracking, counseling, and job development.

SCSEP Managers will work with the LWAs to educate businesses on how to retain older workers. Once businesses see the value older workers bring to their businesses, they will be looking for ideas to retain their older workers. SCSEP assists in restructuring jobs that help employees to maintain or advance their careers. Managers can educate businesses on the following strategies for creating a positive environment for older workers:

- Flextime: employees can begin and end their workday at varying times;
- Job Sharing: Use two employees for one job position;
- Part-time Position: Older workers may be looking for 20-30 hours a week;
- Consulting: older workers may prefer to work in a consultant role;
- Compressed Work Week: work longer hours, but fewer days; and,
- Telecommuting: working from home.

(3) The State's long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (c))

The State subgrants to the Area Agencies on Aging at the Planning and Development Districts since the AAAs are the primary provider of other services to the aging community and have established contacts and rapport in the community. The AAAs should collaborate with the One-Stop Centers and other workforce system partners to provide outreach services to minority populations.

MDES provides the required Equitable Distribution (ED) report and Minority Report to DOL annually. MDES will continue to use both the ED and the Minority Report to guide the AAAs as they provide SCSEP services and to advise the National Grantees that operate the program in the state.

(4) A list of community services that are needed and the places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)

Process Implemented to Identify Community Service Needs.

MDES will work with the National Grantees and the 10 AAAs to collect information on the participants, services, and skills needs of the businesses in the area that each serves. Identifying gaps between the participants, the skill requirements, and the services provided will guide decisions on targeted recruitment, training, host agency assignments, and recruitment of businesses willing to hire seniors into unsubsidized training.

The industry makeup of the state varies by region. The Delta region of the state is predominately agricultural with a secondary gaming and tourism emphasis; the northeastern region is industrial; the west-central region is mixed with agriculture, manufacturing, and professional, with a recent growth in oil production; and the southern region is agricultural, gaming and tourism, and industrial. Due to the variety of industries in the state, SCSEP Managers will continue to work with the local WIN Job Centers and other stakeholders to identify local community service needs and obtain recommendations on how SCSEP participants can bridge those gaps. Individual Employment Plans will be tailored to meet the needs of the participants and the community service assignments.

Timeline for Identifying and Recruiting Host Agencies to Meet Community Service Needs.

State and National Grantees, with the assistance of the LWAs, will identify non-profits and government organizations as potential host agencies for a resource list. The resource list will guide the SCSEP Managers in their attempts to recruit host agencies to train SCSEP participants. The USDOL data collection system will assist SCSEP Managers to track the types of host agencies using the Host agency management reports. The State and National Grantees will increase the number of host agencies every program year to meet the needs of participants.

(5) The State's long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the State, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k))

Since the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) was designated as the State Grantee as of July 1, 2012, coordination with other workforce programs in the state has greatly increased. The division of MDES that has direct oversight of the SCSEP also provides direct fiscal and programmatic support to the state's four Local Workforce Development Areas.

Improving SCSEP Services.

Long-Term Strategy to Improve SCSEP Services.

The State is implementing a WIOA Common Intake and Reporting System that will capture common participant information for the four core programs. The system will align resources and generate automatic referrals among the core programs and partner programs such as SCSEP.

Using a no wrong door policy, all participants will develop an individualized success plan that coordinates the optimum blend of services and funding to achieve their goals for success. This success plan also indicates which of the pathways in the Smart Start Pathways Model to which the participant will be assigned. A connection to a career pathway must be included as part of an older worker's individual service strategy or MS Smart Start Success plan. This model is an integrated compilation of programs and services intended to develop basic, technical and employability skills; provide continuous education and training; and work supports that lead to high-demand jobs in targeted sectors.

Planned Changes in the Utilization of SCSEP Grantees and Program Operators.

In PY2015, the State Grantee's largest subgrantee, Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District, moved its SCSEP staff from the Area Agency on Aging division to the Workforce division. This puts SCSEP in this district under the direction of the Twin Districts Workforce Development Area. SMPDD is the SCSEP subgrantee of both the State subgrant and Senior Service America, Inc., operating a total of 125 slots. SMPDD will use the Smart Start Pathways Model throughout its service area. SSAI intends for all of its subgrantees to follow the lead of SMPDD and use Smart Start as the service model.

To implement WIOA and the Smart Start Pathways Model, the agencies that oversee the four core programs will engage in intensive an ongoing training of staff to ensure a consistent workforce message and seamless operation of the programs. Staff of all the State's SCSEP subgrantees will be included in this training, thereby ensuring that all SCSEP participants in the state grant will be connected with coordinated services of the partner programs under WIOA.

- Increased Frequency of Formal Collaboration Activities Among SCSEP Grantees.
  The state grantee will conduct trainings multiple times a year, as previously discussed. The state is dedicated to increasing the number of collaborative activities and efforts in the state regarding the benefit of older workers.

- Development of Criteria for Selection of Sub-Recipients.
  The state grantee, in collaboration with the USDOL, will develop more stringent criteria for the selection of sub-recipients. Subgrantees will be selected based on their ability to run SCSEP effectively, measured by performance measure results. The program is designed to develop

economic self-sufficiency and promote useful opportunities in community service activities to increase the number of persons who may enjoy the benefits of unsubsidized employment in both the public and private sectors. A performance driven selection process for subgranting SCSEP will ensure the program meets its performance measures.

- **Opportunities to Share Best Practices Statewide.**
  The state grantee will work with National Grantees to share best practices through regular contact including the annual Equitable Distribution Meeting. Working together statewide will ensure that SCSEP is serving the eligible and the target population effectively.

(6)   The State's strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f))

State's Plan for Ensuring Goals are Achieved.

SCSEP Managers receive performance measures from the USDOL prior to the start of the Program Year. The 2006 amendments to the Older Americans Act section 513(a) mandates that SCSEP Managers are given the opportunity to negotiate their performance measures based on state-specific data. Acceptable sources of data include, but are not limited to: TANF; state unemployment rate; labor market information, and past performance.

The USDOL provides the SCSEP Managers with management reports via the web-based data collection system known as SPARQ (SCSEP Performance And Results QPR). Management reports are produced quarterly to gauge progress towards performance measures. The following management reports will be used by the state, National Grantees, and SCSEP Managers:

Applicant

- Pending
- Ineligible
- Eligible, Not Assigned or on Waiting List
- Waiting List

Participants

- Current/Exited
- Started Employment but Not Yet Achieved Entered Employment
- Achieved Entered Employment but Not Yet Achieved Retention
- Waiver of Durational Limit
- Participants Who Have Reached Durational Limit
- Participants With Approved Break(s)

Follow-Ups

- Pending
- Pending, Displayed by Month

Actions

- Most In Need/Waiver Factor Actions

Host Agencies

- Host Agencies
- Assignments by Host agency

Employers

- Unsubsidized Employers
- Placements by Employer

Meeting, trainings, and conference calls.

Meetings among the state, National Grantees, and subgrantees will be held on a regular basis, either in person or using electronic means such as conference calls and webinars. As issues warrant, MDES will meet with subgrantees on an individual basis by phone or during site visits, monitoring visits, or data validation visits. Topics may include:

- Data entry review prior to close date for reports
- Quarterly reports
- Reports reviewed
- Reports discussed by SCSEP Managers.

(c) *Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution*
   (1) *A description of the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))*

   Current and Projected Employment Opportunities in the State.

   There has been a shift in the last two decades in the nation as a whole from an industrial to a service and knowledge based economy. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Mississippi has followed the national industrial trend with 36 percent of the workforce employed in service oriented jobs. In the service industry, the largest sub-sectors include healthcare and social assistance followed by administrative and support services.

   Governor Phil Bryant's economic priorities for Mississippi over the next four years will guide the strategic and operational workforce planning for state agencies. The priorities include providing an attractive economic climate for current and emerging industries that foster economic opportunity, job creation, capital investment and infrastructure development by developing a well-trained, educated, and productive workforce.

The initial emphasis will be placed on two growth sectors, Health Care and Energy, which were the focus of important pieces of legislation passed in the 2012 legislative session. Of equal importance is the retention and expansion of existing industries such as advanced manufacturing, including automotive, shipbuilding, and aerospace; tourism; and defense and homeland security.

Employment Projections for High Growth Industries and Occupations.

Employment in the service sector is projected to grow by 16 percent by 2018 with the largest growth in administrative support; professional, scientific and technical services; health care and social assistance; and arts, entertainment, and recreation. Meanwhile, employment in the manufacturing sector is expected to grow by only 3.2 percent by 2018.

The state relies on labor market information disseminated by the MDES Labor Market Information division to ensure that SCSEP meets the local labor market demands. Labor market information shows that all industry sectors are in need of skilled workers, especially those that require the application of technology and knowledge such as automotive and health care professionals.

The SCSEP Managers must emphasize the need to obtain skills through training at host agencies in order to generate quality job placements in high growth industries. Mississippi projects that over 1.5 million jobs are expected to be available in the next ten years. Increasing SCSEP job placements in the high growth areas will move Mississippi ahead.

Industries and Occupations with Employment Opportunities for SCSEP participants.

Participants are encouraged to design their employment plan around the following industries most in need of skilled workers:

- service sector;
- administrative support;
- health care;
- retail;
- food service;
- gaming;
- social assistance; and,
- education.

Employment Histories and Skills Possessed by Eligible Individuals in the State. Generally, SCSEP participants in Mississippi have very limited skills and work history; many are displaced homemakers or widows with limited work experience. Therefore, the state and National Grantees must ensure that the SCSEP participant's Individual Employment Plan includes the skills training needed to locate unsubsidized employment upon exiting the program. Training may be attained at the host agency, the Workforce

Investment Network Job Centers, community colleges, and at participant educational meetings.

Mississippi ranks last in educational attainment in the adult population, particularly older females. In the state, 21 percent of SCSEP participants have no high school degree, 35 percent have a high school degree or equivalent, and only 13 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. A snapshot of the Mississippi SCSEP participant education, age, and wages from the SPARQ database follows:

Participant Education, Age, and Wages by Mississippi Grantee - PY2013 Final

	EW	NCBA	SSA	MS	All Mississippi SCSEP	
Total	162	127	393	162	**844**	100%
Educational Attainment						
8th grade & under	12	1	9	6	**28**	3.3%
9th grade – 11th grade	39	22	56	30	**147**	17.4%
High	47	51	131	65	**294**	34.8%
1 - 3 years college	33	35	94	35	**197**	23.3%
Post-secondary Certificate	3	1	16	3	**23**	2.7%
Associate Degree	8	3	31	4	**46**	5.5%
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	11	11	42	12	**76**	9.0%
Some graduate school	2	0	1	2	**5**	0.6%
Master's Degree	6	3	11	5	**25**	3.0%
Doctoral Degree	1	0	2	0	**3**	0.4%
Age						
55-64	105	97	233	99	**534**	63.3%
65+	57	30	160	63	**310**	36.7%
Average Placement Wages & Hours						
Starting	$11.06	$8.57	$8.76	$8.53		
Hours	27.7	31.6	28	27.4		

Source: SCSEP Quarterly Progress Report, ETA 5140, PY13 Final

(2) List the cities and counties where the project will be conducted. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year.

This data is listed in the Program Year 2014 Equitable Distribution List by National and State Grantee with Counties (Provided in Appendix I9A)

(3) Describe current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.

Location of Positions.

In 2012, the US Department of Labor redistributed positions among Experience Works, Inc., Senior Service America, Inc., National Caucus on Black Aged, and the Department of Employment Security in order to more equitably serve the eligible population as indicated by the 2010 Census through the USDOL distribution process. In Mississippi, the state and national grantees agree that the distribution is currently equitable.

(4) The State's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:
   (A) Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.
   (B) Equitably serves rural and urban areas.
   (C) Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)

Strategy for Maintaining Equity of Slots

The Department of Labor implemented revisions in 2014 to the required Equitable Distribution Report. The four grantees provided their Grantee Reports to the DOL and MDES compiled the information from the four into a Statewide Grant Report, which was also submitted to DOL on October 30, 2014. The state grantee will monitor distribution and service of the slots to ensure that all grantees are working to implement the action plans stated in the reports. We will also continue to monitor distribution of slots relative to demographic changes and will address any potential issues as they arise through communication with DOL.

(5) The ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. (20 CFR 641.325(a))

(6) The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:
   (A) Reside in urban and rural areas within the State
   (B) Have the greatest economic need
   (C) Are minorities
   (D) Are limited English proficient.
   (E) Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))

The State of Mississippi is a predominately rural state, with 50.72 percent of Mississippians living in rural counties, according to the 2010 census. Access to transportation and limited numbers of host agencies in the most rural counties will continue to be a challenge that all SCSEP grantees must work together to overcome.

Inadequate Resources.

The state and National Grantees strive to serve both rural and urban areas of Mississippi equitably. In order to accomplish this, state and National Grantees must work together to overcome inadequate resources (limited employment prospects, few host agencies, lack of transportation, etc.).

Employment.

The rural nature of the state combined with an agrarian-based economy makes it difficult to provide adequate unsubsidized placement opportunities. The number of jobs available is few and because public and mass transportation are not available, access to many of the existing jobs or employment opportunities can be problematic. In some

instances, the cost of transportation and other job maintenance factors exceed the benefits of employment.

Host Agencies.

The rural nature of the state also creates a shortage of host agencies. The state and National Grantees operating in the state know the challenge of developing enough host agencies to rotate participants appropriately according to their individual employment plan. SCSEP managers will continue to partner with the WIBs to assist in developing new business opportunities and to partner with new and existing non-profit organizations located in the state.

Transportation.

Access to transportation continues to be a problem in areas outside of the metropolitan area of Jackson. In an attempt to alleviate transportation concerns, the state grantees may reimburse participants for transportation costs only when travel is necessary for training, physical exams or enrollee meetings. If there is no public transformation available, and there are no other options, and if the participant could not otherwise participate in the program, transportation to and from host agency assignment may be reimbursed until another option is identified.

The state grantee will attempt to collaborate with other local agencies and resources to provide participant transportation at no cost or reduced cost whenever possible. Additionally, flexible scheduling is encouraged to help participants reduce travel costs by training more hours on fewer days, providing the same community service assignment hours.

Timeline.

To address inadequate resources in rural areas, the grantees will target individual geographic areas and systematically contact community representatives in an attempt to develop host agencies or employers and in partnership with these organizations determine if a plan to accomplish program requirements can be developed. The Area Agencies on Aging and the National Grantees will be challenged to identify and develop two targeted areas each program year. This strategy will result in approximately one-fourth of the 76 rural counties achieving successful targeted development each program year.

C. Specific Populations Groups.

The state and National Grantees offer various recruitment and selection techniques in order to address Older Americans Act Section 518(b) as detailed below:

OAA Section 518(b) defines priority individuals as those who qualify based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Are aged 65 years or older;
- Have a disability;

- Have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills;
- Reside in a rural area;
- Are veterans or their spouses who meet the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, 38 U.S.C.sec.4215(a)(1);
- Have low employment prospects;
- Have failed to find employment after utilizing services provided under Title 1 of WIOA; or,
- Are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Other populations identified in the statute are defined in OAA Section 503(a)(4)(C)(i)-(iv) as:

- Eligible individuals with the "greatest economic need" (as defined in 20 CFR 641.140);
- Eligible individuals who are minority individuals; and,
- Eligible individuals who are individuals with "greatest social need" (as defined in 20 CFR 641.140).

The WIBs that oversee the Workforce Investment Networks in the state are key partners for both the state and National Grantees in the state as they provide labor market information and economic data to assist grantees in developing new host agencies, educating employers on the benefits of hiring older workers, and providing job search assistance for SCSEP participants. Workforce Investment Networks provide an additional avenue to recruit eligible individuals to participate in the SCSEP.

Additional recruitment activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- attending job fairs;
- advertising in local newspapers and newsletters;
- referrals from exited participants, host agencies, faith based organizations and local officials;
- running public service announcements;
- visiting local senior centers;
- partnering with organizations that serve aging and/or disabled adults;
- distributing brochures, flyers, posters and fact sheets throughout the state; and,
- partnering with the local Workforce Investment Networks.

[The following section is extracted from the State Equitable Distribution Report to DOL and provides the information for most of the subrequirements of (c).]

State:

I. Summary of Variance

	Number of Counties	Percent of All Counties	Average Percentage of Variance
Under-service	41	50.6	46.1
Over-service	28	34.6	45.9
Combined Total Under- and Over-service	69	85.2	41.6

II. Discussion: reasons for and significance of the variance

SSAI Variance: Under-Service

SSAI used +/-4 to identify counties with significant variance. The following counties are significantly under-service based on the current data on www.scseped.org.

Mississippi

FIPS	County	AP	E	V
28023	Clarke	5	1	-4
28061	Jasper	6	2	-4
28067	Jones	11	4	-7
28073	Lamar	7	2	-5
28109	Pearl River	7	2	-5
28121	Rankin	10	2	-8
28123	Scott	6	0	-6
28149	Warren	10	1	-9
28153	Wayne	7	3	-4

In October 2013, SSAI changed its IDL policy from granting waivers to participants who qualified for any of the waiver factors to no waivers. Those participants "grand-fathered" by DOL under that shift in reached their IDL exit dates in September 2014. SSAI has had a great deal of participants exit for IDL in Q1 of PY2014 as a result of this change in our policy.

SSAI Variance: Under-Service

SSAI used +/-4 to identify counties with significant variance. The following counties are significantly under-service based on the current data on www.scseped.org

Mississippi

FIPS	County	Authorized Positions	Enrollment	Variance
28049	Hinds	30	51	21

The reason for the significant over service in this county is a lack of awareness on the part of our subgrantee of their enrolled number versus their authorized position number.

** SSAI does not serve Jefferson Davis County. The participants showing on www.scseped.org in this county had their county data incorrectly entered into SPARQ; the participants actually live in Forest and Claiborne counties. This information has been corrected in SPARQ but not in time for the data to be reflected correctly on www.scseped.org.

MDES Variance

MDES, the state grantee, used +/-2 to identify counties with significant variance. The following counties are significantly under- or over-service based on the current data:

County	State Grantee (MDES) Authorized Positions	SG (MDES) Enrolled	SG (MDES) Variance
DeSoto	5	3	-2
Rankin	3	1	-2
Jefferson Davis	3	5	2
Harrison	4	7	3
Jones	4	1	-3
Covington	5	1	-4
Pearl River	5	2	-3

One reason for significant over- or under-service in the counties served under the State Grant is that the subgrantees were not aware of the need to enroll specific, authorized numbers of participants by county as opposed to meeting their authorized enrollment numbers in total from the counties in which they are authorized to serve.

Another reason given by the subgrantees is a difficulty in some counties in finding qualified participants who are willing to stay in the program after being on a waiting list for a month or more. Part of this difficulty is attributable to lax eligibility screening and part to lack of trained enrollment staff.

The ED report indicated that a state subgrantee and national grantee SSAI had enrolled participants in Jackson County and Jefferson Davis County, in which one or the other had no authorized slots. The participants showing on www.scseped.org in these counties had their county data incorrectly entered into SPARQ; the participants actually live in counties in which the respective grantees are authorized to serve. This information has been corrected in SPARQ but not in time for the data to be reflected correctly on www.scseped.org.

NCBA Variances

NCBA finds that the negative variances, for the most part, are caused by the nature of the budget amount that is allocated to participants' wages and fringe benefit categories, and are not due to underserving or under-enrolling. NCBA will strive toward the goal of serving the 78 authorized positions in the most equitable manner possible.

Experience Works Variances

Over-enrolled counties with variances greater than 2 are Benton, Chickasaw, Lefore, Marshall, Monroe and Winston. The reason for this in Benton, Chickasaw and Marshall Counties is because EW has a

strong presence there and is constantly getting word of mouth referrals and calls from applicants who are in dire need of our services. EW is over-enrolled by 3 and 4 in Leflore, Monroe, and Winston counties. We have satellite offices in these counties where program participant assistants are housed and help with recruitment and job development. These counties are less rural and offer better job opportunities so these ED numbers fluctuate more so than the others.

Under-enrolled counties with greater than 2 variances are Carroll and Itawamba. Carroll County is a challenge because it is extremely rural with a low density population of 10,423. The towns of Carrollton and Vaiden are the only 2 populated towns. Carroll County is one of the few EW MS counties that are not considered an area of persistent unemployment. Although Itawamba County is under-enrolled at this time there are no issues that exist there with recruitment.

III. Plan to improve statewide ED during program year

For counties that are significantly under service, **SSAI** will provide training to its subgrantees on the importance of equity with the number of authorized positions per county. The training will include sharing this information with its subgrantees and advising them to begin to conduct outreach and enroll new participants in these counties. If the subgrantee does not have funds currently to enroll at present, these subgrantees will be advised to build waiting lists that are organized by the SCSEP priorities of service so the subgrantee can enroll quickly when vacancies occur.

For the counties above that are significantly over service, SSAI will provide training to its subgrantee on the importance of equity with the number of authorized positions per county. The training will include sharing this information with the subgrantee and instructing them to stop enrolling new participants in those counties with over service until their enrollment comes back in line with their authorized positions and to focus enrollment on their counties that may be under service. In addition, SSAI will advise its subgrantee serving Hinds County to focus on exiting as many participants as possible into unsubsidized employment and to not replace any participants who exit for other reasons in order to create improved equity.

MDES has provided technical assistance over the past year which has focused on methodologies to improve performance against the negotiated measures. We have recently tried to raise awareness of the need to adhere to ED enrollment targets by county. We will continue this focus on ED awareness in future subgrantee trainings and technical assistance guidance.

Reports from MDES subgrantees indicate that they will work toward equity during this program year, lowering over-enrollments through attrition, preferably by placement into unsubsidized employment. They are also placing new emphasis on filling empty slots with high quality, screened participants. One subgrantee is hiring new staff to work out of the WIN Job Centers in Forrest, Marion and Jones counties, Monday through Thursday of each week. This increased presence will increase visibility for the SCSEP programs and help find prospects in those counties where enrollment applications and waiting lists have been non-existent.

NCBA is striving toward serving 100% of the authorized positions by replacing all our participants who are exiting the program for any reason at all. This will definitely continue through the program year.

Experience Works will target Marshall, Chickasaw, LeFlore, Winston and Monroe for accelerated job search and job development in an effort to transition participants into unsubsidized employment. Job clubs and job fairs will be planned for these counties. Efforts will be made to bring enrollments down through attrition and job development in Benton County; however, most participants in this county

qualify for waivers. Field staff has already been advised to concentrate recruitment efforts in Itawamba and Carroll. The remainder of the counties is at level ED or do not have variances greater than 2.

> (7) *A description of the steps taken to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data become available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))*

Avoiding Service Disruptions.

The state and National Grantees are dedicated to the avoidance of disruptions in the service to SCSEP participants. Mississippi's state and National SCSEP Grantees will follow the recommendation of the USDOL that when there is over-enrollment, for any reason, there will be a gradual shift that encourages current participants to move into unsubsidized employment to make positions available for eligible individuals in the areas that are underserved. Grantees understand that participants are not entitled to remain in a subsidized community service assignment indefinitely, and will adhere to the time limits on a SCSEP community service assignment as detailed in the Older Americans Act.

SCSEP standards define the program requirements that AAA state grantees must adhere to. Issued in March 2006, the standards address Designation of Service, slot movement, and time in training assignment.

> (d) <u>SCSEP Operations</u>
> > (1) *Administrative: describe the organizational structure of the project and how subprojects will be managed, including:*
> > > (A) *identification of the key staff, including the primary responsibilities and the amount of time assigned to the SCSEP grant;*

A. Organizational Structure

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security has day-to-day responsibilities for the administration and operation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in Mississippi. The SCSEP funds will be subgranted to 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) housed within Mississippi's Planning and Development Districts. The AAAs currently operate the SCSEP and are experienced in all aspects of the program.

The Grants and Contracts Unit (GCU) is staffed with a Bureau Director and a manager. This unit of two staff serves as fiscal and programmatic liaisons to the four Local Workforce Development Areas and to other WIOA subgrantees. As liaisons, they provide technical assistance on all financial, programmatic, and performance issues. A copy of the MDES Organizational Chart is included in Appendix I8E.

The Bureau Director and the grant managers will assign approximately twenty percent (20%) of their time to the grant. The fiscal oversight staff will each devote approximately ten percent (10%) of their time. The program oversight specialist will assign approximately eight percent (8%) of his time to this grant. MDES does not anticipate exceeding the Administrative Cost Limit of 13.5% for this grant. State-level administration is budgeted at 5% and Project Operator administration at 8.5% of the total grant, for a total administration cost of 13.5%.

(B) *Include an organization chart depicting any subgrantees or local affiliates implementing the grant. Include a table with authorized positions for each subgrantee or affiliate, if applicable;*

Subgrantees/Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) have administered the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) since its inception in Mississippi. The AAAs are assigned chief responsibility for planning, coordinating, developing, and pooling resources to assure the availability and provision of a comprehensive range of services at the substate level to enhance project administration and overall accountability. The names and locations of the nine AAAs and one PDD, the counties they serve, and the number of authorized positions for which they are responsible, are shown in the 2015 County Slots by PDD Chart. The attached Mississippi AAA Map & Contacts document includes the locations of the 10 subgrantees (Appendix I9B).

(C) *describe training that will be provided to local staff;*

Meetings among the state, National Grantees, and subgrantees will be held on a regular basis, either in person or using electronic means such as conference calls and webinars. As issues warrant, MDES will meet with subgrantees on an individual basis by phone or during site visits, monitoring visits, or data validation visits. Topics may include:

- Data entry review prior to close date for reports
- Quarterly reports
- Reports reviewed
- Reports discussed by SCSEP Managers.

(D) *describe how projects will be monitored for program and financial compliance, including audit plans; and*

MDES complies with the monitoring requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Federal Grants at 2 CFR 200.327 – 332 and the audit requirements at 2 CFR 200.500 – 520. MDES monitors its subrecipients annually and requires audits from those who meet the $750,000 threshold for annual federal expenses. We have a transitional monitoring policy in place and require the PDDs to monitor their host agencies and subcontractors.

(E) *describe how the State will manage its providers and how it will transfer participants if new providers are selected to serve in the State.*

The State manages our providers by monthly review of expenditures and quarterly review of SCSEP Reports as well as through monitoring, technical assistance, and training. The State currently does not plan to identify new providers to serve the state since the AAAs are the primary provider of other services to the aging community and have established contacts and rapport in the community. If the need arises to defund or replace a local provider, the state will do so in consultation with our Federal Project Officer and other DOL SCSEP staff.

(2) *Recruitment: describe how grantee will recruit and select of participants will be achieved. The eligibility of participants is described under 20 CFR 641.500 and 641.525.*

Recruitment and selection of participants is performed by the Area Agency on Aging staff at the PDDs or by their subcontractors. The State monitors the local projects' ability to meet their staffing needs and avoid vacancies by monthly review of the expense reports, and quarterly through the SPARQ performance reports. MDES also reviews eligibility determination in its annual monitoring of the AAAs.

(3) *Income Eligibility: describe how participant income will be recertified each year, including where eligibility records will be maintained.*

The AAAs are required to recertify each participant annually to verify income eligibility. This process is verified by the State through annual monitoring and data validation. Eligibility records are kept in the participant records at the PDD offices.

(4) *Orientation: describe the orientation procedures for:*

    (A) *Participants*

Before a participant begins the community service assignment, the host agency must provide an assignment related orientation including but not limited to the host agency background and purpose, the community service(s) it provides, agency personnel policies and procedures related to work hours, time and attendance, and work performance expectations.

A Safety Procedures Consultation must also be included in the orientation if it has not already been done with the participant, including: the location(s) and use of fire extinguishers and alarms; the posted designated route(s) of escape in event of a fire; the participant's role, if any, in an emergency; and a review of all other disaster action plans for the agency.

The participant signs a Certification of Orientation stating that they have completed orientation with the host agency. This document is retained in the participant file.

    (B) *Host Agencies*

Host agencies are provided orientation by the AAA and sign an acknowledgement of Orientation. The most recent modification to the Host Agency Handbook includes a host agency acknowledgement in which the host agency supervisor states that he has received, read, understood, and agreed to follow the program requirements stated in the SCSEP host agency handbook.

This agreement reinforces the supervisor's understanding of the SCSEP as a training program as well as the supervisor's responsibility to cooperate with all job development efforts made on the participant's behalf.

(5) *Duration Limits: describe any policy for maximum duration of enrollment or maximum time in community service and provide a copy of the current Duration Limit policy.*

MDES has chosen to adhere to the program-required Duration Limit of 48 months as provided in 20 CFR 641.570 (a) and not to allow waiver of the limit as allowed in 641.570 (b).

(6) *Assessments: describe the procedures for assessing job aptitudes, job readiness, and job preferences of participants and their potential to transition into unsubsidized employment. Also describe how the assessment will be used to develop the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP).*

Mississippi Works and Skill Gap Analysis.

Mississippi Works is a smartphone app and web-based job resource provided by MDES where employers and job seekers connect. The connection is driven by the ability of job seekers to match experience and qualifications to employer needs. Mississippi Works can be a valuable tool for seniors and SCSEP staff to identify participant skill gaps and training needs.

Labor market studies show that the largest share of future employment opportunities will be middle skill jobs. Middle skill jobs account for 59 percent of Mississippi's labor market but only 50 percent of the state's workers are trained to a middle skill level, thus creating a gap. In program year 2013, Mississippi Works added a gap analysis tool to help workers make informed decisions on career choices and training needs. The Mississippi Works is easy to use. The user simply creates a profile and begins the job search; this launches the gap analysis tool.

After clicking on a recommended job, a question arises for the job seeker: "How do I measure up?" The user needs some means of figuring out how his or her credentials measure up to the job's requirements. Here is where real-time gap analysis comes into play. If the job originated in Mississippi Works, the system can ask employers explicitly what skills, what level of education, and what kinds of experience are required for the candidate to have the best chance to be hired. The system then compares the job seeker's credentials against the credentials required by the employer. In the case of jobs that might be taken from an external labor exchange or other sources, Mississippi Works has a statistical library of career requirements enabling it to give best estimates to the job seeker based on a survey of job seekers in the particular career area.

The following is an example of the Mississippi Works Skill Gap Analysis screen showing a participant with a skill gap and after the participant has closed that gap with training or by additional information to their profile.

Warehouse Supervisor
(#1238723)

Interested?
You are only a 33% match for this job - see below to find out why.

Apply Now

33%

COMPARISON DETAILS

Education
This job requires an Associate's Degree and you indicated Associate's Degree
100%   Update Education Profile

Experience
This job requires a minimum of 6 years of experience in First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand positions. You have 0 years of experience.
0%   Update Work History

Skills
You have 0 of the 3 skills preferred by the employer for this job.
0%   Update Skills in Work History

Gap Analysis when viewing a job for which one is not qualified.
The aggregate percentage (33%) is calculated by the average of education, experience, and skills. Notice, the employer would like someone with 6 years of experience in this occupation and has specific skills he or she is targeting.

Warehouse Supervisor
(#1238723)

Go For It!
You are a good match for this job and it would be worth your while to apply.

Apply Now

86%

COMPARISON DETAILS

Education
This job requires an Associate's Degree and you indicated Associate's Degree
100%   Update Education Profile

Experience
This job requires a minimum of 6 years of experience in First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand positions. You have 5-6 years of experience.
93%   Update Work History

Skills
You have 2 of the 3 skills preferred by the employer for this job.
67%   Update Skills in Work History

Perhaps the job seeker simply **neglected to list a job** on his or her resume and specify skills. After clicking "Update Work History" and adding relevant positions and skills, the picture improves immensely, and the over 50% comparison turns to green and the job seeker is told "Go For It!" This not only gives the job seeker relevant information, it serves as a stimulus to keep one's profile updated.

Mississippi Works and its skill gap analysis abilities can provide SCSEP participants and counselors with a powerful tool that can guide the participants' individual training decisions and improve their EIPs. MDES will inform our sub-grantees and the National Grantees about this new system and the provide training for it, as needed.

(7) Community Service Assignments: describe how the participant will be assigned to community service including:
- *(A) the types of community service activity that will be emphasized and how they were chosen; methods used to match participants with community service training;*
- *(B) the extent to which participants will be placed in the administration of the project itself;*
- *(C) the types of host agencies used and the procedures and criteria for selecting the assignments;*
- *(D) the average number of hours in a participant's training week;*
- *(E) the fringe benefits offered (if any); and*
- *(F) procedures for ensuring adequate supervision.*

Training Positions Available at Host Agencies.
- Telephone Operator
- Janitorial
- Administrative Assistant
- Landscaping
- Homemaker
- Food Preparation
- Maintenance

- Outreach/Referral
- Recreation/Senior Center
- Nutrition Program
- Education, Training, and Library
- Healthcare
- Retail and Sales
- Transportation

Skill Training Offerings.
- Computer Training
- Heavy Equipment Training
- Custodial
- Clerical
- Telephone skills
- Adult Basic Education
- Record Keeping

Training Linkages Negotiated with the One-Stop.
- Resume writing classes
- Interviewing Skills
- Word Processing Instruction
- Typing Classes
- Conflict Resolution
- Job Search Assistance
- Labor Market Information

Ensuring Community Services Assignments Provide Skill Training that Meets the Needs of Participants and Employers: A Collaborative Effort.

The state and National Grantees will follow the SCSEP regulations that require participants be assessed to determine the most suitable employment and community service assignment. They will also require that case managers conduct reassessments every six months to develop and amend IEPs and to ensure that the training the participants receive at the host agency provides the skills training necessary to secure unsubsidized employment in the fields that support the local economy. Additionally, the state will host a collaborative meeting with the National Grantees, WIBs, and host agencies to ensure that community service assignments are truly providing skill training that meets the needs of both participants and employers.

The USDOL Subgrantee Performance Assessments and Reporting Quarterly (SPARQ) data collection system generates management reports that allow grantees to track performance. The SPARQ reporting system generates reports on the types of host agencies that allow SCSEP Managers to track the types of host agencies used to provide training to participants to ensure that the training participants receive meets the needs of the participant and the employers.

> *(8) Training: describe the training that will be provided during community service assignments and any other types of training provided, including linkages with local one-stop centers, and Registered Apprenticeship.*

i. Classroom Training.

Older workers are willing and sometimes eager to update their skills. However, structured training can cause anxiety and fear of failure in older workers. To reduce anxiety, SCSEP managers provide participants with studying tips, shorter hours of training, and assurance that the training is hands-on. Training will be coordinated with WIN Job Centers, local community colleges, SCSEP education meetings and libraries.

ii. Other Training Opportunities.

SCSEP participants will also be prepared for unsubsidized employment through training that is in addition to their community service assignments. SCSEP Managers assist participants to identify other training opportunities based on their Individual Employment Plans. Other training opportunities may include:

- lectures;
- seminars;
- classroom instruction;
- individual instruction;
- private sector on-the-job experiences; and,
- work experience.

iii. Strategies for Improving Training Opportunities.

Stressing the need for participant training to all levels of the SCSEP service delivery system – grantees, sub-grantees, host agencies, and participants – will keep this vitally important aspect of the program at the forefront of SCSEP in Mississippi. To this end, we will work with our partners to provide information on free, reduced price, and partner-funded training resources that can be utilized by our service providers, host agencies, and our participants to further the skills and abilities of our participants. Utilizing Mississippi Works and its skill gap analysis tool can help simplify this process.

Mississippi's network of WIN Job Centers is the centerpiece of the Mississippi Workforce Investment Network. These centers provide easy access to employment services such as education and training for workers, human resource assistance for businesses and information for economic developers. MDES will provide information to the National Grantees and to our sub-grantees regarding which WIN Job Centers offer onsite training classes. MDES will also coordinate the development of computer training classes geared specifically to the needs of our seniors, many of whom may be computer illiterate and fearful of learning new technologies.

MDES will also encourage training to address literacy skills among participants when needed. For participants that are interested in completing their high school equivalency, SCSEP partners with the Adult Basic Education program administered by the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB). The Adult Basic Education program is designed to offer opportunities to enhance the skills and abilities of individuals preparing for the workforce. A link to ABE information at the MCCB website will be provided on our website.

MDES has redesigned our agency website and added a section providing information on SCSEP in Mississippi for participants, our SCSEP partners, and the public. Included on the site

is information on what SCSEP offers to the senior population, who qualifies for the program, and the benefits of being a host agency in the program. Future upgrades to the website would include information on the training options for our participants to inform our host agencies and partners about what classes and programs are offered, where and when the trainings are offered, and which entities are providing the classes.

(9) *Supportive Services: describe the supportive services that will be offered to help participants obtain and retain an unsubsidized job, including transportation assistance (if applicable).*

Supportive services are available to participants and may include, but are not limited to counseling in areas such as health, nutrition, and Medicare benefits, etc.; supportive services may also include work shoes, badges, or eyeglasses; in addition, transportation to training or the worksite may be paid for if no other source of payment is available.

All participant supportive services are dependent upon funding and must be pre-approved by the SCSEP staff. The need for supportive services will be identified in the original IEP if possible or the plan will be updated once the need for a specific supportive service is identified. Requests for supportive services must be made in writing or by email and must include the approximate cost of the service. Written approval (letter or fax) or an email approving the supportive service will be sent prior to the service being provided.

(10) *Termination: describe procedures for terminating a participant, including IEP terminations. Please provide a copy of the current termination procedures.*

The SCSEP Termination Policy sets forth the State's procedures for termination of participants in the SCSEP based on the guidance set forth in the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006 and the SCSEP Final Rule. A full description is provided in Appendix I9C.

(11) *Complaints & Grievances: describe the procedures for addressing and resolving participant complaints and grievances related to program termination. Please provide a copy of the current complaint/grievance policies.*

The Grievances and Complaints Policy sets forth the State's procedures for grievances or complaints alleging violations of the requirements of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (OAA) from participants and other interested or affected parties based on the guidance set forth at OAA sections 306(a)(10) and 307(a)(5)(b) and 20 CFR, 641.910. A full description is provided in Appendix I9D.

(12) *Maximizing enrollment: describe procedures for fully enrolling all available slots, including over enrolling participants, and how over-enrollments will be balanced with equitable distribution requirements.*

(13) *Performance: include a proposed level for each performance measure for each of the program years covered by the plan. While the plan is under review, the State will negotiate with the Employment and Training Administration to set the appropriate levels for the next year. The State may also negotiate performance levels in a subsequent modification. At a minimum, States must identify the performance indicators required under the SCSEP Final Rule published on September 1, 2010, and, for each indicator,*

the State must develop an objective and quantifiable performance goal for the next year. The performance measures include:

    (A)   entered employment,

    (B)   employment retention,

    (C)   average earnings,

    (D)   service level,

    (E)   service to most-in-need, and

    (F)   community service

The following are the negotiated performance measures for Program Year 2015:

Entered Employment	34.80%
Employment Retention	67.70%
Average Earnings	$6,692
Service Level	151.30%
Service to most in need	2.66%
Community Service	79.90%

(14)   Administrative Costs: describe any request for an increase in administrative costs consistent with section 502(c)(3) of the Older Americans Act.

MDES has not requested an increase in administrative costs.

Assurances

	X or N/A	STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE	DOCUMENTATION and COMMENT
1.	X	Where SCSEP is included in the Combined Workforce Plan, the State established a written policy and procedure to obtain advice and recommendations on the State Plan from representatives of the State and area agencies on aging; State and local boards under WIOA; public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a ACSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b); Social service organizations providing services to older individuals; Grantees under Title III of OAA, Affected Communities, Unemployed older individuals, Community-based organizations serving older individuals; business organizations; and labor organizations.	In writing the SCSEP State Plan, the state followed the procedure outlined in Section 503(a)(2) of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments of 2006 which requires that the State Plans describe the state's process for ensuring the involvement, advice and recommendations from representatives of the State and area agencies on aging; State and local boards under WIOA; public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State. The state also complied with the statute requiring involvement of specific organizations, individuals, and grantees by including an appendix containing letters from all required parties attesting to their participation in the state plan modification process. The State Plan described how it ensured an open and inclusive planning process with meaningful opportunity for public comment, per 20 CFR 641.350. The State will establish a written policy to ensure compliance with these requirements.

STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

The SWIB Workforce Development Needs Study

A Report to the Mississippi Legislature

February 2015

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Washington County Board of Supervisors

Carey Wright, Superintendent of Education
Mississippi Department of Education

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APPENDICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) was directed through a 2014 amendment to Miss. Code Ann. § 71-5-353 to conduct a study on workforce development needs in Mississippi and report back to the legislature in February 2015. Specifically, SWIB was directed to:

1. **Identify Mississippi's workforce development needs, including:**
   a. The current and projected workforce needs of existing and potential Mississippi industry.

   b. The needs of the state's workers and residents requiring additional workforce training to improve their work skills.

   c. The needs of workforce service and training providers to improve their ability to offer industry-relevant training.

2. **Assess Mississippi's current workforce development service delivery structure, including:**

   d. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the current service delivery structure.

   e. Identification of strategic options of workforce development services.

   f. Development of results-oriented measures that can be tracked over time.

3. **Provide recommendations on future uses of state workforce investment funds, including:**

   g. Promotion strategies for workforce development programs.

   h. Initiatives to reduce dropout rates.

   i. Long-term monitoring of the state's workforce development programs.

   j. Study of the potential restructuring of the state's workforce programs and delivery systems.

Beginning in July 2014, SWIB directed and conducted a series of activities to meet the legislative intent. SWIB directed a labor market analysis in conjunction with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), and the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (nSPARC) to identify Mississippi's workforce development needs. To assess Mississippi's current workforce development service delivery structure, SWIB formed a task force comprised of leaders from workforce, education, and training organizations in the state. SWIB also authorized a review of the Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) fund and undertook an examination of the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as it relates to the development of a unified state workforce system plan. Finally, SWIB collaborated with the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW) to identify future research on how the creation of human capital can be utilized by the business community in the state.

Currently, Mississippi's economy is strong. After struggling with high unemployment rates, the state's labor market is experiencing a recovery that offers new economic opportunities for workers and job seekers. Employers are showing confidence in the state's workforce, establishing new jobs and looking for qualified employees. In 2014, the manufacturing sector created the largest number of jobs with 21,415, and the natural resource sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, and mining, created the second largest number of jobs with 21,254.

Three key findings emerged from the study:

- A continued decline in workforce participation rates remain a critical threat to the long-term economic viability of the state.

- Middle-skill jobs present the strongest demand and the largest gap in workforce needs.

- The state lacks a coordinated workforce development system that operates as an ecosystem where all parts are connected and line up to achieve common goals and visions.

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SWIB identified three goals that should guide the operation and functioning of the state workforce system:

1. **Improve workforce participation rates so every Mississippian will have the opportunity to find gainful employment.**

2. **Eliminate the workforce skill gap for the increasing demand in middle-skill jobs.**

3. **Create a workforce system that acts and functions as an ecosystem.**

Several key recommendations are proposed to guide future focus on workforce development in the state:

- Develop a long-term, unified, strategic workforce initiative plan aimed at aligning goals and objectives that would define the state workforce system.

- Develop a shared governance with clear policies and procedures to ensure that all of the elements of the workforce development system remain coordinated.

- Strengthen interagency partnerships to position the state to compete more effectively for grant opportunities.

- Build more bridges between all educational sectors (K-16) and employers to capitalize on state investment in education and grow high-skill job opportunities through experiential education opportunities such as internships and co-ops.

- Develop cross-program performance metrics to enable improved monitoring of workforce development programs to gauge progress.

- Continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of WIOA and other federal initiatives.

- Engage in continuous research and analysis to realize the potential of the state's workforce programs and delivery systems.

- Deliver a unified message to promote the components of the training and workforce system.

MISSISSIPPI'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

As directed by Miss. Code Ann. § 71-5-353, SWIB leveraged existing state resources and entities to conduct a labor market analysis to identify Mississippi's workforce development needs. The process included an examination of the post-recession Mississippi economy and paid particular attention to workforce opportunities and vulnerabilities.

Overview of Mississippi's Economy

The great recession of 2007-2009 began as a financial crisis but played out as an enduring employment crisis affecting many employees and job seekers. Mississippi, like the rest of the country, experienced a dramatic loss of jobs that translated into historically high unemployment rates with many people out of work for more than 27 weeks. Like many other states, Mississippi struggled with high unemployment rates but is now experiencing a recovery that offers new economic opportunities for workers and job seekers.

Employment and Emerging Opportunities

Mississippi's unemployment rate has dropped from 10.6 percent in 2010 to 7.2 percent in 2014 (see Appendix A). The number of underemployed citizens declined from 17.6 percent in 2010 to 13.6 percent in 2014 (see Appendix B). State median household income has grown for all income brackets except the top quintile, which is good news for middle-class workers (see Appendix C). Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data show a boom in the growth of new businesses with 2,146 new starts in 2011, bringing the number of new business establishments since 2011 to more than 70,000 in Mississippi (see Appendix D).

Mississippi has several major industrial sectors. Wholesale and retail trade constitute the largest sector (16 percent of total employment), and manufacturing is the second largest sector (14 percent of total employment). Other sectors that account for more than 10 percent of total employment include tourism (accommodation and

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leisure), healthcare, and educational services. Together these sectors account for 65 percent of all employment in the state (see Appendix E).

Employers are showing confidence in the state's workforce, establishing new jobs and looking for qualified employees. In 2014 alone, there were 108,613 job openings posted statewide. Manufacturing constituted the largest amount of job creation in the state with 21,415 job openings. In addition, natural resource sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and mining provided 21,254 job opportunities (see Appendix F).

Manufacturing not only provides the largest number of job opportunities but also offers high-wage opportunities. Since 2012, more than 300 new manufacturing establishments have opened in the state, and 50 of those are advanced manufacturers that pay higher wages than traditional manufacturers. Moreover, jobs created by recently attracted advanced manufacturers pay even more than existing advanced manufacturers in the state — about $5,000 more, or an annual average of $51,000.

Labor Force Preparedness and Preparation

Despite the improved economic outlook, the state has some serious vulnerabilities. According to the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), more than 300,000 people are able to work in Mississippi, but because they are unable to gain meaningful employment, they rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other public programs for financial support. Equipping SNAP recipients to take better advantage of available and emerging economic opportunities would have a significant impact on the state's unemployment rate. Estimates show that when adjusting for this population, the unemployment rate could drop substantially from 7.2 to 5.1 percent.

Many of the long-term unemployed become discouraged and drop out of the labor force, contributing to the decline of workforce availability in the state. The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the workforce participation rate in the state has declined from 59.2 percent in 2011 to 54.6 percent in 2014, placing the state at the bottom for workforce availability and contributing to Mississippi's persistently high poverty rate (24 percent in 2014) (see Appendices G and H).

In addition, employers have had problems filling open jobs. The main reason is that individuals do not have the educational or work requirements to fill the open jobs.

Developing career readiness is a process that should start with students in early education and continue through higher education. This process includes developing core competencies in students over time to help prepare them to transition to the workplace. The seven core competencies include critical thinking and problem solving; oral and written communications; teamwork and collaboration; information technology application; leadership; professionalism and work ethic; and career management (see Figure 1).

K-16 CORE COMPETENCIES

Career readiness is a process of attaining and demonstrating requisite competencies, from K-16, to prepare students to transition to the workplace. The core competency skills identified by the SWIB Task Force include:

CRITICAL THINKING/PROBLEM SOLVING
Exercise sound reasoning and analytical thinking; obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data; demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

ORAL/WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS
Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively; demonstrate public speaking skills; communicate new ideas to others through writing and editing.

TEAMWORK/COLLABORATION
Build collaborative relationships; work in team structure; negotiate and manage conflicts.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION
Select and use appropriate technology; apply computing skills to problem solving.

LEADERSHIP
Leverage the strengths of others; use interpersonal skills and emotions effectively; organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

PROFESSIONALISM/WORK ETHIC
Demonstrate personal accountability, effective work habits, integrity, and ethical behavior; act responsibly; learn from mistakes.

CAREER MANAGEMENT
Identify and articulate skills, strengths, and experiences; identify areas for professional growth and self-advocacy; explore job options and pursue opportunities.

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In fact, one of Mississippi's most pressing workforce needs is to prepare individuals for opportunities in middle-skill jobs, or those that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree. Middle-skill jobs account for two-thirds of jobs in the state, but less than one-third of state workers have the educational requirements to fill a middle-skill job. In particular, middle-skill jobs are seeing tremendous growth in the dominant sectors in the state.

To reach parity with the nation, Mississippi must also close the gap with the number of jobs requiring a four-year degree or more education. In this case, the problem is not producing four-year college graduates but retaining them. Many Mississippians with college degrees leave the state for job opportunities elsewhere. The state must create and attract more jobs that require advanced degrees and professional skills (see Appendix L).

Demand Is Strong For Middle-Skill Jobs

MS JOBS

Low-Skill 19.2%
High-Skill 14.2%
Medium-Skill 66.6%

Legend:
- High-Skill
- Medium-Skill
- Low-Skill

Source: BLS, 2014.

Middle-Skill Jobs Skill Gap

Jobs and Workers by Skill Level

Skill Level	Jobs	Workers
High-Skill	14.2	28.9
Medium-Skill	66.6	30.8
Low-Skill	19.2	40.4

Percent (0.0 – 80.0)

Legend: Jobs, Workers

Source: BLS, 2014.

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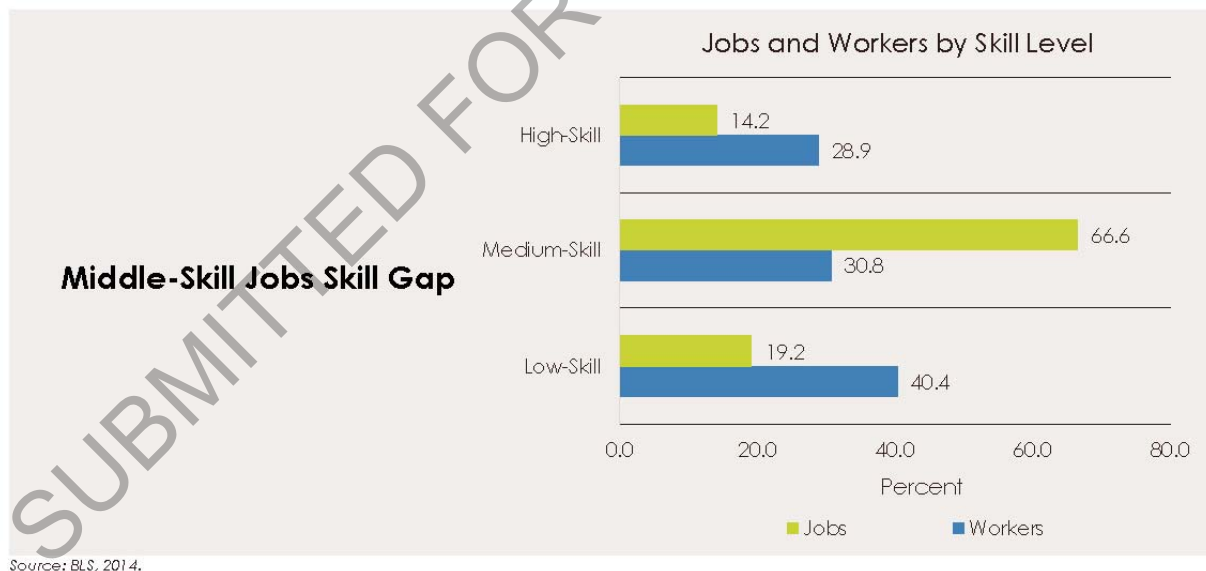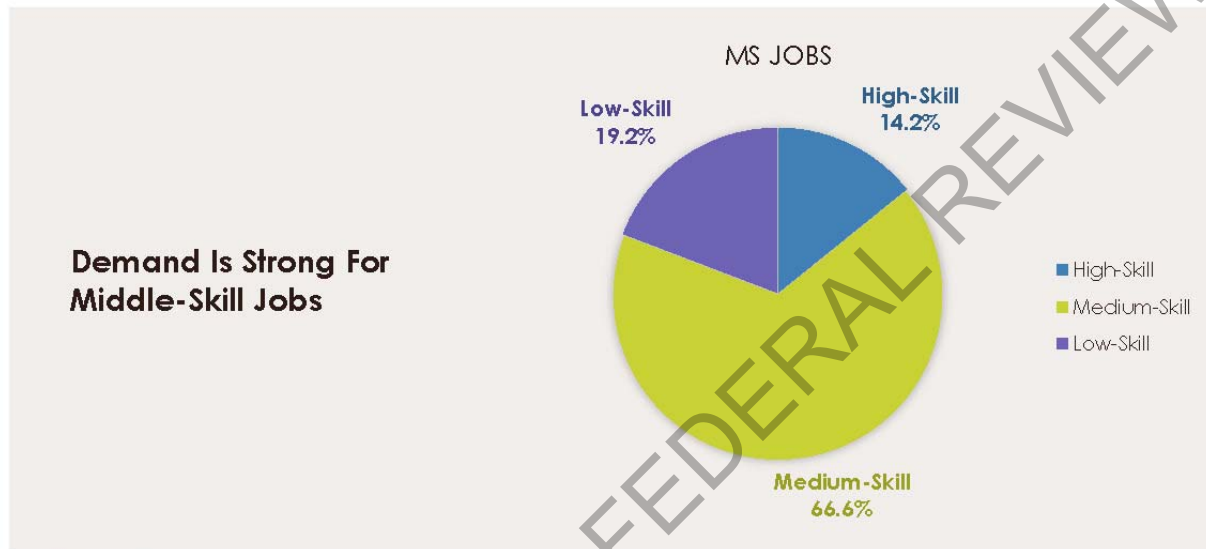
TOP 5 MIDDLE SKILL JOBS BY SECTOR

Manufacturing (Top 5 Middle Skill Jobs)	
Occupation	Openings
Welders	1,599
Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	747
Upholsterers	589
Team Assemblers	554
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	440

Accommodation/Food Services (Top 5 Middle Skill Jobs)	
Occupation	Openings
Food Service Managers	210
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	150
Food Preparation and Serving Workers Supervisors	117
Electrical and Electronics Repairers	100
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	100

Wholesale/Retail Trade (Top 5 Middle Skill Jobs)	
Occupation	Openings
Customer Service Representatives	466
Retail Sales Worker Supervisors	318
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	166
Light Truck or Delivery Service Drivers	115
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	102

Healthcare (Top 5 Middle Skill Jobs)	
Occupation	Openings
Nursing Assistants	1,698
Registered Nurses	1,149
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses	404
Healthcare Support Workers	266
Office Clerks	120

*Full list of 2014 jobs by sector (Appendix K)

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICE DELIVERY STRUCTURE

As directed by Miss. Code Ann. § 71-5-353, SWIB formed a task force to assess Mississippi's current workforce development service delivery structure (see Appendix M). The task force was comprised of leaders from workforce, education, and training organizations in the state to (1) define the workforce system and (2) identify areas of priority.

The task force approached workforce development in a way that included skill development and work preparation along a continuum: basic education or academic skills, career and technical skills, career and work readiness, and entrepreneurship skills. The task force also adopted a workforce development "ecosystem" mindset to understand how individuals currently move through the system. Task force members agreed a workforce development ecosystem must equip individuals with (1) core competencies, (2) foundational skills and (3) advanced skills needed to be successful in the workforce. In addition, the ecosystem must offer employment opportunities to support individuals and families and produce wealth for the state of Mississippi.

Assessment of Workforce Service and Training Providers

The task force noted several challenges that workforce service and training providers face in preparing individuals for the workforce of the future, including: (1) a low labor force participation rate because people need training to move into the workforce; (2) low education levels, which require remediation and dropout recovery work; (3) lack of coordinated ancillary services such as transportation and child care to get people to take advantage of education and training opportunities; and (4) a lack of coordinated messaging efforts to advertise the availability of training services to potential participants and communicate information about jobs and careers.

The task force also noted that programs and services need to be updated continually to meet the needs of industry partners and to provide the incumbent workforce and job seekers with the most current training available. Workforce training providers need a way to find out quickly about the changing needs in the workplace and to adapt training programs accordingly. Finally, the task force found that workforce training providers from all sectors agreed

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on the huge need for more coordination and long-term planning in the workforce development training system.

Assessment of Current Workforce Development System

The task force agreed that the current workforce system is structured to:

- Deliver education and training to prepare individuals for jobs and careers.
- Upgrade, maintain, and fine-tune the skills of the incumbent workforce.
- Connect individuals to jobs and offer supportive services.
- Support business retention, expansion, and recruitment.
- Maintain and improve information that integrates education and workforce data, providing high-quality labor market information.

The task force also addressed opportunities and challenges of Mississippi's current workforce development system. As a result, several strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the state system emerged.

Strengths of the Current Workforce Development System:

- Contains all of the necessary elements of future-ready workforce development ecosystem.
- Recognizes that workforce development is shared responsibility with roles for educational partners, including K-12 schools, two-year colleges, and institutions of higher learning; workforce support services; and public and privately administered programs by employers, business and industry associations, communities, and faith-based partners.
- Provides cross-agency support services that promote education, professional development, and training, especially through the services provided by MDE, community colleges, and institutions of higher learning.
- Connects people to jobs through agency services and innovative use of technology. MDES and MDHS currently provide essential support services for people to connect and reconnect with jobs. MDES provides the technological platform and expertise to bridge

job seekers effectively with employers by connecting multiple stakeholders. MDHS implements programs to assist individuals and families to become self-sufficient. MDOT coordinates a network of public and specialized transportation agencies that help provide access to jobs, education, and training opportunities.

- Leverages the system of Planning and Development Districts (PDDs) across the state to ensure that projects and programs are developed in line with regional long-range plans.
- Integrates community-based organizations (CBOs) into the slate of statewide services.

Weaknesses of the Current Workforce Development System:

- Ineffective matching of incumbent workers and job seekers to career readiness programs.
- Ineffective matching of college students with career strengthening opportunities, such as experiential education and co-ops.
- Lack of system coordination to inform training and education programs to keep them on the leading edge of workforce expectations.
- Competing visions and interests across sectors, programs, and agencies.

Opportunities for the Current Workforce Development System:

- To develop a responsive and proactive workforce ecosystem built on collaboration between statewide leaders, regional experts, and local developers.
- To support state and local efforts dynamically for business retention, expansion, and recruitment.
- To adapt education and training programs to meet current needs and emerging opportunities.
- To develop cross-program performance metrics to enable improved monitoring of workforce development programs to gauge progress in achieving performance benchmarks.
- To expand technology to meet the unified technology requirements of WIOA and other federal initiatives.

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Threats to the Current Workforce Development System:

- Too complex and hard to navigate.
- Insufficient feedback mechanism to inform education and workforce partners so they can adapt to changes in the workforce development ecosystem.
- Changing federal regulations regarding the development of cross-program, cross-agency performance metrics.

Identification of Strategic Options of Workforce Development Services

To help in the process of identifying appropriate strategic options for the state, SWIB authorized reviews of strategies and mechanisms currently in place. Specifically, SWIB asked for a review of the Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) fund model and an examination of the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Review of the WET Fund Model

To help ensure the efficacy and effectiveness of state workforce development training programs, SWIB has asked the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) to conduct a review of WET-funded projects. The proposed analyses that are underway will examine training provision from four perspectives: (1) the community/junior college, (2) the employer, (3) the employee, and (4) the community. The final review will provide objective, analysis-based recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce development training system.

Examination of the WIOA

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 has been the primary mechanism for the delivery of federal workforce funds to Mississippi. In 2014 WIA was reauthorized as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA requires the submission of a unified state plan to create a workforce system that closes the skill gap and helps workers and businesses succeed. The program requires states to align workforce programs with each other and the needs of employers to produce a skilled workforce with an emphasis on closing the middle-skills gap. The state plan must be strategic and operational, clearly describing Mississippi's vision

and goals for preparing a skilled workforce that meets employer needs.

The state "playbook," as recommended by the National Skills Coalition, should describe the overall strategy for workforce development and how it will meet identified skill needs for workers, job seekers, and employers. Mississippi's plan should include strategies in four areas:

- Sector partnerships – identifying local or regional partnerships and funding streams.
- Career pathways – collaborating with stakeholders, including local programs, to use adult education, wrap-around support, and sector partnerships.
- Cross-program data and measurement – developing cross-agency data and measurement to link data and present them in dashboards, to measure outcomes, and to provide training and program performance scorecards.
- Job-driven investments – linking training to the state's in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Common metrics, or primary indicators of performance, are required in the state plan to link data across workforce and education programs for the purpose of measuring outcomes. Some common metrics in adult programs could be unsubsidized employment, median earnings, receipt of a secondary diploma or recognized postsecondary credential, measurable skills gains toward a credential or employment, and employer engagement. A similar set of common measures should be developed for youth programs.

The WIOA mandates that the SWIB assist in the development of strategies for technological improvements, such as aligning technology and data systems across partner programs to create a "one-stop" location for client intake, data collection, and case management.

As WIOA mandates, a meeting of required partners representing core program was convened by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) in partnership with SWIB. Each partner was given an opportunity to discuss current service delivery processes, eligibility, data collection and reporting, performance, and information management systems. This discussion helped SWIB better understand strategic options and will be used by MDES and SWIB in drafting Mississippi's WIOA plan.

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Development of results-oriented measures

Mississippi is well-positioned for the long-term monitoring of workforce ecosystem performance and the tracking of workforce and education performance benchmarks. In this regard, Mississippi has a well-established and robust statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) that the U.S. Department of Education has deemed as one of the best in the country. The Mississippi SLDS includes information from education (PK-20) and workforce agencies in the state that will be aligned to create cross-program performance metrics. The metrics will be actionable, valid, reliable, timely, easy-to-understand, and aligned across sector and delivery mechanisms.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Drawing upon the findings of this study, several key recommendations emerged to guide future focus on workforce development in the state.

Develop a Long-term, Unified, Strategic Workforce Initiative Plan

SWIB recommends the development of a long-term, unified, strategic workforce initiative plan to serve as the state's blueprint for a coordinated workforce development ecosystem. The unified strategic plan would outline long-term goals and objectives that would define the state workforce system for the next several years. The plan would incorporate regional and local long-range plans, recognizing the autonomy of local organizational partners, and multiyear incremental objectives to define, implement, and measure success of the state workforce development ecosystem. Development of the plan would be a collaborative effort of SWIB and workforce, education, and economic development stakeholders across the state.

Develop a Shared Governance Structure with Clear Policies and Procedures

SWIB recommends the development of a shared governance structure with clear policies and procedures to ensure that all of the elements of the workforce development ecosystem remain coordinated and to improve the ability to offer industry-relevant training. A set of rules and regulations would be developed to help ensure the efficacy and effectiveness of the state workforce development ecosystem.

Strengthen Interagency Partnerships

SWIB recommends strengthening interagency partnerships and developing ongoing working relationships to improve the state's ability to: (1) meet the education and training requirements of the incumbent workforce, (2) design initiatives to reduce the state's high school dropout rate, (3) design initiatives to increase college graduations rates, (4) promote workforce development programs, and (5) compete for grant opportunities.

Build More Bridges Between All Educational sectors (K-16) and Employers

SWIB recommends additional linkages between all educational sectors (K-16) and employers to capitalize on state investment in education and to grow high-skill job opportunities through experiential education opportunities such as internships and co-ops.

Develop Cross-program Performance Metrics

SWIB recommends leveraging the Mississippi SLDS in the design, measurement, and analysis of cross-program performance metrics. Mississippi's SLDS is a ready platform for the generation of common performance metrics across workforce development programs and activities.

Continue to Invest in Integrated Technology to Meet the Unified Technology Requirements of WIOA and Other Federal Initiatives

SWIB recommends continued support of integrated technological innovation, similar to that which has garnered national awards for the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and the Mississippi Department of Information Technology.

Engage in Continuous Research and Analysis to Realize the Potential of the State's Workforce Programs and Delivery Systems

SWIB recommends supporting continuous research to generate information that can inform the improvement of Mississippi's workforce development ecosystem. SWIB further recommends continued partnerships with the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW), the National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research

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Center (nSPARC), and similar organizations or entities to propose and conduct research to evaluate Mississippi's economy further and map out current and future workforce needs to align with the state's economic goals.

Deliver a Unified Message

The SWIB recommends that partners in the state's workforce development system develop a unified message to promote and market the components of the training and workforce system.

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APPENDIX A: MISSISSIPPI UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 2009-2014

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014.

APPENDIX B: MISSISSIPPI UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE, 2009-2014

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014.

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APPENDIX C: MISSISSIPPI PERCENT CHANGE IN MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY INCOME QUINTILES, 2009-2013
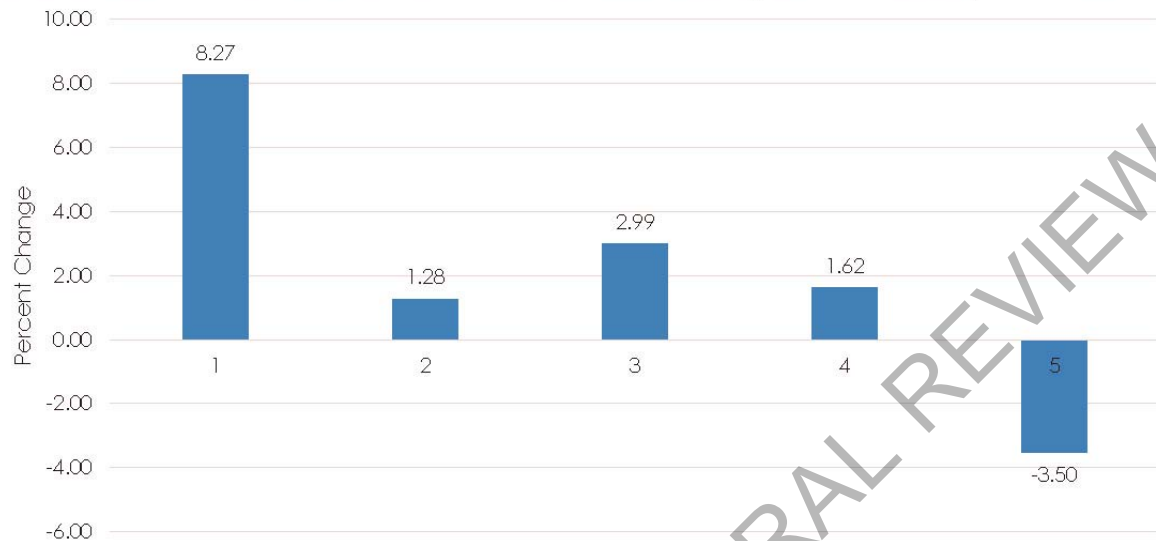
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey, 2014.

APPENDIX D: NUMBER OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS IN MISSISSIPPI, 2009-2014

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014.

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APPENDIX E: MISSISSIPPI INDUSTRY SECTORS, 2014

Legend:
- Natural Resources
- Utilities
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale/Retail Trade
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Information
- Financial Activities
- Professional/Technical Services
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Administrative and Waste Services
- Educational Services
- Healthcare
- Accommodation/ Leisure
- Other Services
- Public Administration

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

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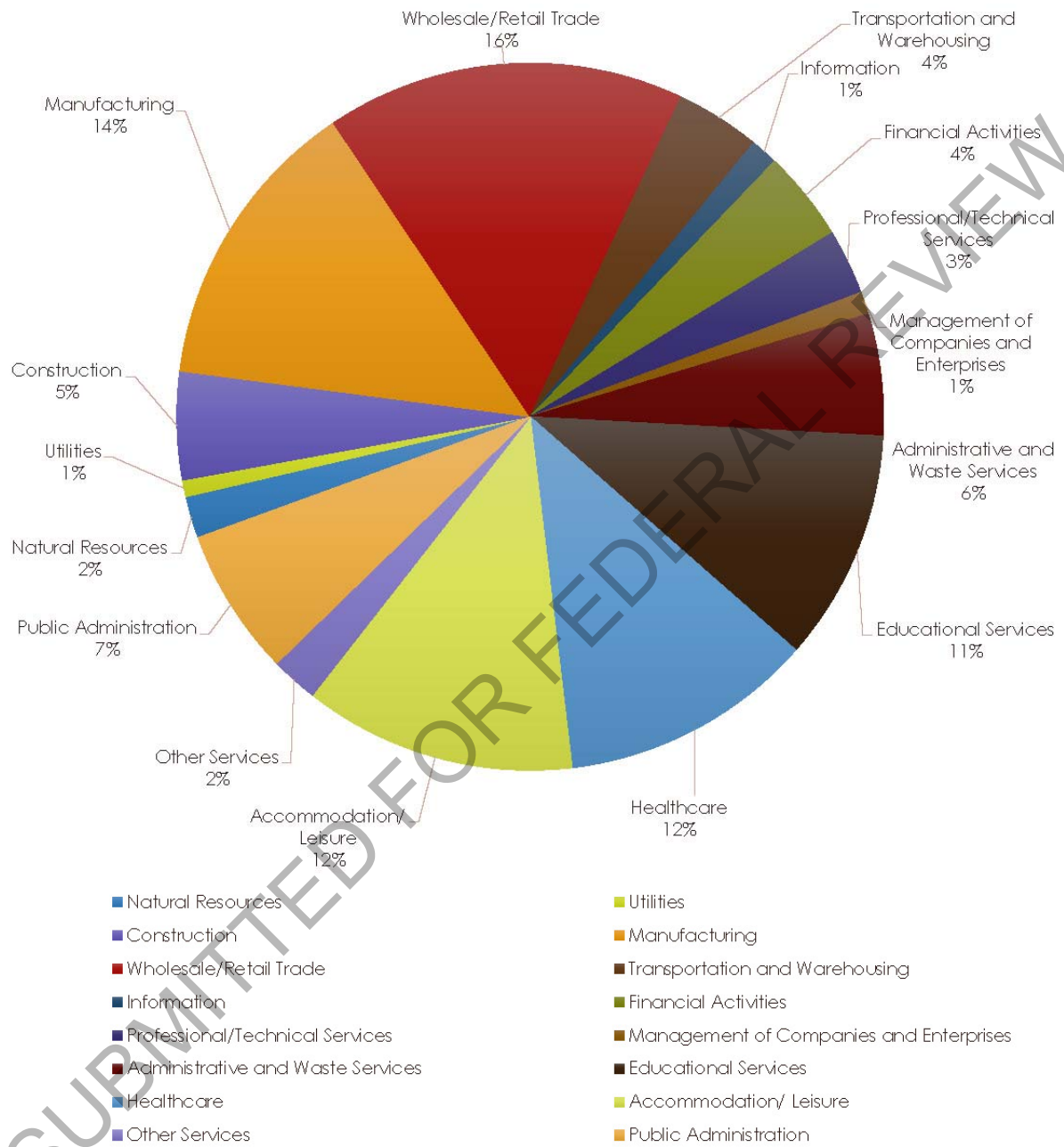
APPENDIX F: 2014 JOB POSTINGS BY SECTOR

Total Job Openings 2014:
108,613
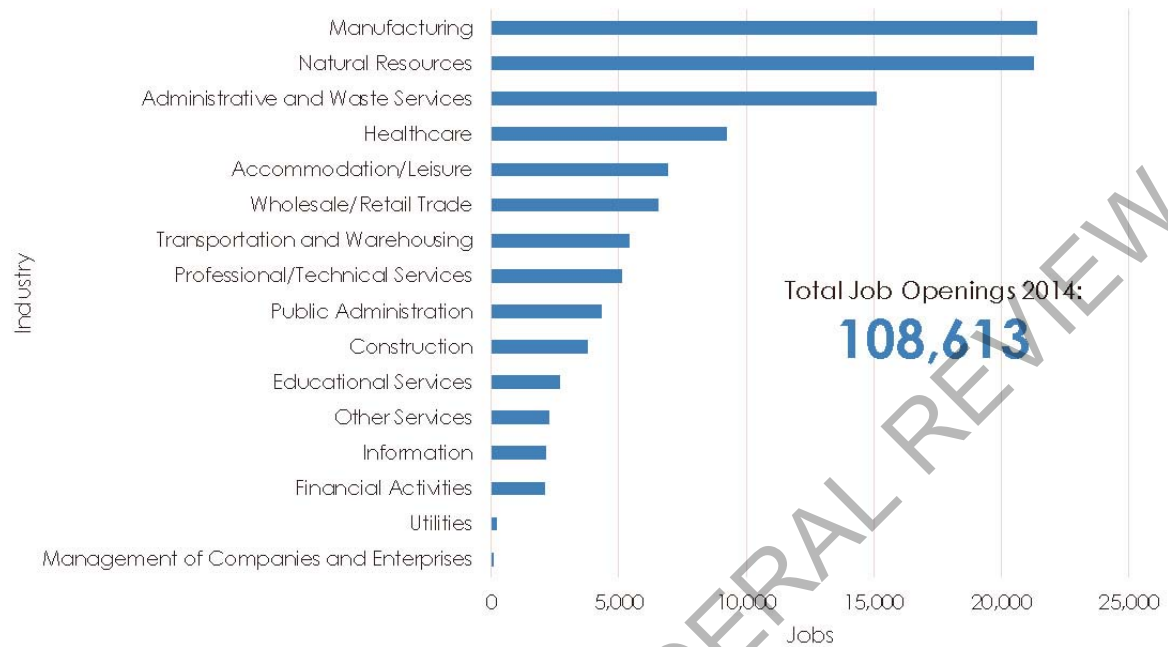
Source: MDES, 2015.

APPENDIX G: MISSISSIPPI LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE, 2009-2014

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014.

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APPENDIX H: PERCENT IN POVERTY, MISSISSIPPI, 2009-2013
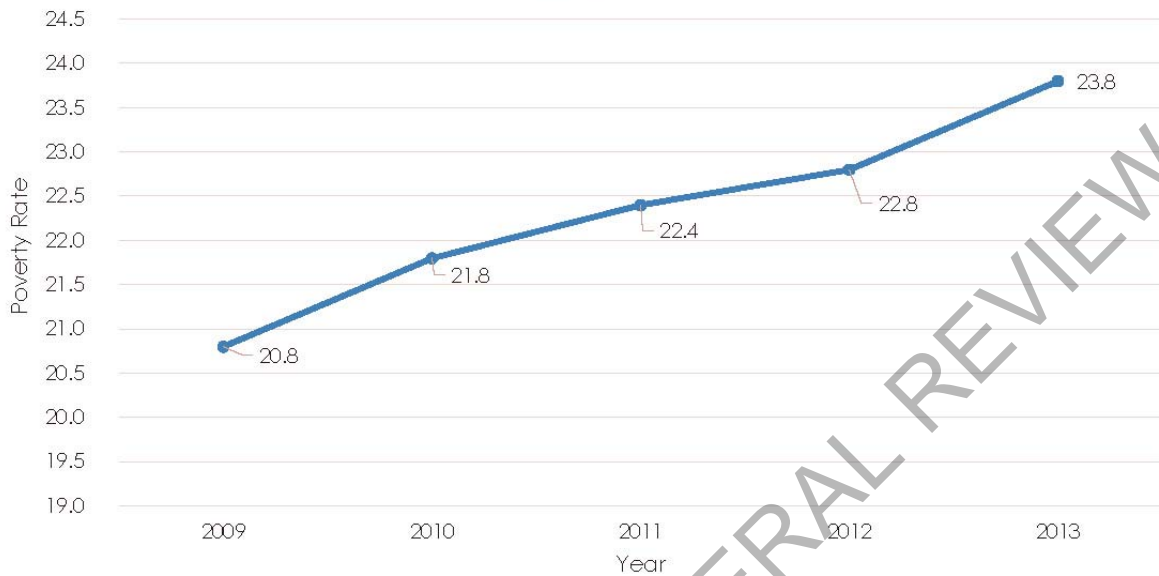
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey, 2014.

APPENDIX I: MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS

Source: BLS, 2014.

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APPENDIX J: MISSISSIPPI VERSUS NATIONAL EDUCATION LEVELS

Percent of Jobs by Job Zone: State vs. Nation
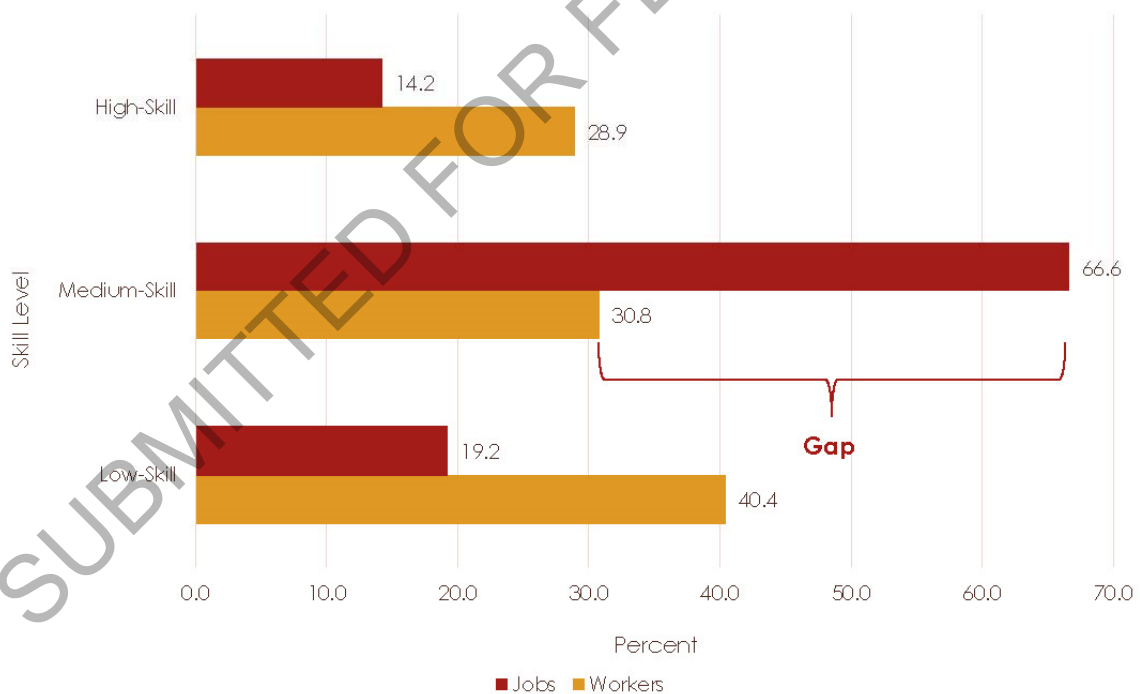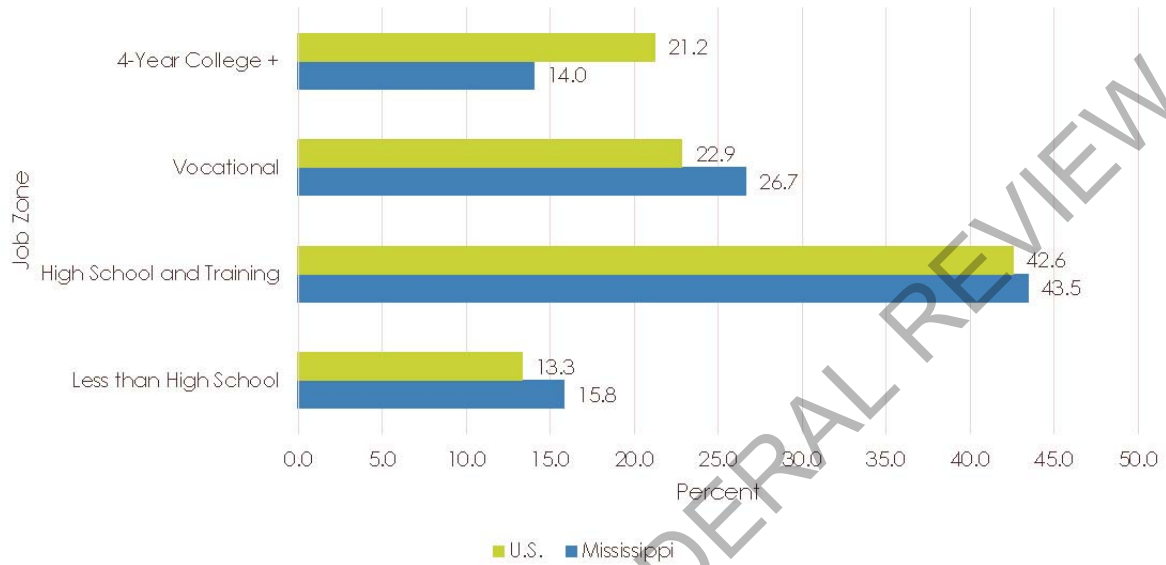
Source: BLS, 2014.

APPENDIX K:
MANUFACTURING JOB POSTINGS[1]

OSOC CODE	Description	Job Openings	Median Hourly Earnings	Education_Level
Management Occupations		**92**	**$28.84**	
113051	Industrial Production Managers	45	$37.05	Bachelor's degree
111021	General and Operations Managers	38	$39.67	Bachelor's degree
119013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	4	$18.97	High school diploma or equivalent
119051	Food Service Managers	4	$22.42	High school diploma or equivalent
112031	Public Relations and Fundraising Managers	1	$33.58	Bachelor's degree
113011	Administrative Services Managers	1	$26.08	Bachelor's degree
Business/Financial Occupations		**13**	**$26.09**	
131022	Wholesale and Retail Buyers, Except Farm Products	10	$27.15	High school diploma or equivalent
131031	Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	1	$28.68	High school diploma or equivalent
131199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	1	$29.54	High school diploma or equivalent
132081	Tax Examiners and Collectors, and Revenue Agents	1	$18.98	Bachelor's degree
Computer/Mathematical Occupations		**5**	**$18.57**	
151151	Computer User Support Specialists	5	$18.57	Some college, no degree
Engineering Occupations		**151**	**$23.50**	
173026	Industrial Engineering Technicians	47	$22.24	Associate's degree
173023	Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technicians	35	$26.32	Associate's degree
173024	Electro-Mechanical Technicians	26	$25.91	Associate's degree
173029	Engineering Technicians, Except Drafters, All Other	20	$27.16	Associate's degree
173013	Mechanical Drafters	10	$22.76	Associate's degree
173027	Mechanical Engineering Technicians	9	$25.05	Associate's degree
173012	Electrical and Electronics Drafters	2	$25.12	Associate's degree
173011	Architectural and Civil Drafters	1	$20.67	Associate's degree
173022	Civil Engineering Technicians	1	$16.28	Associate's degree
Life/Physical/Social Science Occupations		**12**	**$18.31**	
194031	Chemical Technicians	12	$18.31	Associate's degree
Art and Media Occupations		**3**	**$15.74**	
274011	Audio and Video Equipment Technicians	1	$15.65	Postsecondary non-degree award
274014	Sound Engineering Technicians	1	$18.41	Postsecondary non-degree award
274021	Photographers	1	$13.17	High school diploma or equivalent
Healthcare Occupations		**67**	**$16.35**	
311014	Nursing Assistants	42	$9.91	Postsecondary non-degree award
319099	Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	10	$22.63	High school diploma or equivalent
292052	Pharmacy Technicians	4	$12.65	High school diploma or equivalent
292061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	3	$17.05	Postsecondary non-degree award
292041	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	2	$14.11	Postsecondary non-degree award
299012	Occupational Health and Safety Technicians	2	$18.02	High school diploma or equivalent
291141	Registered Nurses	1	$27.52	Associate's degree
292055	Surgical Technologists	1	$15.78	Postsecondary non-degree award
292081	Opticians, Dispensing	1	$13.21	High school diploma or equivalent
319092	Medical Assistants	1	$12.65	Postsecondary non-degree award
Food Preparation/Serving Occupations		**1**	**$12.06**	
351012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1	$12.06	High school diploma or equivalent
Building/Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance Occupations		**10**	**$15.21**	
371012	First-Line Supervisors of Landscaping, Lawn Service, and Groundskeeping Workers	6	$18.86	High school diploma or equivalent
371011	First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers	3	$13.99	High school diploma or equivalent
372021	Pest Control Workers	1	$12.77	High school diploma or equivalent
Sales Occupations		**14**	**$18.71**	
413011	Advertising Sales Agents	8	$15.55	High school diploma or equivalent
411011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	4	$17.02	High school diploma or equivalent
419091	Door-to-Door Sales Workers, News and Street Vendors, and Related Workers	2	$23.56	High school diploma or equivalent
Office/Administrative Support Occupations		**464**	**$14.71**	
435061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	122	$19.48	High school diploma or equivalent
435071	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	101	$13.11	High school diploma or equivalent
434051	Customer Service Representatives	68	$12.83	High school diploma or equivalent
433031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	33	$15.31	High school diploma or equivalent
436014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	22	$13.32	High school diploma or equivalent
434071	File Clerks	20	$10.94	High school diploma or equivalent
436011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	15	$18.15	High school diploma or equivalent

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[1] Job Openings from MDES 2015

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439061	Office Clerks, General	14	$10.63	High school diploma or equivalent
434171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	11	$11.14	High school diploma or equivalent
434161	Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	10	$16.99	High school diploma or equivalent
433021	Billing and Posting Clerks	7	$14.15	High school diploma or equivalent
433051	Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks	7	$15.77	High school diploma or equivalent
439021	Data Entry Keyers	7	$11.73	High school diploma or equivalent
435032	Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance	5	$15.21	High school diploma or equivalent
433061	Procurement Clerks	4	$18.37	High school diploma or equivalent
434121	Library Assistants, Clerical	3	$9.42	High school diploma or equivalent
439011	Computer Operators	3	$16.34	High school diploma or equivalent
431011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	2	$20.59	High school diploma or equivalent
432011	Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service	2	$11.80	High school diploma or equivalent
433011	Bill and Account Collectors	2	$13.85	High school diploma or equivalent
435111	Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping	2	$13.17	High school diploma or equivalent
434141	New Accounts Clerks	1	$13.57	High school diploma or equivalent
434151	Order Clerks	1	$13.27	High school diploma or equivalent
435051	Postal Service Clerks	1	$25.68	High school diploma or equivalent
439071	Office Machine Operators, Except Computer	1	$12.89	High school diploma or equivalent
Farming/Fishing/Forestry Occupations		**58**	**$20.26**	
454011	Forest and Conservation Workers	40	$18.45	High school diploma or equivalent
451011	First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	18	$22.07	High school diploma or equivalent
Construction Occupations		**916**	**$19.00**	
472111	Electricians	335	$21.50	High school diploma or equivalent
472152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	237	$18.48	High school diploma or equivalent
472211	Sheet Metal Workers	74	$17.37	High school diploma or equivalent
473015	Helpers--Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	72	$11.65	High school diploma or equivalent
472221	Structural Iron and Steel Workers	59	$19.83	High school diploma or equivalent
474099	Construction and Related Workers, All Other	24	$29.82	High school diploma or equivalent
472171	Reinforcing Iron and Rebar Workers	19	$17.07	High school diploma or equivalent
473013	Helpers--Electricians	18	$12.20	High school diploma or equivalent
472011	Boilermakers	17	$21.88	High school diploma or equivalent
472031	Carpenters	17	$16.44	High school diploma or equivalent
472071	Paving, Surfacing, and Tamping Equipment Operators	17	$13.59	High school diploma or equivalent
472132	Insulation Workers, Mechanical	10	$15.91	High school diploma or equivalent
475031	Explosives Workers, Ordnance Handling Experts, and Blasters	7	$32.27	High school diploma or equivalent
472073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	4	$16.12	High school diploma or equivalent
471011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	3	$24.24	High school diploma or equivalent
474011	Construction and Building Inspectors	2	$21.40	High school diploma or equivalent
Installation/Maintenance/Repair Occupations		**1,032**	**$19.53**	
499071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	249	$13.40	High school diploma or equivalent
499043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	160	$18.83	High school diploma or equivalent
499041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	134	$22.43	High school diploma or equivalent
492094	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment	115	$19.00	Postsecondary non-degree award
499099	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other	104	$20.94	High school diploma or equivalent
499096	Riggers	70	$30.03	High school diploma or equivalent
493031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	41	$16.99	High school diploma or equivalent
499098	Helpers--Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers	33	$11.93	High school diploma or equivalent
491011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	30	$25.46	High school diploma or equivalent
493023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	28	$15.25	High school diploma or equivalent
493042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	22	$18.97	High school diploma or equivalent
499044	Millwrights	14	$20.58	High school diploma or equivalent
499021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	6	$16.89	Postsecondary non-degree award
493021	Automotive Body and Related Repairers	5	$15.09	High school diploma or equivalent
499052	Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	4	$19.38	High school diploma or equivalent
492093	Electrical and Electronics Installers and Repairers, Transportation Equipment	3	$25.43	Postsecondary non-degree award
493041	Farm Equipment Mechanics and Service Technicians	3	$16.17	High school diploma or equivalent
493053	Outdoor Power Equipment and Other Small Engine Mechanics	3	$13.78	High school diploma or equivalent
493011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	2	$24.63	Postsecondary non-degree award
493091	Bicycle Repairers	2	$14.88	High school diploma or equivalent
492096	Electronic Equipment Installers and Repairers, Motor Vehicles	1	$15.62	Postsecondary non-degree award
493051	Motorboat Mechanics and Service Technicians	1	$19.13	High school diploma or equivalent
499012	Control and Valve Installers and Repairers, Except Mechanical Door	1	$17.31	High school diploma or equivalent
499081	Wind Turbine Service Technicians	1	$36.61	Some college, no degree
Production Occupations		**6,220**	**$16.93**	
514121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1,599	$18.72	High school diploma or equivalent
512041	Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	747	$17.42	High school diploma or equivalent
516093	Upholsterers	589	$15.60	High school diploma or equivalent
512092	Team Assemblers	554	$13.83	High school diploma or equivalent
517041	Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	378	$11.73	High school diploma or equivalent
514041	Machinists	361	$18.90	High school diploma or equivalent
511011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	296	$22.23	Postsecondary non-degree award
512022	Forging Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	266	$16.83	High school diploma or equivalent
519061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	261	$13.90	High school diploma or equivalent
512022	Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers	189	$13.73	High school diploma or equivalent
514081	Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	106	$14.95	High school diploma or equivalent

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519041	Extruding, Forming, Pressing, and Compacting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	101	$12.71	High school diploma or equivalent
519191	Adhesive Bonding Machine Operators and Tenders	58	$13.04	High school diploma or equivalent
519122	Painters, Transportation Equipment	55	$18.40	High school diploma or equivalent
516063	Textile Knitting and Weaving Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	53	$15.84	High school diploma or equivalent
512031	Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	52	$15.51	High school diploma or equivalent
514122	Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	46	$17.14	High school diploma or equivalent
518091	Chemical Plant and System Operators	41	$23.43	High school diploma or equivalent
519023	Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	40	$14.37	High school diploma or equivalent
514192	Layout Workers, Metal and Plastic	37	$26.40	High school diploma or equivalent
518093	Petroleum Pump System Operators, Refinery Operators, and Gaugers	36	$37.42	High school diploma or equivalent
519032	Cutting and Slicing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	34	$11.62	High school diploma or equivalent
519111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	34	$11.16	High school diploma or equivalent
519051	Furnace, Kiln, Oven, Drier, and Kettle Operators and Tenders	33	$19.00	High school diploma or equivalent
519196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	25	$15.76	High school diploma or equivalent
514021	Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	23	$14.66	High school diploma or equivalent
516091	Extruding and Forming Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Synthetic and Glass Fibers	22	$20.98	High school diploma or equivalent
519195	Molders, Shapers, and Casters, Except Metal and Plastic	22	$11.09	High school diploma or equivalent
512021	Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	21	$16.69	High school diploma or equivalent
512091	Fiberglass Laminators and Fabricators	21	$14.35	High school diploma or equivalent
514111	Tool and Die Makers	18	$19.50	High school diploma or equivalent
515112	Printing Press Operators	16	$12.76	High school diploma or equivalent
514011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	15	$16.76	High school diploma or equivalent
512011	Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	13	$27.79	High school diploma or equivalent
519011	Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	12	$22.43	High school diploma or equivalent
514191	Heat Treating Equipment Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	10	$19.33	High school diploma or equivalent
519021	Crushing, Grinding, and Polishing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	10	$14.31	High school diploma or equivalent
514072	Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	5	$11.77	High school diploma or equivalent
516041	Shoe and Leather Workers and Repairers	4	$22.80	High school diploma or equivalent
518021	Stationary Engineers and Boiler Operators	4	$14.80	High school diploma or equivalent
514012	Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic	3	$19.80	High school diploma or equivalent
516062	Textile Cutting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	2	$11.63	High school diploma or equivalent
514032	Drilling and Boring Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1	$14.54	High school diploma or equivalent
514034	Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1	$14.97	High school diploma or equivalent
514071	Foundry Mold and Coremakers	1	$9.98	High school diploma or equivalent
515113	Print Binding and Finishing Workers	1	$11.33	High school diploma or equivalent
516092	Fabric and Apparel Patternmakers	1	$15.55	High school diploma or equivalent
518013	Power Plant Operators	1	$29.11	High school diploma or equivalent
519012	Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	1	$19.02	High school diploma or equivalent
519151	Photographic Process Workers and Processing Machine Operators	1	$10.98	High school diploma or equivalent
Transportation/Material Moving Occupations		**564**	**$21.73**	
533032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	440	$17.35	Postsecondary non-degree award
533033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	53	$12.63	High school diploma or equivalent
531021	First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	31	$21.68	High school diploma or equivalent
535031	Ship Engineers	28	$30.90	Bachelor's degree
537021	Crane and Tower Operators	10	$18.63	High school diploma or equivalent
532012	Commercial Pilots	1	$35.53	High school diploma or equivalent
537032	Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators	1	$15.40	High school diploma or equivalent

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APPENDIX K: HEALTHCARE JOB POSTINGS[2]

OSOC CODE	Description	Job Openings	Median Hourly Earnings	Education_Level
Management Occupations		**80**	**$29.39**	
119051	Food Service Managers	50	$22.42	High school diploma or equivalent
111021	General and Operations Managers	15	$39.67	Bachelor's degree
113011	Administrative Services Managers	15	$26.08	Bachelor's degree
Business/Financial Occupations		**32**	**$23.03**	
131199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	27	$29.54	High school diploma or equivalent
131022	Wholesale and Retail Buyers, Except Farm Products	4	$27.15	High school diploma or equivalent
132082	Tax Preparers	1	$12.40	High school diploma or equivalent
Computer/Mathematical Occupations		**18**	**$18.57**	
151151	Computer User Support Specialists	18	$18.57	Some college, no degree
Life/Physical/Social Science Occupations		**3**	**$17.44**	
194099	Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other	3	$17.44	Associate's degree
Education/Training Occupations		**154**	**$12.01**	
252011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	107	$11.71	Associate's degree
259041	Teacher Assistants	44	$8.74	Some college, no degree
253021	Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	3	$15.59	High school diploma or equivalent
Healthcare Occupations		**4,331**	**$17.86**	
311014	Nursing Assistants	1,698	$9.91	Postsecondary non-degree award
291141	Registered Nurses	1,149	$27.52	Associate's degree
292061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	404	$17.05	Postsecondary non-degree award
319099	Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	266	$22.63	High school diploma or equivalent
292099	Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	103	$29.09	High school diploma or equivalent
319092	Medical Assistants	85	$12.65	Postsecondary non-degree award
292041	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	81	$14.11	Postsecondary non-degree award
292055	Surgical Technologists	59	$15.78	Postsecondary non-degree award
292034	Radiologic Technologists	58	$21.47	Associate's degree
292012	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	54	$16.67	Associate's degree
292071	Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	54	$13.10	Postsecondary non-degree award
291126	Respiratory Therapists	53	$23.37	Associate's degree
292053	Psychiatric Technicians	49	$12.07	Postsecondary non-degree award
292052	Pharmacy Technicians	32	$12.65	High school diploma or equivalent
319091	Dental Assistants	31	$15.02	Postsecondary non-degree award
319097	Phlebotomists	30	$11.79	Postsecondary non-degree award
311013	Psychiatric Aides	21	$10.10	High school diploma or equivalent
292032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	16	$26.50	Associate's degree
292031	Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	14	$19.39	Associate's degree
292051	Dietetic Technicians	11	$9.21	Associate's degree
312021	Physical Therapist Assistants	11	$21.16	Associate's degree
312011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	10	$21.29	Associate's degree
319096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	8	$10.37	High school diploma or equivalent
292033	Nuclear Medicine Technologists	6	$29.80	Associate's degree
292057	Ophthalmic Medical Technicians	6	$15.54	Postsecondary non-degree award
292021	Dental Hygienists	5	$25.23	Associate's degree
319094	Medical Transcriptionists	5	$14.83	Postsecondary non-degree award
291124	Radiation Therapists	4	$36.05	Associate's degree
312012	Occupational Therapy Aides	3	$17.44	High school diploma or equivalent
292081	Opticians, Dispensing	2	$13.21	High school diploma or equivalent
312022	Physical Therapist Aides	1	$11.07	High school diploma or equivalent
319011	Massage Therapists	1	$19.99	Postsecondary non-degree award
319093	Medical Equipment Preparers	1	$13.21	High school diploma or equivalent
Protective Service Occupations		**38**	**$17.36**	
339032	Security Guards	30	$10.06	High school diploma or equivalent
333051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	3	$15.56	High school diploma or equivalent
333012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	2	$13.00	High school diploma or equivalent
331012	First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives	1	$24.54	High school diploma or equivalent
332021	Fire Inspectors and Investigators	1	$26.92	High school diploma or equivalent
339011	Animal Control Workers	1	$14.08	High school diploma or equivalent
Food Preparation/Serving Occupations		**5**	**$21.41**	
351011	Chefs and Head Cooks	5	$21.41	High school diploma or equivalent
Building/Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance Occupations		**3**	**$13.99**	
371011	First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers	3	$13.99	High school diploma or equivalent

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[2] Job Openings from MDES 2015

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Personal Care/Service Occupations		115	$10.92	
399011	Childcare Workers	106	$8.69	High school diploma or equivalent
399041	Residential Advisors	8	$10.13	High school diploma or equivalent
399031	Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	1	$13.93	High school diploma or equivalent
Sales Occupations		**1**	**$15.51**	
419011	Demonstrators and Product Promoters	1	$15.51	High school diploma or equivalent
Office/Administrative Support Occupations		**558**	**$14.47**	
439061	Office Clerks, General	120	$10.63	High school diploma or equivalent
434051	Customer Service Representatives	73	$12.83	High school diploma or equivalent
434171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	70	$11.14	High school diploma or equivalent
436013	Medical Secretaries	70	$13.74	High school diploma or equivalent
436014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	47	$13.32	High school diploma or equivalent
436011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	24	$18.15	High school diploma or equivalent
435021	Couriers and Messengers	22	$9.99	High school diploma or equivalent
433031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	21	$15.31	High school diploma or equivalent
439041	Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks	17	$15.02	High school diploma or equivalent
433021	Billing and Posting Clerks	14	$14.15	High school diploma or equivalent
431011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	10	$20.59	High school diploma or equivalent
434071	File Clerks	9	$10.94	High school diploma or equivalent
435071	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	9	$13.11	High school diploma or equivalent
434061	Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs	6	$15.30	High school diploma or equivalent
434199	Information and Record Clerks, All Other	6	$19.07	High school diploma or equivalent
439021	Data Entry Keyers	6	$11.73	High school diploma or equivalent
433011	Bill and Account Collectors	5	$13.85	High school diploma or equivalent
435031	Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers	4	$11.60	High school diploma or equivalent
435051	Postal Service Clerks	4	$25.68	High school diploma or equivalent
432011	Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service	3	$11.80	High school diploma or equivalent
433051	Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks	3	$15.77	High school diploma or equivalent
433061	Procurement Clerks	2	$18.37	High school diploma or equivalent
434021	Correspondence Clerks	2	$18.40	High school diploma or equivalent
434161	Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	2	$16.99	High school diploma or equivalent
435061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	2	$19.48	High school diploma or equivalent
439022	Word Processors and Typists	2	$12.94	High school diploma or equivalent
432021	Telephone Operators	1	$10.47	High school diploma or equivalent
434031	Court, Municipal, and License Clerks	1	$14.06	High school diploma or equivalent
434121	Library Assistants, Clerical	1	$9.42	High school diploma or equivalent
434151	Order Clerks	1	$13.27	High school diploma or equivalent
435041	Meter Readers, Utilities	1	$11.44	High school diploma or equivalent
Construction Occupations		**22**	**$17.42**	
474041	Hazardous Materials Removal Workers	9	$13.24	High school diploma or equivalent
472031	Carpenters	7	$16.44	High school diploma or equivalent
472043	Floor Sanders and Finishers	3	$14.98	High school diploma or equivalent
472111	Electricians	2	$21.50	High school diploma or equivalent
472152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	1	$18.48	High school diploma or equivalent
Installation/Maintenance/Repair Occupations		**53**	**$16.92**	
499071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	31	$13.40	High school diploma or equivalent
499062	Medical Equipment Repairers	8	$21.16	Associate's degree
499043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	5	$18.83	High school diploma or equivalent
499021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	4	$16.89	Postsecondary non-degree award
493031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	2	$16.99	High school diploma or equivalent
493023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1	$15.25	High school diploma or equivalent
499098	Helpers--Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers	1	$11.93	High school diploma or equivalent
499099	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other	1	$20.94	High school diploma or equivalent
Production Occupations		**16**	**$18.67**	
517041	Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	6	$11.73	High school diploma or equivalent
511011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	3	$22.23	Postsecondary non-degree award
518021	Stationary Engineers and Boiler Operators	3	$14.80	High school diploma or equivalent
519061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	2	$13.90	High school diploma or equivalent
518099	Plant and System Operators, All Other	1	$32.19	High school diploma or equivalent
519081	Dental Laboratory Technicians	1	$17.14	High school diploma or equivalent
Transportation/Material Moving Occupations		**147**	**$16.92**	
533022	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	90	$9.10	High school diploma or equivalent
533021	Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	23	$12.96	High school diploma or equivalent
533033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	11	$12.63	High school diploma or equivalent
531021	First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	10	$21.68	High school diploma or equivalent
532012	Commercial Pilots	8	$35.53	High school diploma or equivalent
533011	Ambulance Drivers and Attendants, Except Emergency Medical Technicians	4	$9.17	High school diploma or equivalent
533032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1	$17.35	Postsecondary non-degree award

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APPENDIX K:
WHOLESALE/RETAIL JOB POSTINGS[3]

OSOC CODE	Description	Job Openings	Median Hourly Earnings	Education_Level
Management Occupations		**114**	**$28.84**	
119051	Food Service Managers	43	$22.42	High school diploma or equivalent
111021	General and Operations Managers	35	$39.67	Bachelor's degree
113011	Administrative Services Managers	30	$26.08	Bachelor's degree
119013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	5	$18.97	High school diploma or equivalent
113051	Industrial Production Managers	1	$37.05	Bachelor's degree
Business/Financial Occupations		**2**	**$28.35**	
131022	Wholesale and Retail Buyers, Except Farm Products	1	$27.15	High school diploma or equivalent
131199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	1	$29.54	High school diploma or equivalent
Computer/Mathematical Occupations		**2**	**$18.57**	
151151	Computer User Support Specialists	2	$18.57	Some college, no degree
Engineering Occupations		**8**	**$24.31**	
173023	Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technicians	4	$26.32	Associate's degree
173024	Electro-Mechanical Technicians	2	$25.91	Associate's degree
173013	Mechanical Drafters	1	$22.76	Associate's degree
173026	Industrial Engineering Technicians	1	$22.24	Associate's degree
Art and Media Occupations		**105**	**$13.90**	
271026	Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	102	$16.20	High school diploma or equivalent
271023	Floral Designers	3	$11.59	High school diploma or equivalent
Healthcare Occupations		**40**	**$18.22**	
292052	Pharmacy Technicians	18	$12.65	High school diploma or equivalent
311014	Nursing Assistants	13	$9.91	Postsecondary non-degree award
291141	Registered Nurses	2	$27.52	Associate's degree
319095	Pharmacy Aides	2	$12.99	High school diploma or equivalent
291126	Respiratory Therapists	1	$23.37	Associate's degree
292021	Dental Hygienists	1	$25.23	Associate's degree
292061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1	$17.05	Postsecondary non-degree award
319092	Medical Assistants	1	$12.65	Postsecondary non-degree award
319099	Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	1	$22.63	High school diploma or equivalent
Personal Care/Service Occupations		**13**	**$13.12**	
399011	Childcare Workers	7	$8.69	High school diploma or equivalent
395012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	3	$12.00	Postsecondary non-degree award
391021	First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers	2	$14.53	High school diploma or equivalent
397012	Travel Guides	1	$17.27	High school diploma or equivalent
Sales Occupations		**319**	**$16.27**	
411011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	318	$17.02	High school diploma or equivalent
419011	Demonstrators and Product Promoters	1	$15.51	High school diploma or equivalent
Office/Administrative Support Occupations		**695**	**$15.15**	
434051	Customer Service Representatives	466	$12.83	High school diploma or equivalent
435071	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	72	$13.11	High school diploma or equivalent
435041	Meter Readers, Utilities	51	$11.44	High school diploma or equivalent
433031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	23	$15.31	High school diploma or equivalent
439199	Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	16	$20.40	High school diploma or equivalent
436014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	14	$13.32	High school diploma or equivalent
434151	Order Clerks	12	$13.27	High school diploma or equivalent
434171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	11	$11.14	High school diploma or equivalent
439061	Office Clerks, General	11	$10.63	High school diploma or equivalent
433021	Billing and Posting Clerks	5	$14.15	High school diploma or equivalent
435061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	5	$19.48	High school diploma or equivalent
433011	Bill and Account Collectors	2	$13.85	High school diploma or equivalent
435032	Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance	2	$15.21	High school diploma or equivalent
431011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1	$20.59	High school diploma or equivalent
434021	Correspondence Clerks	1	$18.40	High school diploma or equivalent
436011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	1	$18.15	High school diploma or equivalent
439011	Computer Operators	1	$16.34	High school diploma or equivalent
439041	Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks	1	$15.02	High school diploma or equivalent
Farming/Fishing/Forestry Occupations		**5**	**$20.83**	
451011	First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	3	$22.07	High school diploma or equivalent
452011	Agricultural Inspectors	2	$19.58	Bachelor's degree

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[3] Job Openings from MDES 2015

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Construction Occupations		**13**	**$19.49**	
472111	Electricians	6	$21.50	High school diploma or equivalent
472031	Carpenters	2	$16.44	High school diploma or equivalent
474099	Construction and Related Workers, All Other	2	$29.82	High school diploma or equivalent
472073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	1	$16.12	High school diploma or equivalent
472221	Structural Iron and Steel Workers	1	$19.83	High school diploma or equivalent
474041	Hazardous Materials Removal Workers	1	$13.24	High school diploma or equivalent
Installation/Maintenance/Repair Occupations		**235**	**$18.43**	
499099	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other	79	$20.94	High school diploma or equivalent
493023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	41	$15.25	High school diploma or equivalent
499071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	31	$13.40	High school diploma or equivalent
492022	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	26	$30.27	Postsecondary non-degree award
493031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	12	$16.99	High school diploma or equivalent
493021	Automotive Body and Related Repairers	10	$15.09	High school diploma or equivalent
493041	Farm Equipment Mechanics and Service Technicians	7	$16.17	High school diploma or equivalent
499021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	5	$16.89	Postsecondary non-degree award
492092	Electric Motor, Power Tool, and Related Repairers	4	$19.33	Postsecondary non-degree award
492011	Computer, Automated Teller, and Office Machine Repairers	3	$15.88	Some college, no degree
493022	Automotive Glass Installers and Repairers	2	$14.80	High school diploma or equivalent
493092	Recreational Vehicle Service Technicians	2	$15.64	High school diploma or equivalent
499041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	2	$22.43	High school diploma or equivalent
499091	Coin, Vending, and Amusement Machine Servicers and Repairers	2	$14.40	High school diploma or equivalent
499092	Commercial Divers	2	$22.65	Postsecondary non-degree award
491011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	1	$25.46	High school diploma or equivalent
492094	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment	1	$19.00	Postsecondary non-degree award
492097	Electronic Home Entertainment Equipment Installers and Repairers	1	$18.22	Postsecondary non-degree award
493042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	1	$18.97	High school diploma or equivalent
493051	Motorboat Mechanics and Service Technicians	1	$19.13	High school diploma or equivalent
493052	Motorcycle Mechanics	1	$16.20	High school diploma or equivalent
499031	Home Appliance Repairers	1	$18.43	High school diploma or equivalent
Production Occupations		**74**	**$15.76**	
519061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	20	$13.90	High school diploma or equivalent
511011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	13	$22.23	Postsecondary non-degree award
517041	Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	8	$11.73	High school diploma or equivalent
514121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	7	$18.72	High school diploma or equivalent
517042	Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing	6	$12.27	High school diploma or equivalent
512022	Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers	5	$13.73	High school diploma or equivalent
516093	Upholsterers	3	$15.60	High school diploma or equivalent
514023	Rolling Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	2	$14.66	High school diploma or equivalent
514041	Machinists	2	$18.90	High school diploma or equivalent
519041	Extruding, Forming, Pressing, and Compacting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	2	$12.71	High school diploma or equivalent
514022	Forging Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1	$16.83	High school diploma or equivalent
514072	Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1	$11.77	High school diploma or equivalent
515112	Printing Press Operators	1	$12.76	High school diploma or equivalent
516052	Tailors, Dressmakers, and Custom Sewers	1	$12.14	Less than high school
517011	Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	1	$11.98	High school diploma or equivalent
518099	Plant and System Operators, All Other	1	$32.19	High school diploma or equivalent
Transportation/Material Moving Occupations		**299**	**$18.98**	
533032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	166	$17.35	Postsecondary non-degree award
533033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	115	$12.63	High school diploma or equivalent
536051	Transportation Inspectors	5	$23.45	High school diploma or equivalent
537032	Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators	5	$15.40	High school diploma or equivalent
531021	First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	4	$21.68	High school diploma or equivalent
531031	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators	2	$23.73	High school diploma or equivalent
537021	Crane and Tower Operators	2	$18.63	High school diploma or equivalent

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APPENDIX K: EDUCATION JOB POSTINGS[4]

OSOC CODE	Description	Job Openings	Median Hourly Earnings	Education_Level
Management Occupations		**19**	**$32.88**	
113011	Administrative Services Managers	10	$26.08	Bachelor's degree
111021	General and Operations Managers	9	$39.67	Bachelor's degree
Business/Financial Occupations		**26**	**$29.54**	
131199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	26	$29.54	High school diploma or equivalent
Computer/Mathematical Occupations		**17**	**$22.59**	
151151	Computer User Support Specialists	10	$18.57	Some college, no degree
151134	Web Developers	7	$26.60	Associate's degree
Engineering Occupations		**3**	**$22.86**	
173027	Mechanical Engineering Technicians	2	$25.05	Associate's degree
173011	Architectural and Civil Drafters	1	$20.67	Associate's degree
Life/Physical/Social Science Occupations		**8**	**$16.95**	
194011	Agricultural and Food Science Technicians	5	$13.24	Associate's degree
194093	Forest and Conservation Technicians	2	$19.31	Associate's degree
194031	Chemical Technicians	1	$18.31	Associate's degree
Education/Training Occupations		**70**	**$12.01**	
259041	Teacher Assistants	53	$8.74	Some college, no degree
253021	Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	13	$15.59	High school diploma or equivalent
252011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	4	$11.71	Associate's degree
Art and Media Occupations		**13**	**$21.02**	
272021	Athletes and Sports Competitors	3	$50.51	High school diploma or equivalent
274011	Audio and Video Equipment Technicians	3	$15.65	Postsecondary non-degree award
274032	Film and Video Editors	3	$13.85	Bachelor's degree
274021	Photographers	2	$13.17	High school diploma or equivalent
272023	Umpires, Referees, and Other Sports Officials	1	$18.91	High school diploma or equivalent
274012	Broadcast Technicians	1	$14.01	Associate's degree
Healthcare Occupations		**57**	**$18.11**	
319096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	32	$10.37	High school diploma or equivalent
292056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	17	$13.93	Associate's degree
292034	Radiologic Technologists	2	$21.47	Associate's degree
292061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	2	$17.05	Postsecondary non-degree award
311014	Nursing Assistants	2	$9.91	Postsecondary non-degree award
291141	Registered Nurses	1	$27.52	Associate's degree
292032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1	$26.50	Associate's degree
Protective Service Occupations		**27**	**$18.50**	
333051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	10	$15.56	High school diploma or equivalent
333041	Parking Enforcement Workers	7	$19.28	High school diploma or equivalent
339032	Security Guards	7	$10.06	High school diploma or equivalent
331012	First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives	2	$24.54	High school diploma or equivalent
333021	Detectives and Criminal Investigators	1	$23.07	High school diploma or equivalent
Food Preparation/Serving Occupations		**41**	**$21.41**	
351011	Chefs and Head Cooks	41	$21.41	High school diploma or equivalent
Building/Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance Occupations		**4**	**$15.82**	
371012	First-Line Supervisors of Landscaping, Lawn Service, and Groundskeeping Workers	3	$18.86	High school diploma or equivalent
372021	Pest Control Workers	1	$12.77	High school diploma or equivalent
Personal Care/Service Occupations		**41**	**$15.44**	
395012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	16	$12.00	Postsecondary non-degree award
399041	Residential Advisors	13	$10.13	High school diploma or equivalent
399011	Childcare Workers	7	$8.69	High school diploma or equivalent
391021	First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers	3	$14.53	High school diploma or equivalent
393092	Costume Attendants	1	$33.35	High school diploma or equivalent
399031	Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	1	$13.93	High school diploma or equivalent
Office/Administrative Support Occupations		**360**	**$14.75**	
436014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	113	$13.32	High school diploma or equivalent
434111	Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan	79	$12.69	High school diploma or equivalent
436011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	33	$18.15	High school diploma or equivalent
434071	File Clerks	26	$10.94	High school diploma or equivalent
433031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	23	$15.31	High school diploma or equivalent
434161	Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	18	$16.99	High school diploma or equivalent
439061	Office Clerks, General	12	$10.63	High school diploma or equivalent

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[4] Job Openings from MDES 2015

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434171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	9	$11.14	High school diploma or equivalent
433051	Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks	5	$15.77	High school diploma or equivalent
434081	Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	5	$9.00	High school diploma or equivalent
435071	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	5	$13.11	High school diploma or equivalent
439021	Data Entry Keyers	5	$11.73	High school diploma or equivalent
433061	Procurement Clerks	4	$18.37	High school diploma or equivalent
434121	Library Assistants, Clerical	4	$9.42	High school diploma or equivalent
434051	Customer Service Representatives	3	$12.83	High school diploma or equivalent
433011	Bill and Account Collectors	2	$13.85	High school diploma or equivalent
433099	Financial Clerks, All Other	2	$15.24	High school diploma or equivalent
436013	Medical Secretaries	2	$13.74	High school diploma or equivalent
439022	Word Processors and Typists	2	$12.94	High school diploma or equivalent
439051	Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, Except Postal Service	2	$12.60	High school diploma or equivalent
431011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1	$20.59	High school diploma or equivalent
435031	Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers	1	$11.60	High school diploma or equivalent
435032	Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance	1	$15.21	High school diploma or equivalent
435081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	1	$9.97	Less than high school
439011	Computer Operators	1	$16.34	High school diploma or equivalent
439111	Statistical Assistants	1	$42.00	Bachelor's degree
Construction Occupations		**18**	**$17.81**	
472031	Carpenters	5	$16.44	High school diploma or equivalent
472111	Electricians	4	$21.50	High school diploma or equivalent
472152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	2	$18.48	High school diploma or equivalent
473013	Helpers--Electricians	2	$12.20	High school diploma or equivalent
473015	Helpers--Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	2	$11.65	High school diploma or equivalent
471011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	1	$24.24	High school diploma or equivalent
472011	Boilermakers	1	$21.88	High school diploma or equivalent
472073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	1	$16.12	High school diploma or equivalent
Installation/Maintenance/Repair Occupations		**39**	**$19.23**	
499071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	18	$13.40	High school diploma or equivalent
493031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	3	$16.99	High school diploma or equivalent
499021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	3	$16.89	Postsecondary non-degree award
499052	Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	3	$19.38	High school diploma or equivalent
499041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	2	$22.43	High school diploma or equivalent
499051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	2	$26.66	High school diploma or equivalent
499094	Locksmiths and Safe Repairers	2	$15.48	High school diploma or equivalent
491011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	1	$25.46	High school diploma or equivalent
492022	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	1	$30.27	Postsecondary non-degree award
492098	Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers	1	$14.49	High school diploma or equivalent
493023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1	$15.25	High school diploma or equivalent
493091	Bicycle Repairers	1	$14.88	High school diploma or equivalent
499061	Camera and Photographic Equipment Repairers	1	$18.39	Associate's degree
Production Occupations		**4**	**$17.36**	
512041	Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	2	$17.42	High school diploma or equivalent
514041	Machinists	1	$18.90	High school diploma or equivalent
519196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	1	$15.76	High school diploma or equivalent
Transportation/Material Moving Occupations		**36**	**$15.27**	
533021	Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	15	$12.96	High school diploma or equivalent
533022	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	12	$9.10	High school diploma or equivalent
533032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	7	$17.35	Postsecondary non-degree award
531021	First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	2	$21.68	High school diploma or equivalent

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APPENDIX K:
ACCOMMODATION/LEISURE JOB POSTINGS[5]

OSOC CODE	Description	Job Openings	Median Hourly Earnings	Education_Level
Management Occupations		**272**	**$26.73**	
119051	Food Service Managers	210	$22.42	High school diploma or equivalent
111021	General and Operations Managers	38	$39.67	Bachelor's degree
119081	Lodging Managers	23	$18.74	High school diploma or equivalent
113011	Administrative Services Managers	1	$26.08	Bachelor's degree
Business/Financial Occupations		**6**	**$25.22**	
131199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	4	$29.54	High school diploma or equivalent
131022	Wholesale and Retail Buyers, Except Farm Products	1	$27.15	High school diploma or equivalent
132081	Tax Examiners and Collectors, and Revenue Agents	1	$18.98	Bachelor's degree
Protective Service Occupations		**16**	**$12.61**	
339032	Security Guards	12	$10.06	High school diploma or equivalent
339031	Gaming Surveillance Officers and Gaming Investigators	4	$15.16	High school diploma or equivalent
Food Preparation/Serving Occupations		**126**	**$16.74**	
351012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	117	$12.06	High school diploma or equivalent
351011	Chefs and Head Cooks	9	$21.41	High school diploma or equivalent
Building/Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance Occupations		**29**	**$16.43**	
371011	First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers	25	$13.99	High school diploma or equivalent
371012	First-Line Supervisors of Landscaping, Lawn Service, and Groundskeeping Workers	4	$18.86	High school diploma or equivalent
Personal Care/Service Occupations		**28**	**$14.09**	
393011	Gaming Dealers	14	$8.67	High school diploma or equivalent
391011	Gaming Supervisors	6	$20.47	High school diploma or equivalent
399031	Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	4	$13.93	High school diploma or equivalent
396011	Baggage Porters and Bellhops	3	$9.86	High school diploma or equivalent
395094	Skincare Specialists	1	$17.53	Postsecondary non-degree award
Sales Occupations		**61**	**$13.51**	
419011	Demonstrators and Product Promoters	55	$15.51	High school diploma or equivalent
412012	Gaming Change Persons and Booth Cashiers	6	$11.50	High school diploma or equivalent
Office/Administrative Support Occupations		**469**	**$13.73**	
434081	Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	417	$9.00	High school diploma or equivalent
436011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	13	$18.15	High school diploma or equivalent
434051	Customer Service Representatives	11	$12.83	High school diploma or equivalent
433041	Gaming Cage Workers	8	$12.09	High school diploma or equivalent
434161	Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	4	$16.99	High school diploma or equivalent
439061	Office Clerks, General	4	$10.63	High school diploma or equivalent
433031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	3	$15.31	High school diploma or equivalent
431011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	2	$20.59	High school diploma or equivalent
436014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	2	$13.32	High school diploma or equivalent
432021	Telephone Operators	1	$10.47	High school diploma or equivalent
433071	Tellers	1	$11.31	High school diploma or equivalent
434071	File Clerks	1	$10.94	High school diploma or equivalent
434171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	1	$11.14	High school diploma or equivalent
435061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	1	$19.48	High school diploma or equivalent
Construction Occupations		**6**	**$16.44**	
472031	Carpenters	6	$16.44	High school diploma or equivalent
Installation/Maintenance/Repair Occupations		**184**	**$18.69**	
492094	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment	100	$19.00	Postsecondary non-degree award
499071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	67	$13.40	High school diploma or equivalent
499098	Helpers--Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers	7	$11.93	High school diploma or equivalent
499099	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other	3	$20.94	High school diploma or equivalent
491011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	2	$25.46	High school diploma or equivalent
499041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	2	$22.43	High school diploma or equivalent
492092	Electric Motor, Power Tool, and Related Repairers	1	$19.33	Postsecondary non-degree award
499021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	1	$16.89	Postsecondary non-degree award
499043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	1	$18.83	High school diploma or equivalent
Production Occupations		**156**	**$13.73**	
519061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	150	$13.90	High school diploma or equivalent
513093	Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders	3	$9.99	High school diploma or equivalent
516052	Tailors, Dressmakers, and Custom Sewers	2	$12.14	Less than high school

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[5] Job Openings from MDES 2015

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514041	Machinists	1	$18.90	High school diploma or equivalent
Transportation/Material Moving Occupations		**120**	**$16.90**	
533033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	100	$12.63	High school diploma or equivalent
533032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	11	$17.35	Postsecondary non-degree award
531031	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators	5	$23.73	High school diploma or equivalent
531021	First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	2	$21.68	High school diploma or equivalent
533022	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	2	$9.10	High school diploma or equivalent

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SWIB TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Ronald Aldridge, State Director
National Federation of Independent Business

Alice Clark, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor for Research
University of Mississippi

John Davis, Deputy Administrator
Mississippi Department of Human Services

Mary Graham, Ph.D., President
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Mark Henry, Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Clarke Holmes, Chief Executive Officer
Central Mississippi Planning and Development
District

James Hull, Executive Director
Move Mississippi Forward

Vernon R. (Randy) Kelley, III, Executive Director
Three Rivers Planning and Development District, Inc.

Scott Maynard, Director
Mississippi State University Career Center

Jim McArthur, Deputy Director
Mississippi Development Authority (MDA)

Marcella L. McKay, President/CEO
MHA Health, Research & Educational Foundation,
Inc

Jay C. Moon, President and CEO
Mississippi Manufacturers Association

Mike Mulvihill, Director, Bureau of Compliance &
Reporting
Mississippi Department of Education

Domenico "Mimmo" Parisi, Ph.D., Professor and
Director
nSPARC, Mississippi State University

Jesse Smith, Ph.D., President
Jones County Junior College

Paul Sumrall, Director of Business and University
Relations
State Institution of Higher Learning

Lex Taylor, Chairman and CEO
Taylor Machine Works

Debra West, Ph.D., Deputy Executive Director,
Programs & Accountability
Mississippi Community College Board

Shirley Wilson, Public Transportation Division
Mississippi Department of Transportation

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STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Mississippi Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Planning Document

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

In my inaugural address, I made the pledge that every Mississippian that wants a job should be able to find a job. Workforce development is a key strategy for economic development. I created the Mississippi Works website and app to help everyone obtain a good job in the state. Along the same lines, I pledged that we would create a workforce system so that every Mississippian has the opportunity to be work- or career-ready and secure his or her dream job right here at home. Mississippi's plan to develop and implement the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) gives the state the opportunity to bring together all the elements necessary to create a workforce system that improves our workforce participation rates and closes the skill gap for middle-skill jobs. I asked the State Workforce Investment Board to develop the plan with input from the public, business community, workforce stakeholders, and educational entities. This inclusive approach has led to a plan that will lead to the successful development and implementation of a workforce system that will put Mississippi at the top of the class. I encourage all Mississippians to contribute to the development of this plan and to take an active role in its full implementation.

Phil Bryant
Governor of Mississippi

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INTRODUCTION

This document is designed to inform the public about Mississippi's strategic plan to create an integrated workforce development system and to provide insight into the processes developed by the state to comply with the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). First, this document includes general background on the WIOA's content, goals, and requirements, including its required components and planning elements.

Second, this document details the roles and responsibilities of each workforce group within each element required by the WIOA. The state created several workgroups to solicit input from stakeholders, as outlined in the WIOA. Specifically, three workgroups were established to address strategic planning requirements, and four workgroups were established to examine the operational planning elements.

This document also includes strategies implemented to engage the business sector and the public. A focus group with business owners and industry professionals will be conducted to assess workforce needs and concerns. There will also be three open forums to solicit opinions about the state's plan.

Next, the document includes a list of operating groups, detailing each group's roles and responsibilities. A communication plan describes the exchange of information across these groups.

Finally, the document presents the strategy of how all the gathered input and information will be collected and written, as well as a timeline for the completion of all pertinent activities.

WIOA GENERAL BACKGROUND

On July 22, 2014, the WIOA was signed into law. The goal of the WIOA is to strengthen the national workforce to become more competitive in the global economy. The WIOA intends to achieve this goal by placing the responsibility of creation and implementation of workforce plans solely on states. Governors will have the opportunity to have full ownership of leading state efforts in developing and implementing a strategic four-year plan for an integrated workforce development system.

The WIOA presents an extraordinary opportunity for each state's current workforce system to accelerate its transformational efforts and demonstrate its ability to improve job and career options through an integrated, job-driven public workforce system that links diverse talent to businesses. These new systems will be designed to support the development of strong, vibrant regional economies where businesses thrive and people want to live and work.

The WIOA outlines six main objectives designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and supportive services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in a global economy:

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1. Increasing access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training, and support services that individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, need to succeed in the labor market.

2. Supporting the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system.

3. Improving the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts.

4. Promoting improvement in the structure and delivery of services.

5. Increasing the prosperity of workers and employers, the economic growth of communities, regions, and states, and the global competitiveness of the United States.

6. Providing workforce investment activities, through workforce development systems, that increase employment, retention, and earnings of participants and that increase post-secondary credential attainment and, as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet skill requirements of employers, and enhance productivity and competitiveness of the nation.

To meet these objectives, the WIOA requires an integrated approach to the implementation, administration, service delivery, and evaluation of services provided under the core programs at federal, state, and local levels. The four core programs that states must strategically align are:

- Programs and services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth (Title I).

- Programs and services listed in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II).

- Programs and services covered in the Wagner-Peyser Act (Title III).

- Programs and services covered under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Title IV).

Integration of the core programs essential to the effective operation of the workforce development system is achieved through:

- The development of a Unified or a Combined State Plan.

- The implementation of a common performance accountability system.

- The design of the one-stop service delivery system.

Under a Unified or a Combined State Plan, every state collaborates across the core programs, the one-stop service delivery system, and other partners at the local and state levels to create a single collaborative and integrated state plan. The core programs and a brief description of their services are presented in Figure 1.

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Figure 1: Core WIOA Programs

Title	Core Programs	WIOA Services
I	**Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth**	Workforce training, professional degree and certification programs, secondary and postsecondary education programs, employment services, career counseling and planning, and Job Corps services.
II	**Adult Education and Family Literacy Act**	Programs, activities, and services that include adult education literacy, work place adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training.
III	**Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933**	Employment/Unemployment Services integrated with the delivery of other services (i.e., cannot be a stand-alone facility) into the one-stop framework. Provides unemployment insurance claimants with referrals and application assistance for training and educational resources and programs. Provides staff with professional development and career advancement opportunities.
IV	**Rehabilitation Act of 1973**	Job exploration counseling, work-based learning experience, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary education programs, workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living, and instructions in self-advocacy for persons with physical or mental disabilities.

The submission of a Combined State Plan gives states the option to go beyond the core programs of a Unified State Plan and include at least one optional, additional federal workforce, educational, or social service program referenced in the WIOA. Submission of a Combined State Plan expands the benefits of cross program strategic planning, increases the alignment among state programs, and improves service integration. Submitting a Combined State Plan offers the additional benefit of allowing for the submission of a single plan in lieu of two or more plans for the core programs and the additional programs and activities. The optional programs and a brief description of their services are presented in Figure 2.

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Figure 2: Optional WIOA Approved Programs

Program	WIOA Services
Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Act	Secondary and postsecondary education for students and adults. Available for incarcerated individuals.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Temporary financial assistance for families in need.
Employment and Training Programs under sec.6(d)94) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008	Education and training services for supplementary nutrition assistance program (SNAP).
Employment and Training Programs under sec.6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008	Work and employment services for supplementary nutrition assistance program (SNAP).
Trade Adjustment Assistance: Title II-Chapter 2 of the Trade Act of 1974	Services for workers who have lost their job to foreign trade: job training, Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA), Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA), job search allowance, relocation allowance, and travel reimbursement for training.
Service for Veterans: Authorized under chapter 41 of title 38 United States Code	Services designed to help veterans find jobs, training, and support services: Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), Vocational Rehabilitation and Education (VRE), and Transition Assistance Programs (TAP).
Programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws	Temporary income assistance for unemployed workers: Unemployment Insurance (UI).
Senior Community Service Employment Programs under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1956	Employment services for state residents 55 or older. Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
Employment and Training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development	Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community services, environmental quality issues, and economic opportunity needs.
Employment and Training Activities carried out by the Community Service Block Grant Act	Provide services and activities addressing employment, education, housing, nutrition, and health services for low-income individuals. (Childcare, education, emergency services, employment, health and safety, housing, income management, nutrition, and transportation.)
Reintegration of Offenders program authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007	Services for eligible ex-offenders in obtaining and retaining employment: Vocation Education, Adult Basic Education, Federal Bonding Program, and Community Work Centers.

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REQUIRED COMPONENTS

Workforce Development Boards

States submitting a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan must establish a state workforce development board. Board members are selected by the governor to assist in guiding and directing the functions to be carried out in the WIOA. Members of these development boards are selected to represent agencies and organizations that reflect the workforce, training, and education interests across a state. The workforce development boards are responsible for the development, implementation, and modification of the plan and for the convening of all relevant programs, required partners, and stakeholders. The governor must ensure that the state plan is developed in a transparent manner and in consultation with representatives of local boards, chief elected officials (CEOs), businesses, representatives of labor organizations, community-based organizations (CBOs), adult and youth education and workforce development providers, institutions of higher education, disability service entities, youth-service programs, and other stakeholders with an interest in the services provided by the core programs and any optional program included in a Combined State Plan, as well as the general public, including individuals with disabilities.

Common Performance Accountability System

The WIOA requires that each state create a common performance accountability system for the core and all additional programs in each state's workforce development plan. Integrating data systems will allow for unified and streamlined intake, case management, and service delivery; minimize the duplication of data; ensure consistently defined and applied data elements; facilitate compliance with performance reporting and evaluation requirements; and provide meaningful information about core program participation to inform operations.

One-Stop Service Delivery System

To support a comprehensive system providing integrated seamless services to all job seekers and workers and effective strategies that meet the business workforce needs across the business cycle, the WIOA requires all states to implement a one-stop delivery system for core and other programs of each state's plan. The one-stop delivery system brings together workforce development, educational, and other human resource services in a unified customer-focused service delivery network that enhances access to the programs' services and improves long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance.

REQUIRED PLANNING ELEMENTS

To assist the governor and the state workforce development boards in creating the most effective proposal possible, the WIOA has organized the planning process into two distinct elements: the Strategic Planning Element and the Operational Planning Element. The separation of strategic elements allows the state to develop a vision for its entire system and identify the operational elements across the programs that support the system-wide vision.

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Strategic Planning Element

The goal of the Strategic Planning Element is to develop a strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce. The Strategic Planning Element of every state must include:

- State analysis of economic and workforce factors.

- An assessment of workforce development activities.

- Formulation of the state's vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of employers.

- A strategy to achieve the vision and goals.

Utilizing economic and labor market information will help ensure that the governor's vision and the state's strategies are based on a thorough understanding of the economic opportunities and workforce needs of the state. This approach will align the best interests of job seekers and businesses with the economic future of the state.

Operational Planning Element

The Operational Planning Element describes how the state will support and implement the strategies and goals developed in the Strategic Planning Element. Specifically, the Operational Planning Element must clarify how specific workforce programs (core and optional programs) will operationalize and administer systems and structures to achieve the identified vision, strategies, and goals. The WIOA mandates that states indicate how these strategies will be implemented by including descriptions of:

- The activities that will be funded by the entities carrying out the respective core programs to implement the strategy and how such activities will be aligned across the programs and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies.

- How the planned activities will be aligned with activities provided under employment, training, education, including career and technical education, and human services programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of and avoiding duplication of services. How the entities carrying out the respective core programs will coordinate activities and provide comprehensive, high-quality services, including supportive services to individuals.

- How the state's strategy will engage the state's community colleges and area career and technical education schools as partners in the workforce development system and enable the state to leverage other federal, state, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at those institutions.

- How the activities will be coordinated with economic development strategies and activities in the state.

- How the state's strategy will improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable.

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WORKING GROUPS

In efforts to support the governor's vision of a unified workforce ecosystem and foster collaboration across stakeholders statewide, a set of workforce groups reflecting the two major planning elements (i.e., strategic planning and operational planning) of the WIOA has been developed. Each of the workforce groups is charged with specific roles and responsibilities and composed of a variety of professionals who are experts in their respective fields. The agencies and personnel representing each workgroup have been selected to ensure all stakeholders are represented in the decision making process of each workgroup.

Strategic Planning Workgroups

The workforce groups organized under the Strategic Planning Element will work collaboratively on identifying strategies and goals for bringing the governor's vision of a workforce ecosystem to fruition. These groups include the Planning and Communication Group, the Technology Group, and the Sector Strategy Group. The workforce groups organized under the Strategic Planning Element will work collaboratively on utilizing the strategies identified by the strategic planning workgroups to create, operationalize, and administer systems and structures that achieve the strategic planning goals while maintaining the governor's vision of a unified workforce ecosystem.

Each workgroup has been charged with specific roles and responsibilities to help focus efforts on critical components of the WIOA. A chair and a vice chair have been selected from each group to help align internal group activities with each group's charge.

Planning and Communication Group

The Planning and Communication Group is the management group of the WIOA project in Mississippi. The main responsibility of the Planning and Communication Group is to ensure that the other groups are on task and on time. Communications facilitation is another responsibility of the Planning and Communication Group. The group communicates with the other groups as well as with stakeholders to ensure that the public voice is heard.

Figure 3: Planning and Communication Groups

State Workforce Investment	Jay Moon (Chairman)
MS Department Employment Security	Mark Henry (Vice Chairman)
MS Department Human Services	Sandra Giddy
MS Department Rehabilitation Services	LaVonda Hart and Cindy Goodin
MS Development Authority	Michael Curran
Office of the Governor	Laurie Smith
MS Association Workforce Areas	Bill Renick
Moving MS Forward	James Hull
MS Department Education	Jean Massey
MS Community College Board	Shawn Mackey
Community College President's Association	Jessie Smith
Institution of Higher Learning	Paul Sumrall
Moore Community House	Carol Burnett
MS Economic Council	Vickie Powell

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Aligned and Integrated Technology Group

The task of the Aligned and Integrated Technology Group is to understand the WIOA requirements, leverage resources, and integrate Mississippi Works (www.mississippiworks.org) as the foundation of the WIOA technology requirements. Because the WIOA was passed in a time of powerful technologies, each state is required to incorporate technology into workforce development plans. In order to meet the demands of today and the goals of tomorrow, technology must be used to bring Mississippians together to create a renewed and stronger workforce.

Figure 4: Aligned and Integrated Technology Group

MS Department Employment Security	Dale Smith (Chairman)
NSPARC	Mimmo Parisi (Vice Chairman)
MS Department Human Services	Dana Kidd
MS Community College Board	Raul Fletes
CC Chairman of Technology	Ronnie Nettles
MS Department Rehabilitation	Paula Brown and Mark Winter

Sector Strategies Group

The Sector Strategies Group has been tasked with using data and analysis of the current and projected job market and economic conditions to develop strategies focused on linking job seekers to gainful employment. By identifying regional and local employment deficits, this group will create strategies and approaches for training, development, and education programs that teach job seekers the skills necessary to address the needs of the state's employers.

Figure 5: Sector Strategies Group

MS Development Authority	Michael Curran (Chairman)
Community College	Jason Pugh (Vice Chairman)
Local Workforce Development Board	Mitzi Woods
MS Department Employment Security	Bob DeYoung and Laura Ring
MS Department Human Services	Cathy Sykes
MS Department Education	Mike Mulvihill
MS Community College Board	Val Williams
Institution of Higher Learning	Paul Sumrall
Energy Institute	Patrick Sullivan
MS Department Rehabilitation Services	Susan Williams and Jo Ann Crudup

Operational Planning Workgroups

The workforce groups organized around the Operational Planning Element will work collaboratively to implement the strategies conceived by the workgroups in the Strategic Planning Element. Similar to the strategic planning workforce groups, each operational planning workgroup has been charged with specific roles and responsibilities to help focus efforts on implementation of the goals and strategies developed by the strategic planning groups. The operational workgroups include the One-Stop Operations Group, Career Pathways and Assessment Group, Performance and Accountability Group, and Employer Engagement Group.

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One-Stop Operations Group

The goal of the One-Stop Operations Group is to develop the structure and general operational procedures for how the one-stop system will work. The one-stop system is designed to best serve Mississippians by providing all program services at one physical location. In order to ensure the efficiency of the one-stop system, the One-Stop Operations Group will implement a design where all programs communicate and understand the new integration. By completing the new integration, Mississippi job seekers will be efficiently and effectively served.

Figure 6: One-Stop Operations Group

Local Workforce Development Board	Bill Renick (Chairman)
MS Department Employment Security	Robin Stewart (Vice Chairman) and Jacqueline Turner
MS Department Human Services	Cathy Sykes
Adult Basic Education/MCCB	Eloise Richardson
Moving MS Forward	James Hull
MS Department Transportation	Shirley Wilson
Job Corps	Roger Givens
Community College	Brad Gates
MS Department Rehabilitation Services	Cindy Goodin and Anna Thornton

Career Pathways and Assessment Group

The Career Pathways and Assessment Group is responsible for the design and implementation of pathways for Mississippians that start from K-12 education and end at the workforce. The regions of Mississippi will, in part, help to determine pathways for individuals because of industry demand in the region. The Career Pathways and Assessment Group develops and implements career-readiness plans so that Mississippians can gain necessary training or education to move directly into careers that are in demand in their region.

Figure 7: Career Pathways and Assessment group

State Workforce Investment	James Williams (Chairman)
MS Department Employment Security	Donna Hollis (Vice Chairman) and Tonya Minor
MS Department Human Services	Sandra Giddy and Dana Kidd
MS Department Rehabilitation Services	Anna Thornton and Pam Hall
Jobs for MS Graduates	Ramona Williams
MS Department Education	Mike Mulvihill
MS Community College Board	Kenneth Wheatley
Community College	Raj Shaunak
Community College	Nadara Cole
Job Corp	Jackie Beasley
Moore Community House	Carol Burnett
MS Economic Council	Vickie Powell

Performance and Accountability Group

The goal of the Performance and Accountability Group is to create a reporting system with common measurements to streamline the performance evaluation process. The Performance and Accountability Group also monitors the progress of the implemented programs and holds underperforming programs accountable. Performance and accountability are important measures for evaluating the impact the developed system has on improving the workforce of Mississippi.

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Figure 8: Performance and Accountability Group

State Workforce Investment Board	James Williams (Chairman)
NSPARC	Mimmo Parisi (Vice Chairman)
MS Department Employment Security	Jackie Turner
MS Department Rehabilitation Services	Gary Neely, LaVonda Hart, Dorothy Young
Jobs for MS Graduates	Ramona Williams
MS Department Education	Melissa May
MS Community College Board	Shawn Mackey
Community College	Billy Stewart
Community College Data Group	Carolyn Warren
Local Workforce Development Board	James McGuffee

Employer Engagement Group

The Employer Engagement Group is focused on partnering with employers to gain input on what Mississippi businesses need from the Mississippi workforce. The system is designed to engage employers to allow for the maximum amount of input in Mississippi's strategies. With the input from employers, plans can be developed to better serve both employers and job seekers.

Figure 9: Employer Engagement Group

MS Department Employment	Mark Henry (Chairman)
Local Workforce Development Board	Tee McCovey (Vice Chairman)
MS Department Human Services	Sandra Giddy and Dana Kidd
MS Department Rehabilitation Services	Dorothy Young, Lou Ellen McDonald
MS Development Authority	Michael Curran
MS Community College	Joseph Knight
MS Community College Board	Dexter Holloway
State Workforce Investment Board	James Williams

BUSINESS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A series of group meetings will be held to engage the business sector and the public at large for feedback and comments on the plan as it is being developed.

Business Sector

A focus group with the business sector will be conducted to gauge the interest of businesses in public partnerships and determine the needs of Mississippi businesses. Involving the business community enables the various planning workgroups to incorporate the business sector perspective into the planning and implementation of the state's plan and create momentum for increasing business and industry involvement in the workforce ecosystem.

Public Sector

Three public forums will be held to engage the public at large during different stages of the plan's development. The initial public forum will be held to allow all concerned individuals the opportunity to voice their comments and concerns regarding the development of the state's plan. The information collected from the initial public forum will be collated and posted on the SWIB website to keep the general public abreast of the status and activities of the state's plan as it

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develops. The second public forum will be more specifically focused on plan implementation. Specifically, the public will be given the opportunity to preview a rough draft of the plan and give comments on any specific components or areas of concern. The comments and suggestions from the second public forum will also be collated and posted on the SWIB website for public viewing. The final forum will be held at the SWIB meeting in August to reveal the final plan and allow for final comments before it is sent to the governor for submission approval. Any comments submitted at the final public forum will be collated and placed on the SWIB website for public viewing.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the workgroups, an additional set of operating groups have been identified and/or established. The purpose of the operational groups is to ensure the planning process is completed in an accurate and efficient manner.

Office of the Governor

The role of the Office of the Governor is to provide overall guidance and leadership in the implementation of the WIOA. The Office of the Governor is in a position to guide the state plan so that Mississippi can follow a path that will lead to economic success.

State Workforce Investment Board

The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) has the task of facilitating the plan development to ensure the needs of Mississippi businesses and job seekers can be met. Specifically, the SWIB is charged with advising the workgroups and operational groups on the creation and implementation of the state plan's strategies and goals. SWIB members represent interests from various employment, training, educational, and business stakeholders across the state.

Subject Matter Experts

The Subject Matter Experts are involved to provide expertise on programs and services so that Mississippians can best be served by programs the state offers. The members of this group are experienced servants of Mississippi and will help in shaping programs and services to meet demands.

Management Team

The Management Team is tasked with the organization and management of the state plan for the implementation of WIOA programs and services. Communication with other groups is a key for the Management Team to ensure progress toward an economically successful Mississippi.

Data Team

The Data Team is composed of labor market experts, whose role is conducting basic analyses for strategy implementation and goals. The Data Team also engages with other universities to conduct analyses to promote collaboration across Mississippi.

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Compliance Team

The Compliance Team, working with the plan submitted under WIA, will be creating the general outline for Mississippi's Combined Plan. The goals of the Compliance Team are to set a framework that integrates the submitted WIA plan into a plan that reflects the revisions and requirements of WIOA; assures compliance; assists in writing quality; and ensures that all information needed to complete the requirements of WIOA are included in Mississippi's Combined State Plan.

Public Relations Team

The Public Relations Team will meet with stakeholders across the state to collect information and materials to facilitate the goals of the state's WIOA plan and disseminate information back to the Management Team. The Public Relations Team will conduct group interviews with identified stakeholder groups where they will disseminate technical information in support of the WIOA plan. Additionally, the Public Relations Team will meet with Subject Matter Experts and aid in publicizing and facilitating the public meetings.

Communication Plan

A communication plan was developed to maintain a systematic method of communication across all parties and ensure a consistent flow of information across all involved parties. A flowchart of the communication plan is presented in Figure 10.

Office of the Governor

The role of the Office of the Governor is to provide overall guidance and leadership in the implementation of the WIOA. The chairman of the SWIB will serve as the point of contact between the Office of the Governor and the SWIB.

State Workforce Investment Board

SWIB will coordinate with the Office of the Governor via the SWIB chairman. Communications between the general public, Internal Work Group, Subject Matter Experts, External Work Group, and the SWIB Taskforce will be coordinated through the SWIB via the executive director of the SWIB.

Internal Work Group (Management Team, Compliance Team, and Public Relations Team)

The Management Team, Compliance Team, and Public Relations Team comprise a working group that focuses on the day-to-day operations of the workforce development plan. Within the Internal Work Group, the Management Team will coordinate all activities and maintain communication with SWIB. The Compliance Team and Public Relations Team will maintain communications with each another to ensure a smooth and consistent flow of information and that the writing of the plan stays on schedule.

Subject Matter Experts

The Subject Matter Experts will provide insight into the process of generating the plan. This group will interact with groups within the Internal Work Group, including the Management Team and the Public Relations Team.

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External Work Group

Any information submitted by the External Working Group will be shared with the SWIB and all members of the other working groups. The External Work Group will communicate with the SWIB and coordinate communications with the Internal Work Group through the SWIB.

Figure 10: Communication Plan Flowchart
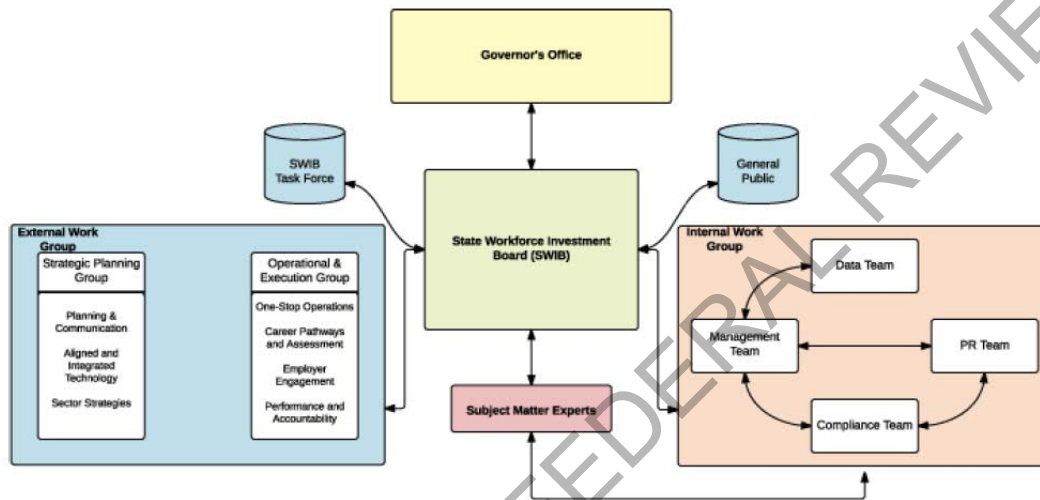
Writing Plan/Writing Strategy

Writing the state's plan will be a collaborative effort among all operation groups. With guidance from the Governor's Office and SWIB, the Internal Work Group will begin drafting the written plan by collating the notes and materials from the Planning Workgroup meetings and subject matter expert interviews.

Material Collection and Integration

At least one member of the Management Team and the Public Relations Team will attend each strategic work group and operational work group meeting to gather information and take notes. These notes will be collated and distributed across the three groups for review. Additional programmatic information will be collected from Subject Matter Experts from the agencies that provide the various services identified in the Combined Plan. A member of the Management Team will contact and coordinate with the Subject Matter Experts and the Public Relations Team to discuss program-specific and collect materials and information that will assist in the physical writing of the plan.

Outlining the Written Plan

Members of the Compliance Team will comb through the WIOA and create an outline for the writing of the plan. The outline will highlight required components that each plan must address according to the WIOA. In addition, the outline will provide a structure for streamlining the writing of each element identified in the Combined Plan to ensure a comprehensive description of each program and its role in the state's workforce development system.

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Writing Plan

The Management Team will collect and review all materials and notes gathered at the various workgroup meetings and discussions with Subject Matter Experts. Utilizing the outline created by the Compliance Team, members of the Management Team will write initial drafts of each component of the plan. The draft will then be sent to the Public Relations Team for content review and initial editing. Once the Public Relations Team edits have been incorporated into the draft, it will be sent to the Compliance Team to ensure all required WIOA areas have been addressed. Upon approval from the Compliance Team, each finished component will be submitted to the SWIB for final approval. Upon final approval from the SWIB, each component will be integrated into a working document that will be continually updated until the completion of the final component. Once all components have been integrated into the working document, it will be resubmitted to the SWIB for final edits and approval for submission to the governor.

TIMELINE

This timeline of all meetings and collaborations regarding WIOA planning will keep all parties informed of when the various activities of the WIOA process will take place. The timeline serves the dual role of acting as a safeguard to ensure all WIOA activities are completed on schedule for submission of the plan by September 1.

Date	Time	Group	Location
		June	
11	10:00am	Planning and Communication Workgroup	MDES
16	10:00am	Aligned and Integrated Technology Workgroup	MDES
18	10:00am	One-Stop Operations	Adcock Library, Holmes CC
23	10:00am	Employer Engagement Workgroup	MDES
25	10:00am	Career Pathways and Assessment Workgroup	MDES
26	10:00am	SWIB Task Force/Public Forum	MDE-Auditorium
30	10:00am	Performance and Accountability	CAVS, Canton
30	1:30pm	Sector Strategies	CAVS, Canton
		July	
8	10:00am	Focus Group with Area Businesses	ITS
15		Initial Draft of State Plan Published for Review and Comments	
22	5:30 pm	Second SWIB Task Force/Public Forum	MDE-Auditorium
		August	
5		Second Draft of State Plan Published for Review	
14	10:00am	SWIB Meeting	Jackson Convention Center
		September	
1		Final Draft of the WIOA Plan	

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STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

APPENDIX B: SLDS GOVERNING BOARD RULES & REGULATIONS

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 501: Statewide Longitudinal Data System Governing Board Rules & Regulations

Part 501 Chapter 1: STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Rule 1.1: Statutory Authority. The SLDS Governing Board was established effective July 1, 2013 through Mississippi Code Annotated § 37-154-1 and 37-154-3.

The SLDS Governing Board is authorized to develop and promulgate all rules and regulations governing the activities of the SLDS in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. The board is authorized to contract with a third party to manage and maintain the system and to insure the policies and procedures developed by the board are enforced.

The SLDS Governing Board shall be responsible for, but not limited to, the following objectives:

    A.   Identifying critical research and policy questions that need to be addressed by education (P-20) and workforce programs;

    B.   Identifying reports and other information that should be available to education and workforce entities and other public stakeholders;

    C.   Developing a funding mechanism for sustaining the system after it is developed;

    D.   Defining and maintaining standards for privacy, confidentiality and security of data; and

    E.   Performing other advisory functions that are necessary for the successful continuation and management of the longitudinal data system.

A Statewide longitudinal data system is one that collects, connects, and maintains data from distinct systems within governmental entities over time. Longitudinal data extends into the past as well as the present so that progress and outcomes can be measured with reasonable precision rather than relying on a simple snapshot.

Rule 1.2: Organization and policy and procedure. Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3 provides that the SLDS Governing Board shall be composed of a representative from each agency or entity providing data to the system and that each agency or entity will appoint their representative to sit on the Governing Board. For the two (2) years following July 1, 2013, the State Workforce Investment Board Chair will also serve as Chair of the SLDS Governing Board. In subsequent years, the SLDS Governing Board will elect a chair from among its members. The Chair of the SLDS Governing Board will serve a two-year term.

The Chair will appoint a vice-chair. Half of all board members shall be a quorum. The chairman shall be responsible for ensuring official minutes of each meeting are kept.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 2: SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Introduction: The SLDS Governing Board is authorized to contract with a third party to manage and maintain the system and to insure the policies and procedures developed by the board are enforced. The system shall be referred to as LifeTracks. LifeTracks includes activities within three categories:

A. Securing and managing data;

B. Supporting, maintaining, and expanding the online reporting portal (www.lifetracks.ms.gov); and

C. Developing research design and methodology for the purpose of conducting scientific research that addresses policy and research questions.

Rule 2.1: STATE DATA CLEARINGHOUSE. The SLDS Governing Board shall enter into a five-year memorandum of agreement with a third party to serve as the state data clearinghouse and to ensure the policies and procedures developed by the SLDS Governing Board are enforced. The third party contractor shall be a center of excellence and a research organization with a demonstrated track record of combining and extracting information from disparate large administrative data sets; creating, preserving, analyzing, and reporting on those data in a safe and secure manner; ensuring user-friendly and timely access to a variety of stakeholders; and building and sustaining partnerships with data contributors. The third party shall also be an organization with the knowledge, experience, and resources necessary to provide flexible, streamlined services and to design and implement best practices for data integration and data security. The organization must have experience with SLDS-type architecture and data modeling, and be qualified to provide all necessary technical resources aligned with the scope and objectives of the SLDS.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 2.2: APPLICATION HOST. The SLDS Governing Board shall select an entity to provide application hosting services for www.lifetracks.ms.gov. No data shall reside on application host servers, only summary reports. The SLDS Governing Board shall make provisions for this as part of the contract with the third party contractor acting as the state data clearinghouse.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 3: DATA SCOPE

Rule 3.1: DATA SCOPE. All data transferred for LifeTracks shall flow to the third party contractor in accordance with applicable SLDS Governing Board rules, regulations, policies and procedures and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.

A. Individual governmental entities shall transfer data to the third party contractor for inclusion in LifeTracks that includes:

1. All data transferred as part of the development of LifeTracks as specified in individual data dictionaries for each data stakeholder;

2. All data required to meet the 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act (Public Law 110–69);

3. Data necessary to provide decision makers a tool to develop policies to support objectives, including, but not limited to:

    a. Enabling Mississippians to secure and retain employment and receive better pay after completing training or postsecondary degrees;

    b. Enabling Mississippi to meet the education and job skill demands of business and industry;

    c. Developing an early warning system, which allows the state to intervene early, improving the graduation rates in high school and college; and

    d. Linking teachers, teaching methods and programs that lead to positive student outcomes.

4. All data necessary for the successful continuation, management, and development of the online reporting portal (www.lifetracks.ms.gov); and

5. All data required to fulfill authorized ad hoc research and reporting requests.

B. In an effort to maintain the highest degree of accuracy, LifeTracks shall adopt the business rules, logic, and calculation methodology of the contributing data provider. The third party contractor shall maintain agency/entity specific LifeTracks data dictionaries defining data elements:

1. Included in the development and initial deployment of LifeTracks;

2. Necessary for maintaining the system as deployed; and

3. Necessary for future development.

Copies of all agency/entity specific data dictionaries will be available to the public on the LifeTracks website.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 3.2: SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS. The SLDS Governing Board is cognizant of the fact that it is necessary to transmit and process personal information in the form of Social Security Numbers (SSNs) in order to conduct the business of the board. The SLDS Governing Board takes its responsibilities with respect to the use of SSNs seriously and seeks to provide functional secure systems for the appropriate handling of this information through the use of administrative, technical, and physical safeguards. To comply with Miss. Code Ann. §25-1-111, the following have been established:

A. Individual governmental entities shall transfer the SSN to the third party contractor for the purpose of creating a 10-digit unique identification number (ID10) created at random using a hardware based true random number generator that replaces the SSN and becomes the common link allowing all data in LifeTracks to be connected across different points in time. In regards to the Mississippi Department of Education, the specific method of transfer of data containing social security numbers or other unique identifiers is subject to written agreement by the SLDS Governing Board and the MDE.

B. Destruction of SSN information that is no longer needed shall be handled in an approved manner and completed using accepted methods that will not enable inappropriate recovery of data.

C. Individuals and entities are expected to comply with laws and policies pertaining to the collection and use of SSNs and are expected to take the steps necessary to protect this information.

D. SSN information is exempt from inclusion as public record information and is never to be provided in response to such requests.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 3.3: IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS. Agency/entity and/or program specific identification numbers shall also be transferred to the third party contractor for the purpose of conducting data validation and quality control activities and to allow individual governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks to use information from LifeTracks for internal agency use.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 4: STANDARDS FOR PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY & SECURITY OF DATA

Rule 4.1: SECURITY OF DATA. The third party contractor will establish a framework to initiate and control the implementation of security policies and standards for the SLDS Governing Board. The Governing Board will ensure that the State Data Clearinghouse's security posture is adequate and compliant with the Department of Information Technology Services' Enterprise Information Security Plan and that an organizational structure is in place that focuses on information security.

In addition, the third party contractor shall establish processes and procedures for incident reporting objectives, goals and deliverables identified in the ITS Enterprise Security Policy and ITS Enterprise Information Security Plan.

All data transferred from individual governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks to the third party contractor shall be held in a secure file location that is accessible only by authorized third party contractor personnel. This access limitation shall be enforced by third party contractor and board approved industry standard file access locks and an independent security system. The permissions structure shall be designed to only allow authorized users to access files. The independent security system shall be implemented to guard access to sensitive file storage areas and provide robust augmentation of security provided through file access locks and credentialing.

The third party contractor shall perform appropriate background checks and screening of all employees that have any access to the clearinghouse data.

The third party contractor shall employ technical safeguards to ensure personal information transmitted over an electronic communications network is not accessed by unauthorized persons or groups. Encryption shall be used when PII are in transmit or at rest. Unencrypted PII shall not be transmitted over public networks to third parties.

The third party contractor shall employ data integrity procedures that protect PII including mechanisms to authenticate records and corroborate that they have not been altered or destroyed in an unauthorized manner.

The third party contractor shall implement a risk assessment strategy plan that is updated annually which includes access and control processes, security risks, threats and vulnerabilities assessments, and methods for managing risks and incidents.

The third party contractor shall maintain and update the incident response plan that establishes procedures to follow in case a breach occurs and processes for notifying organizations in the event of unauthorized acquisition of files or documents. The third party contractor shall be subject to an annual external data security audit conducted by the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 4.2: DE-IDENTIFICATION OF DATA. All de-identification procedures shall be implemented with appropriate physical, technical, and administrative protections in place to maximize security, minimize risk, and ensure regulatory compliance. Data shall be de-identified through the ID10 process instituted in the development of LifeTracks wherein a 10-digit unique identification number (ID10) created from and replacing the SSN becomes the common link across all data in LifeTracks. An encrypted key held in a secure, offline location at the third party contractor's site shall allow for the matching of SSNs to the appropriate ID10 to ensure data can be reliably linked over time and across governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks. The SSN shall only be used for assigning the ID10.

Other internal identification numbers shall remain part of the transferred data to facilitate data validation and matching and to allow governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks to use information from LifeTracks for internal agency use.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 4.3: ID10 PROCESS. A unique 10-digit identification number (ID10) created at random using a hardware-based true random number generator that uses quantum physics to generate random binary data has been assigned to each SSN. For all data transferred from governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks to the third party contractor, the SSN shall be replaced with the ID10 that becomes the common link allowing all data in LifeTracks to be connected across different points in time.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 4.4: ADDITIONAL STANDARDS FOR PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY. Additional privacy and confidentiality safeguards shall include only releasing information generated from the data transferred from individual state agencies and state entities to the third party contractor in tabular form via the online reporting portal (www.lifetracks.ms.gov) and applying appropriate data suppression techniques when cell sizes fail to meet minimum SLDS Governing Board defined reporting requirements.

The minimum allowable cell size or subgroup contained in any reports shall be not less than ten (10); any cell size or subgroup with a number smaller than ten (10) shall be suppressed.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 5: PROVIDING DATA

Introduction: All data provided to the SLDS shall be provided in accordance with local, state and federal laws governing the protection and sharing of such data.

Rule 5.1: DATA MANAGER. All governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks shall designate a data manager to serve as the primary point of contact for all LifeTracks activities at the beginning of each state fiscal year and communicate this in writing to the SLDS Governing Board Chair and the designated third party contractor.

The third party contractor shall be subject to an annual external audit conducted by the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor for compliance with SLDS Governing Board rules and regulations.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 5.2: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU). Memorandums of understanding (MOUs) shall be executed between the governmental entity providing data and the third party contractor to ensure the safety, quality, and integrity of data in accordance with state and federal law.

At any such time as the third party contractor shall change, new MOUs shall be executed between individual governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks and the third party contractor.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 5.3: DATA TRANSFER. Data shall be transferred from individual governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks as necessary to meet the requirements of Chapter 3 and in accordance with applicable MOUs but not less than annually and no later than October 15 of each calendar year.

All data shall be transferred from individual governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks via an SLDS Governing Board approved secure file transfer solution chosen by the third party contractor. The selected managed file transfer solution shall employ industry standard file transfer encryption and include the ability to assign private destination folders to each data exchange partner that shall be locked down with and credentialed to individual source users such that only they can see their own folder. All data received by LifeTracks shall be transferred to a secure work area that is only accessible to authorized staff.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 6: DATA VALIDATION

Rule 6.1: DATA INVENTORY. Governmental entities shall submit data in accordance with state and federal law. Upon receipt of data, the third party contractor shall verify the list of data elements received from data contributors within ten (10) working days of receipt.

Upon verification of the list of fields, tables, and relationships between tables by the data contributor, the data shall undergo the complete LifeTracks data inventory process. The complete data inventory process shall include updating or creating data dictionaries and program data mapping documents. Data dictionaries shall include metadata such as meaning, relationship to other data, origin, usage, and format. Program data mapping documents shall provide information on how data fields relate to other data fields across multiple data sets. The program data mapping document shall be used to compare and contrast data elements collected across multiple governmental entities and over time.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 6.2: DATA VALIDATION. Data validation shall be the primary responsibility of the third party contractor and undertaken in accordance with SLDS Governing Board rules and regulations and the terms of applicable MOUs. The business rules, logic, and calculation

methodology provided by the governmental entity contributing the data shall be used shall be used for data validation. The objective of the data validation process shall be to verify that data transferred by governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks mirrors data contributor internal data so that accurate reports can be produced across systems.

The data validation process shall entail individual data contributors working closely with the third party contractor staff as part of a process designed to detect and correct inaccurate or incomplete records so that LifeTracks data will be consistent and reliable. Data validation diagnostics run to ensure high-quality, accurate, and complete data are available for LifeTracks shall include, but not be limited to:

A.   Checking that all tables, records, and fields, and the full contents of each field have been successfully transmitted and read;

B.   Comparing record counts between the source data and the data transmitted to the third party contractor; and

C.   Producing a report with basic summary statistics for validation by the data contributor.

Data contributors shall have thirty (30) working days to validate and approve their summary statistics reports prior to that data becoming public, as part of the LifeTracks online reporting system (www.lifetracks.ms.gov).

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 7: REPORTS

Rule 7.1: PRE-DEFINED REPORTS. Access to agreed-upon pre-defined statewide aggregate reports shall be publicly available through the LifeTracks one-stop portal. Access to sub-state level reports shall be subject to role-based credentials. De-identified individual data points shall never be part of pre-defined reports and shall not be accessible through LifeTracks online portal.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 7.2: AD HOC REQUESTS AND REPORTS. Data from LifeTracks shall be used to address requests that require data from multiple data contributors, and requests that are longitudinal in nature requiring data at different points in time along the education and workforce pathway. For longitudinal studies, requests can be categorized as one of three types of studies:

A.   Trend studies,
B.   Cohort studies, and
C.   Panel studies.

Trend studies are those requests that examine a given characteristic(s) of some group over time. Cohort studies are those requests that examine or study some specific sub-population (cohort)

over time. Panel studies are those requests that examine how the same members of a group progress along the education and workforce pathway. Trend, cohort, and panel studies will provide a true mechanism to evaluate the impact of policies, programs, and initiatives on education, workforce, and economic outcomes in the state to inform the development of strategic planning.

Requests for reports involving data within a single state agency/entity shall be referred to the relevant state agency/entity.

All requests for studies, reports, or information deemed suitable for LifeTracks shall be classified into one of two review types for processing: Standard Review or Expedited Review.

A.   Standard Review is required for all requests for traditional/basic research studies where a research question or set of research questions is posed that is not subject to predefined or statutorily mandated methodology or reporting requirements. Standard Review is appropriate for requests that require the development of a research design that examines relationships using scientific techniques such as regression analysis or multilevel modeling and where the research design is guided by a conceptual or theoretical framework drawing upon current scholarly research published in peer-reviewed journals and technical reports. All requests for reports or information falling within the Standard Review category are reviewed by all members of the Research Review and Standards Committee.

The eligibility criteria for Standard Review is as follows. All requests for studies, reports, or information wherein a research question or set of research questions is posed and the methodology or parameters of the request are not statutorily defined, specified by rules or regulations, or otherwise clearly specified by the requestor and require the development of a research design that examines relationships using scientific techniques (e.g., regression analysis or multilevel modeling) shall be subject to the Standard Review process.

Standard Review requests shall require:

1.   Review of the request feasibility report by each member of the Research Review and Standards Committee

2.   Completion of the Research Review and Standards Committee review form by each committee member

3.   Request authorization or denial from the Research Review and Standards Committee to the third-party contractor

4.   Review of and provision of feedback on draft report by all Research Review and Standards Committee members

5. Authorization of final report by Research Review and Standards Committee chair

The Research Review and Standards Committee shall review the request feasibility report as provided by the third-party contractor and may, at the Research Review and Standards Committee's discretion, seek appropriate input from the identified data contributor(s).

The Research Review and Standards Committee will have ten (10) business days from the receipt of the request feasibility report to complete its review and provide notice to proceed or not to the third-party contractor.

Should the Research Review and Standards Committee not authorize the request, the RRSC will provide written justification for the decision to the SLDS Governing Board.

Upon receipt of authorization to proceed from the Research Review and Standards Committee, the third-party contractor shall propose an estimated timeline for fulfilling the request and share the timeline with all parties involved. The third-party contractor will conduct the study and provide a draft report to the Research Review and Standards Committee.

All members of the Research Review and Standards Committee will review the draft report and provide feedback to be compiled by the Research Review and Standards Committee chair and transmitted to the third-party contractor.

The third-party contractor will address Research Review and Standards Committee feedback and refine the report as necessary and appropriate.

The review and feedback process will continue until the report is approved by the Research Review and Standards Committee.

The report is shared with the appropriate data contributors who will have an opportunity to review and formally comment on the report. The comments should be for clarification and to provide an opportunity for the data contributor to provide substantive meaning of the results that reflects the data contributor's perspective. The third-party contractor will include data contributor comments in the final report.

The final report will be transmitted to the requestor and posted online at www.lifetracks.ms.gov.

B. Requests for reports or information suitable for LifeTracks that meet the Expedited Review eligibility criteria may be classified as Expedited Review. These requests are descriptive in nature and are essentially census-type requests. Expedited Review is appropriate for requests wherein:

1. The methodology, definitions, or reporting requirements are clearly specified

2. The request includes predetermined/mandatory parameters established or provided by the requestor (e.g., Excel files, tables, or applications to be completed)

3. No report is required or requested

Requests classified for Expedited Review will be reviewed by the Research Review and Standards Committee chair or her/his designee and one or more Research Review and Standards Committee members designated by the chair. These reviewers may authorize the request or refer the request to the full Research Review and Standards Committee for consideration. If the request is referred to the full Research Review and Standards Committee, Standard Review procedures will be followed.

The third-party contractor will transmit the final product to the requestor and notify the Research Review and Standards Committee that the request is complete.

To be eligible for Expedited Review, answers to the following questions must be affirmative. If the answer to any of the questions below is "No," the request must be classified as Standard Review.

1. Are the reporting requirements predefined by the requestor?
2. Is the format for results predefined and clearly specified?

Expedited Review requests shall require:

1. Review of the request feasibility report by the Research Review and Standards Committee chair or his/her designee and one or more members of the Research Review and Standards Committee as designated by the chair

2. Completion of the Research Review and Standards Committee review form by each reviewer

3. Authorization of request or referral to full Research Review and Standards Committee and notice to the third-party contractor

The Research Review and Standards Committee shall review the request feasibility report as provided by the third-party contractor and may, at its discretion, seek appropriate input from the identified data contributor(s).

The Research Review and Standards Committee will have ten (10) business days to provide notice to proceed or notice of referral to the full Research Review and Standards Committee to the third-party contractor. Should the expedited review team refer the request to the full Research Review and Standards Committee, standard review procedures shall be followed.

Upon receipt of authorization to proceed from the Research Review and Standards Committee, the third-party contractor shall propose an estimated timeline for fulfilling the request and share the timeline with the Research Review and Standards Committee chair, specific data contributors, and the requestor.

The third-party contractor will transmit the final product to the requestor and notify the Research Review and Standards Committee that the request is complete.

Requests from the following entities will receive priority over any other requests:

A.   SLDS Governing Board Members;

B.   Governor's Office;

C.   Lt. Governor;

D.   All members of the Mississippi Legislature;

E.   Attorney General;

F.   Secretary of State;

G.   State Auditor;

H.   Other state leadership as approved by the SLDS Governing Board.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 8: ONLINE REPORTS

Rule 8.1 Online Reports. To have new reports available on the LifeTracks portal a proposal including a report template, data required for the report and the methodology and/or business rules necessary to create the report shall be presented to the SLDS Governing Board for review and approval.

Upon approval, the SLDS Governing Board shall instruct the third party contractor to make the approved report available through the LifeTracks portal.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 9: LIFETRACKS ACCOUNTS

Rule 9.1: SLDS GOVERNING BOARD ACCOUNTS. Requests for LifeTracks accounts to access full online reports shall be made to stakeholders and policymakers by submitting information required via the online account request form available at www.lifetracks.ms.gov. The third party contractor shall notify the SLDS Governing Board. Upon approval by SLDS Governing Board, the third party contractor shall create the approved account.

Stakeholders and policymakers are those in state leadership positions with a direct role in developing and supporting state education and workforce objectives. Stakeholders and policymakers that can request LifeTracks accounts for access to full online reports shall be:

    A.   SLDS Governing Board Members;

    B.   Governor's Office;

    C.   Lt. Governor;

    D.   All members of the Mississippi Legislature;

    E.   Attorney General;

    F.   Secretary of State;

    G.   State Auditor;

    H.   Other state leadership as approved by the SLDS Governing Board.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 9.2: AGENCY/ENTITY ACCOUNTS. LifeTracks accounts for access to full online reports shall be managed by the governmental entities contributing data to LifeTracks. Each data contributor can provide access to their own LifeTracks reports as it deems appropriate. Each data contributor shall notify the third party contractor of all accounts created and shall be fully responsible for any liability arising therefrom.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 10: PUBLIC RECORDS

Rule 10.1 Statutory authority and purpose. These public records rules are promulgated by the SLDS Governing Board in compliance with the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983, Miss. Code Ann. §25-61-1, et seq., except as noted in 3-3.2-D of these regulations.

"It is the policy of the Legislature that public records must be available for inspection by any person unless otherwise provided by this act. Furthermore, providing access to public records is a duty of each public body and automation of public records must not erode the right of access to those records." Section 25-61-1, Miss. Code of 1972.

"[A]ll public records are hereby declared to be public property, and any person shall have the right to inspect, copy or mechanically reproduce or obtain a reproduction of any public record of a public body in accordance with reasonable written procedures adopted by the public body concerning the cost, time, place and method of access, and public notice of the procedures shall be given by the public body." Section 25-61-5, Miss. Code of 1972.

The act defines "public record" to include any "all books, records, papers, accounts, letters, maps, photographs, films, cards, tapes, recordings or reproductions thereof, and any other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, having been used, being in use, or prepared, possessed or retained for use in the conduct, transaction or performance of any business, transaction, work, duty or function of any public body, or required to be maintained by any public body." Section 25-61-3(b).

The purpose of these rules is to establish the procedures the SLDS Governing Board will follow in order to provide full access to public records. These rules provide information to persons wishing to request access to public records of the SLDS Governing Board and establish processes for both requestors and SLDS Governing Board staff that are designed to best assist members of the public in obtaining such access.

The purpose of the act is to provide the public full access to public records concerning the conduct of government. The act and these rules will be interpreted in favor of disclosure. In carrying out its responsibilities under the act, the SLDS Governing Board will be guided by the provisions of the act describing its purposes and interpretation.

If the Contractor receives a public records request for information pertaining to SLDS or any data contributors, the third party contractor shall immediately inform all SLDS board members.

When the SLDS Governing Board receives a public records request, it shall immediately notify all SLDS Governing Board members.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 10.2 Contact information. Any person wishing to request access to public records of the SLDS Governing Board, or seeking assistance in making such a request should make the request in writing to the Chair of the SLDS Governing Board.
Information is also available on the LifeTracks website at www.lifetracks.ms.gov.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 10.3 Availability of public records. Any person wishing to request access to public records of the SLDS Governing Board is encouraged to view the documents available on the LifeTracks web site prior to submitting a records request.

A. Any person wishing to inspect or copy public records of the SLDS Governing Board should make the request in writing to the SLDS Governing Board and including the following information:

1. Name of requestor;

2. Address of requestor;

3. Other contact information, including telephone number and any e-mail address;

4. Identification of the public records adequate so that the record may be located; and

5. The date and time of day of the request.

B. If the requestor wishes to have copies of the records made instead of simply inspecting them, he or she should so indicate and make arrangements to pay for copies of the records or a deposit. The SLDS Governing Board shall determine the cost of providing access to and/or copies of the records being requested. Upon receipt of the payment (cash, check, or money order) of the estimated costs in advance, the SLDS Governing Board will provide copies of the records.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 10.4 Processing of public records requests. The SLDS Governing Board acknowledges that "providing access to public records is a duty" and that "any person shall have the right to inspect, copy or mechanically reproduce or obtain a reproduction of any public record" in accordance with these rules (Miss. Code Ann. §25-61-1 and §25-61-5). The SLDS Governing Board will process requests in the order allowing the most requests to be processed in the most efficient manner.

A. Acknowledging receipt of request. Within seven (7) business days of receipt of the request, the SLDS Governing Board will do one or more of the following:

1. Make the records available for inspection or copying;

2. If copies are requested and payment of a deposit for the copies, if any, is made or terms of payment are agreed upon, send the copies to the requestor;

3. Provide a reasonable estimate of when records will be available; for records that do not fall within the provisions of Mississippi Code Annotated §25-61-9 regarding third party notification requirements, the SLDS Governing Board will provide a written explanation if the records cannot be produced within the seven (7) business day period;

4. If the request is unclear or does not sufficiently identify the requested records, request clarification from the requestor. Such clarification may be requested and provided by telephone. The SLDS Governing Board or designee may revise the estimate of when records will be available;

5. Deny the request, with documentation to the requestor as to the reason for denial.

B. Consequences of failure to respond. If the SLDS Governing Board does not respond in writing within seven (7) business days of receipt of the request for disclosure, the requestor should consider contacting the SLDS Governing Board to determine the reason for the failure to respond.

C. Protecting rights of others. In the event that the requested records contain information that may affect rights of others and may be exempt from disclosure, the SLDS Governing Board may, prior to providing the records, give notice to such others whose rights may be affected by the disclosure. Such notice should be given so as to make it possible for those other persons to contact the requestor and ask him or her to revise the request, or, if necessary, seek an order from a court to prevent or limit the disclosure. The notice to the affected persons will include a copy of the request.

D. Denial of request.

1. Records exempt from disclosure. Some records are exempt from disclosure, in whole or in part. If the SLDS Governing Board believes that a record is exempt from disclosure and should be withheld, the SLDS Governing Board will state the specific exemption and provide a brief explanation of why the record or a portion of the record is being withheld. If only a portion of a record is exempt from disclosure, but the remainder is not exempt, the SLDS Governing Board will redact the exempt portions, provide the nonexempt portions, and indicate to the requestor why portions of the record are being redacted.

2. Record does not exist or SLDS Governing Board does not have the record. The SLDS Governing Board must only provide access to public records in

existence at the time of the request. If a public record is created or comes into the possession of the SLDS Governing Board after the request is received by the SLDS Governing Board, that record will not be provided. The requestor must make a new request to obtain subsequently-created public records.

E.   Inspection of records. Consistent with other demands and with prior written notice by the requestor to the SLDS Governing Board, it shall promptly provide space to inspect nonexempt public records. No member of the public may remove a document from the viewing area or disassemble or alter any document. The requestor shall indicate which documents he or she wishes the public body to copy.

The requestor must claim or review the assembled records within ten (10) business days of the SLDS Governing Board notification to him or her that the records are available for inspection or copying. The SLDS Governing Board will notify the requestor in writing of this requirement and inform the requestor that he or she should contact the SLDS Governing Board to make arrangements to claim or review the records. If the requestor or a representative of the requestor fails to claim or review the records within the ten-day period or make other arrangements, the SLDS Governing Board may close the request and refile the assembled records. Other public records requests can be processed ahead of a subsequent request by the same person for the same or almost identical records, which can be processed as a new request.

F.   Providing copies of records. After inspection is complete, the SLDS Governing Board shall make the requested copies or arrange for copying. The requestor must provide payment for copies at the time copies are made. Alternatively, the requestor may ask that the SLDS Governing Board provide the requested information directly to the requestor, in printed or electronic form, without prior inspection of the information by the requestor.

G.   Providing records in installments. When the request is for a large number of records, the SLDS Governing Board will provide access for inspection and copying in installments, if he or she reasonably determines that it would be practical to provide the records in that way. If, within ten (10) business days, the requestor fails to inspect the entire set of records or one or more of the installments, the SLDS Governing Board or designee may stop searching for the remaining records and close the request.

H.   Completion of inspection. When the inspection of the requested records is complete and all requested copies are provided, SLDS Governing Board will indicate that it has completed a diligent search for the requested records and made any located nonexempt records available for inspection.

I.   Closing withdrawn or abandoned request. When the requestor either withdraws the request or fails to fulfill his or her obligations to inspect the records or pay

required fees, the SLDS Governing Board will close the request and indicate to the requestor that the SLDS Governing Board has closed the request.

J.   Later discovered documents. If, after the SLDS Governing Board has informed the requestor that it has provided all available records, the SLDS Governing Board becomes aware of additional responsive documents existing at the time of the request, it will promptly inform the requestor and data contributors of the additional documents and provide them on an expedited basis.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 10.5 Processing of public records requests for electronic records. The SLDS Governing Board process for requesting electronic public records is the same as for requesting paper public records. When a requestor requests records in an electronic format, the SLDS Governing Board will provide the nonexempt records or portions of such records that are reasonably locatable in an electronic format that is used by the SLDS Governing Board and is generally commercially available, or in a format that is reasonably translatable from the format in which the SLDS Governing Board keeps the record. The SLDS Governing Board shall determine the cost of providing access to electronic records.

With the consent of the requestor, the SLDS Governing Board may provide customized access if the record is not reasonably locatable or not reasonably translatable into the format requested. The SLDS Governing Board may charge the actual cost for such customized access.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 10.6 Exemptions. The Public Records Act, as well as other statues and court decisions, provide that a number of types of documents are exempt from public inspection and copying. In addition, other statutes or rules of law, such as various privacy restrictions, may prohibit disclosure. Requestors should be aware of the following exemptions, outside the Public Records Act, that restrict the availability of some documents held by the SLDS Governing Board for inspection and copying. This list is provided for informational purposes only and may not be all-inclusive:

- Academic records exempt from public access, see § 37-11-51.
- Appraisal records exempt from access, see § 31-1-27.
- Archaeological records exempt from public access, see § 39-7-41.
- Attorney work product, examination, exemption, see § 25-1-102.
- Birth Defects Registry, see § 41-21-205.
- Bureau of vital statistics, access to records, see § 41-57-2.
- Charitable organizations, registration information, exemption from public access, see § 79-11-527.
- Concealed pistols or revolvers, licenses to carry, records, exemption, see § 45-9-101.

- Confidentiality, ambulatory surgical facilities, see § 41-75-19.

- Defendants likely to flee or physically harm themselves or others, see § 41-32-7.

- Environmental self-evaluation reports, public records act, exemption, see § 49-2-71.

- Hospital records, Mississippi Public Records Act exemption, see § 41-9-68.

- Individual tax records in possession of public body, exemption from public access requirements, see § 27-3-77.

- Insurance and insurance companies, risk based capital level requirements, reports, see § 83-5-415.

- Judicial records, public access, exemption, see § 9-1-38.

- Jury records exempt from public records provisions, see § 13-5-97.

- Licensure application and examination records exemption from Public Records Act, see § 73-52-1.

- Medical examiner, records and reports, see § 41-61-63.

- Personnel files exempt from examination, see § 25-1-100.

- Public records and trade secrets, proprietary commercial and financial information, exemption from public access, see § 79-23-1.

- Workers' compensation, access to records, see § 71-3-66.

- Records subject to privilege, such as Attorney/Client, Physician/Patient, etc.

SLDS Governing Board will describe why each withheld record or redacted portion of a record is exempt from disclosure.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 10.7 Third party information. Upon request to inspect or copy any third party document, the SLDS Governing Board shall notify the third party who filed the document. Seven (7) working days after such notice, the document will be made available for public inspection and/or copying unless the third party shall have either (i) obtained a court order protecting such records as confidential pursuant to Section 25-61-9, Miss. Code of 1972 or (ii) furnished the SLDS Governing Board a copy of the filed petition for a protective court order, providing the petition was timely filed upon the third party's receipt of notification from the SLDS Governing Board regarding the request for information.

The third party must prove to the court's satisfaction that the record or portion of the records is exempt from disclosure and must deliver the court order preventing the release of all or part of the information to the SLDS Governing Board prior to the deadline to prevent disclosure of the

information. The third party must name the requestor as a party to any action to enjoin disclosure.

The SLDS Governing Board will not make a determination as to whether a requested record provided by a third party contains trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information. The SLDS Governing Board will provide the third party notice as outlined above and allow the court to determine if a protective order should be issued.

Documents are frequently produced by the SLDS Governing Board that contain specific information directly obtained from a third party and, as such, may be subject to third party notice as described above.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 10.8 Costs for fulfilling a request. Costs of providing public records shall be determined in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. §25-61-7(1) that reads as follows: "Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, each public body may establish and collect fees reasonably calculated to reimburse it for, and in no case to exceed, the actual cost of searching, reviewing and/or duplicating and, if applicable, mailing copies of public records."

A. A requestor may obtain standard black and white photocopies for 15 cents per page and color copies for 15 cents per page. Copy charges for some specific types of records are set by statute and may exceed the amount stated above. Before copies can be made and/or provided to the requestor, the requestor must pre-pay all reasonably estimated costs of copying all the records selected by the requestor. The SLDS Governing Board may also require the payment of the remainder of the copying costs before providing all the records in an installment before providing that installment. The SLDS Governing Board will not charge sales tax when it makes copies of public records.

B. Costs for electronic records. The cost of electronic copies of records shall be specified as the media cost for a CD. The cost of scanning existing SLDS Governing Board paper or other non-electronic records will be calculated at the hourly service rate. There will be no charge for e-mailing electronic records to a requestor, unless another cost applies such as a scanning fee or system costs.

C. Costs of mailing. The SLDS Governing Board may also charge actual costs of mailing, including the cost of the shipping container.

D. Payment. Payment may be made by cash, check, or money order to the SLDS Governing Board for the amount specified.

E. Charges for searching, reviewing and redacting. The actual cost of searching for and reviewing and, if necessary, redacting exempt information from public records shall be based upon the hourly service rate multiplied by the actual time to complete the task.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Rule 10.9 Review by Ethics Commission. Pursuant to Section 25-61-13, if the SLDS Governing Board denies a requestor access to public records, the requestor may ask the Ethics Commission to review the matter. The Ethics Commission has adopted rules on such requests. They may be found at www.ethics.state.ms.us.

Any person whose request for public records was denied may institute a suit in the chancery court of Hinds County, seeking to reverse the denial, as set forth in Section 25-61-13.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 11: RULEMAKING ORAL PROCEEDINGS

Rule 11.1 Rulemaking oral proceedings. These rules apply to all oral proceedings held for the purpose of providing the public with an opportunity to make oral presentations or written input on proposed new rules, amendments to rules, and proposed repeal of existing rules for the SLDS Governing Board.

When a political subdivision, an agency, or ten (10) persons request an oral proceeding in regards to a proposed rule adoption, the requestor must submit a printed, typewritten, or legibly handwritten request.

      A.   Each request must be submitted on 8-1/2" x 11" white paper.

      B.   The request may be in the form of a letter addressed to the Chair of the SLDS Governing Board or in the form of a pleading as if filed with a court.

      C.   Each request must include the full name, telephone numbers, and mailing address of the requestor(s).

      D.   All requests shall be signed by the person filing the request, unless represented by an attorney, in which case the attorney may sign the request.

Notice of the date, time, and place of all oral proceedings shall be filed with the Secretary of State's Office for publication in the Administrative Bulletin. The SLDS Governing Board shall provide notice of oral proceedings to all persons requesting notification of proposed rule adoptions. The oral proceedings will be scheduled no earlier than twenty (20) days from the filing of the notice with the Secretary of State. The Chair of the SLDS Governing Board or designee who is familiar with the substance of the proposed rule shall preside at the oral proceeding on a proposed rule.

Public participation shall be permitted at oral proceedings, as follows:

      A.   At an oral proceeding on a proposed rule, persons may make statements and present documentary and physical submissions concerning the proposed rule.

B. Persons wishing to make oral presentations at such a proceeding shall notify the Chair of the SLDS Governing Board at least three (3) business days prior to the proceeding and indicate the general subject of their presentations. The presiding officer in his or her discretion may allow individuals to participate that have not contacted the SLDS Governing Board prior to the proceeding.

C. At the proceeding, those who participate shall indicate their names and addresses, identify any persons or organizations they may represent, and provide any other information relating to their participation deemed appropriate by the presiding officer.

D. The presiding officer may place time limitations on individual presentations when necessary to assure the orderly and expeditious conduct of the oral proceeding. To encourage joint presentations and to avoid repetition, additional time may be provided for persons whose presentations represent the views of other individuals as well as their own views.

E. Persons making presentations are encouraged to avoid restating matters that have already been submitted in writing. Written materials may be submitted at the oral proceeding.

F. Where time permits and to facilitate the exchange of information, the presiding officer may open the floor to questions or general discussion. The presiding officer may question participants and permit the questioning of participants by other participants about any matter relating to that rule-making proceeding, including any prior written submissions made by those participants in that proceeding. No participant shall be required to answer any question.

Physical and documentary submissions presented by participants in an oral proceeding shall be submitted to the presiding officer. Such submissions become the property of the SLDS Governing Board, part of the rulemaking record, and are subject to the SLDS Governing Board public records request procedure. The SLDS Governing Board may record oral proceedings by stenographic or electronic means.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 12: DECLARATORY OPINIONS

Introduction. These rules and regulations govern the form, content, and filing of requests for declaratory opinion, the procedural rights of persons in relation to the written requests, and the SLDS Governing Board's procedures regarding the disposition of requests as required by Miss. Code Ann. §25-43-2.103.

Rule 12.1 Declaratory Opinions. The SLDS Governing Board will issue declaratory opinions regarding the applicability to specified facts of:

A.   A statute administered or enforceable by the SLDS Governing Board;

B.   A rule or regulation promulgated by the SLDS Governing Board; or,

C.   An order issued by the SLDS Governing Board.

A request must be limited to a single transaction or occurrence.

When a person with substantial interest, as required by Miss. Code Annotated §25-43-2.103, requests a declaratory opinion, the requestor must submit a printed, typewritten, or legibly handwritten request.

A.   Each request must be submitted on 8-1/2" x 11" white paper.

B.   The request may be in the form of a letter addressed to the Chair of the SLDS Governing Board or in the form of a pleading as if filed with a court.

C.   Each request must include the full name, telephone numbers, and mailing address of the requestor(s).

D.   All requests shall be signed by the person filing the request, unless represented by an attorney, in which case the attorney may sign the request.

E.   Each request must clearly state that it is a request for a declaratory opinion.

Any party who signs the request shall attest that the request complies with the requirements set forth in these rules, including but not limited to a full, complete, and accurate statement of relevant facts and that there are no related proceedings pending before any agency, administrative, or judicial tribunal.

Each request must contain the following:

A.   A clear identification of the statute, rule, regulation, or order at issue;

B.   The question for the declaratory opinion;

C.   A clear and concise statement of all facts relevant to the question presented;

D.   The identity of all other known persons involved in or impacted by the facts giving rise to the request including their relationship to the facts, and their name, mailing address, and telephone number; and,

E.   A statement sufficient to show that the requestor has a substantial interest in the subject matter of the request.

The SLDS Governing Board may, for good cause, refuse to issue a declaratory opinion. The circumstances in which declaratory opinions will not be issued include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

A. The matter is outside the primary jurisdiction of the SLDS Governing Board;

B. There is a lack of clarity concerning the question presented;

C. There is pending or anticipated litigation, administrative action or anticipated administrative action, or other adjudication which may either answer the question presented by the request or otherwise make an answer unnecessary;

D. The statute, rule, or order on which a declaratory opinion is sought is clear and not in need of interpretation to answer the question presented by the request;

E. The facts presented in the request are not sufficient to answer the question presented;

F. The request fails to contain information required by these rules or the requestor failed to follow the procedure set forth in these rules;

G. The request seeks to resolve issues which have become moot or are abstract or hypothetical such that the requestor is not substantially affected by the rule, statute, or order on which a declaratory opinion is sought;

H. No controversy exists or is certain to arise which raises a question concerning the application of the statute, rule, or order;

I. The question presented by the request concerns the legal validity of a statute, rule, or order;

J. The request is not based upon facts calculated to aid in the planning of future conduct, but is, instead, based on past conduct in an effort to establish the effect of that conduct;

K. No clear answer is determinable;

L. The question presented by the request involves the application of a criminal statute or sets forth facts which may constitute a crime;

M. The answer to the question presented would require the disclosure of information which is privileged or otherwise protected by law from disclosure;

N. The question is currently the subject of an Attorney General's opinion request;

O. The question has been answered by an Attorney General's opinion;

P. One or more requestors have standing to seek an Attorney General's opinion on the proffered question;

Q. A similar request is pending before this agency, or any other agency, or a proceeding is pending on the same subject matter before any agency, administrative or judicial tribunal, or where such an opinion would constitute the unauthorized practice of law; or,

R. The question involves eligibility for a license, permit, certificate, or other approval by the SLDS Governing Board or some other agency and there is a statutory or regulatory application process by which eligibility for said license, permit, or certificate or other approval may be determined.

Within forty-five (45) days after the receipt of a request for a declaratory opinion which complies with the requirements of these rules, the SLDS Governing Board shall, in writing:

A. Issue an opinion declaring the applicability of the statute, rule, or order to the specified circumstances;

B. Agree to issue a declaratory opinion by a specified time but no later than ninety (90) days after receipt of the written request; or,

C. Decline to issue a declaratory opinion, stating the reasons for its action.

The forty-five (45) day period shall begin on the first business day after which the request is received by the SLDS Governing Board.

Declaratory opinions and requests for declaratory opinions shall be available for public inspection and copying at the expense of the viewer during normal business hours. All declaratory opinion and requests shall be indexed by name, subject, and date of issue. Declaratory opinions and requests which contain information which is confidential or exempt from disclosure under the Mississippi Public Records Act or other laws shall be exempt from this requirement and shall remain confidential.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

Part 501 Chapter 13: REVIEW AND AUDIT

Rule 13.1 Review and Audit. These rules and regulations shall be subject to review by an SLDS Governing Board committee on annual basis as set forth by the SLDS Governing Board Chair. The SLDS Governing Board committee shall prepare a report including recommendations for any actions to be considered by the convened governing board.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §37-154-3

APPENDIX C: LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA DESIGNATION POLICY

MISSISSIPPI

Policy Number 1

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA DESIGNATION POLICY

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Office of Grant Management

I.   SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Section 106 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the Governor to designate Local Workforce Development Areas within the state through consultation with the State Workforce Development Board and after consultation with the chief elected officials and comments from the general public as described in Section 102(b)(2)(E)(ii)(II). For the purposes of this policy, the term "Governor" shall mean the Governor or his designee. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance regarding the initial and subsequent designation of Local Workforce Development Areas in Mississippi.

II. REQUIREMENTS

WIOA provides for three types of local workforce development area designation: Initial Designation, Subsequent Designation, and Designation on Recommendation of the State

Board. The Governor *shall* approve requests for initial and subsequent designation submitted by chief elected officials, provided the area under consideration meets the applicable eligibility criteria. Under the third designation type, the Governor *may* approve such requests from any unit of general local government on recommendation from the State Workforce Development Board.

A. Initial Designation [Section 106(b)(2)]:

During the first two (2) full program years following the date of enactment of the Act, July 22, 2014, the Governor *shall* approve a request for initial designation as a local area from any area that **(a)** was designated as a local area for purposes of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for the two-year period preceding the date of enactment of this Act, **(b)** has performed successfully, and **(c)** sustained fiscal integrity.

1. "The term "performed successfully," used with respect to a local area, means the local area met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) (or, if applicable, core indicators of performance described in section 136(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as in effect the day before the date of enactment of this Act) for each of the last 2 consecutive years for which data are available preceding the determination of performance under this paragraph." *(The local area has achieved at least 80 percent of their local performance goal on each performance measure for Program Year 2012 and Program Year 2013 as stated in Section 106(e)(1) of the WIOA.)*

2. "The term "sustained fiscal integrity," per Section 106(e)(2) is used with respect to a local area, means that the Secretary has not made a formal determination, during either of the last two (2) consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misexpended funds provided under subtitle B (or, if applicable, Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 as in effect prior to the effective date of such subtitle B) due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration."

B. **Subsequent Designation [Section 106(b)(3)]:**

After the two full program years initial designation period, the Governor *shall* approve a request for subsequent designation from such local area, if such area –

1. performed successfully;

2. sustained fiscal integrity;

3. and in the case of a local area in a planning region, met the requirements described at Section 106(c)(1).

C. **Governor Not Prohibited:**

If justification exists to explain why a local area(s) did not meet or exceed the adjusted levels of performance under the Initial or Subsequent Designation clauses, the Governor *may* approve such local area designation. Nothing in the requirements to approve certain initial or subsequent designations of local areas shall be construed as prohibiting the Governor from approving such areas as may be recommended by the State board or the chief elected officials and which conform to the majority but not all of the requirements.

D. **Designation on Recommendation of State Board and Approval of Governor**

[Section 106(b)(1)]:

The Governor *may* approve a request for a local area designation from any unit of general local government or combination of such units if the State Board determines that such area should be so designated. In making the designation of local areas, the Governor must give considerations consisting of the extent to which the areas:

1. are consistent with labor market areas in the State;

2. are consistent with regional economic development areas in the State; and

3. have available the Federal and non-Federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under subtitle B and other applicable provisions of WIOA, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools.

E. **Regions [Section 106(a)]:**

Before the second full program year after the date of enactment of the Act, in order for a State to receive an allotment under Section 127(b) or 132(b) and as part of the process for developing the State Plan, a State *shall* identify regions in the State after consultation with the local boards and chief elected officials in the local areas and consistent with the considerations described in Section 106(b)(1)(B). The State *shall* also identify regions consistent with the requirements of Section 106 (a)(2).

F. **State Appeals Process [Section 106(b)(5)]:**

If an existing local workforce area under the WIA requests but is not granted designation as a local workforce development area under WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or Section 106(b)(3), the unit (or combination of units) of general local government or grant recipient may submit an appeal to the State Board under an appeal process established in the State Plan.

The written appeal must explain the appellant's opinion that the denial is contrary to the designation provisions of WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or 106(b)(3). Entities may not appeal a denial if their designation request does not meet the requirements of Section 106(b)(2) or 106(b)(3). The State Workforce Board will issue a determination within thirty (30) days of receipt of an appeal.

If the appeal to the State Board does not result in designation, the appellant, if appealing an initial designation under WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or subsequent designation under Section 106(b)(3), may request review by the Secretary of Labor. An appeal to the Secretary must be submitted by the appellant or grant recipient no later than 30 days after receipt of written

notification from the State Board that the appeal has been denied. Appeals must be submitted by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC 20210, Attention: Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the State Board.

If the Secretary determines that the appellant was not accorded procedural rights under the appeal process established under the above section, or that the area meets the requirements for initial or subsequent designation in WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or 106(b)(3), the Secretary may require that the area be designated as a workforce development area. The Secretary must issue a written decision to the Governor.

Local Workforce Development Area Designation
WIOA Policy Number 1
Page 4 of 4

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy shall be effective immediately upon signature.

Yolonda Boone   3/2/2015
Director   Date
Office of Grant Management

Attachment: Request for Designation as a Workforce Development Area Checklist

APPENDIX D: STATE AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Current Industry Structure

Table D1: Current Wholesale/Retail Trade Industry Structure

Industry	Total	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
General Merchandise Stores	37,123	21.8	$20,364	1,046
Food and Beverage Stores	18,391	10.8	$18,500	1,023
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	16,859	9.9	$50,281	1,754
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	16,178	9.5	$39,090	1,469
Gasoline Stations	13,964	8.2	$16,232	2,049
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	13,793	8.1	$47,063	943
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	11,920	7.0	$28,256	827
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	10,047	5.9	$15,156	1,272
Health and Personal Care Stores	9,196	5.4	$35,075	1,075
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	6,130	3.6	$22,200	1,041
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores	4,428	2.6	$16,440	401
Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers	4,087	2.4	$76,943	1,958
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	3,406	2.0	$26,825	468
Electronics and Appliance Stores	3,065	1.8	$30,441	380
Nonstore Retailers	1,703	1.0	$37,514	263
Totals	*170,290*	*100.0*	*$32,025*	*15,969*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Table D2: Current Manufacturing Industry Structure

Industry	Total	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
Transportation Equipment	25,198	18.0	$59,456	122
Food	22,818	16.3	$28,759	200
Furniture	18,339	13.1	$30,609	234
Machinery	11,899	8.5	$45,926	163
Fabricated Metal Product	9,799	7.0	$44,791	352
Wood Product	9,239	6.6	$39,870	254
Electrical Equipment	6,719	4.8	$47,969	43
Chemical Manufacturing	6,300	4.5	$60,158	138
Plastics and Rubber Products	5,740	4.1	$44,180	107
Paper	3,920	2.8	$63,649	59
Primary Metal	3,360	2.4	$62,028	41
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	3,080	2.2	$41,997	152
Miscellaneous	2,800	2.0	$37,444	166
Petroleum and Coal Products	2,380	1.7	$97,927	40
Computer and Electronic Product	2,380	1.7	$51,223	41
Printing and Related Support Activities	1,540	1.1	$33,374	187
Apparel	1,540	1.1	$29,410	37
Textile Product Mills	1,260	0.9	$25,664	49
Textile Mills	1,120	0.8	$46,674	23
Beverage and Tobacco Product	420	0.3	$38,875	30
Leather and Allied Product	140	0.1	$23,080	4

	139,989	100.0	$45,211	2,442
Totals				

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Table D3: Current Accommodation and Leisure Industry Structure

Industry	Total	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
Food Services and Drinking Places	87,334	67.6	$13,225	4,561
Accommodation	31,265	24.2	$24,765	792
Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	9,560	7.4	$19,228	526
Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries	646	0.5	$24,117	142
Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions	388	0.3	$21,793	33
Total	*129,193*	*100.0*	*$20,626*	*6,054*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Table D4: Current Healthcare and Social Assistance Industry Structure

Industry	Total	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
Ambulatory Health Care Services	63,689	37.5	$54,806	4,775
Hospitals	42,799	25.2	$43,836	110
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	33,118	19.5	$24,785	427
Social Assistance	30,231	17.8	$17,329	1,569
Total	*169,838*	*100.0*	*$35,189*	*6,880*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Table D5: Natural Resources Industry Structure

Industry	Total	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
Support Activities for Mining	4,522	23.3	$72,221	440
Crop Production	4,386	22.6	$24,560	661
Animal Production and Aquaculture	3,260	16.8	$33,729	167
Forestry and Logging	3,047	15.7	$35,147	466
Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry	2,368	12.2	$36,140	400
Oil and Gas Extraction	1,029	5.3	$118,528	83
Mining (except Oil and Gas)	737	3.8	$52,330	60
Fishing, Hunting and Trapping	58	0.3	$24,866	14
Total	*19,407*	*100.0*	*$49,690*	*2,291*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Current Occupations

Table D6: Top 10 Occupations in the Wholesale/Retail Industry

Occupation	Total	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Minimum	Median	Maximum
Retail Salespersons	36,138	21.2	$7.86	$9.56	$17.46
Cashiers	28,341	16.6	$7.71	$8.79	$11.50
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	12,150	7.1	$7.85	$9.68	$16.17
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	11,346	6.7	$9.84	$16.34	$27.54
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	6,215	3.6	$7.95	$10.41	$16.62
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	5,608	3.3	$10.55	$22.46	$44.40
General and Operations Managers	4,041	2.4	$19.23	$36.41	$87.38
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	3,135	1.8	$8.62	$15.11	$28.73
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	2,819	1.7	$8.14	$11.94	$23.17

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,782	1.6	$11.49	$17.67	$28.43
Total	*112,575*	*66.1*	*$9.92*	*$15.84*	*$30.14*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.
*Percent of all Wholesale/Retail jobs.

Table D7: Top 10 Occupations in the Manufacturing Industry

Occupation	Total	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Minimum	Median	Maximum
Team Assemblers	14,421	10.3	$9.16	$14.42	$25.49
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	7,808	5.6	$8.33	$11.23	$14.14
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	5,205	3.7	$13.35	$22.86	$40.12
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	4,583	3.3	$12.84	$19.77	$28.01
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4,336	3.1	$7.95	$10.41	$16.62
Helpers—Production Workers	3,919	2.8	$8.21	$10.99	$17.49
Upholsterers	3,347	2.4	$10.32	$16.43	$22.57
Sewing Machine Operators	3,229	2.3	$8.07	$11.86	$17.40
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	3,139	2.2	$8.73	$13.80	$23.99
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	2,534	1.8	$9.05	$13.76	$22.74
Total	*52,521*	*37.5*	*$9.60*	*$14.55*	*$22.86*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.
*Percent of all Manufacturing jobs.

Table D8: Top 10 Occupations in the Accommodation and Leisure Industry

Occupation	Total	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Minimum	Median	Maximum
Waiters and Waitresses	17,011	13.2	$7.63	$8.63	$11.02
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	12,943	10.0	$7.60	$8.54	$10.07
Cooks, Fast Food	10,396	8.0	$7.59	$8.49	$9.53
Cooks, Restaurant	7,365	5.7	$7.88	$9.91	$13.94
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	7,259	5.6	$8.23	$11.87	$18.87
Food Preparation Workers	6,690	5.2	$7.63	$8.63	$11.17
Cashiers	4,512	3.5	$7.71	$8.79	$11.50
Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	3,990	3.1	$7.63	$8.57	$10.17
Gaming Dealers	3,946	3.1	$7.63	$8.66	$21.25
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	3,883	3.0	$7.61	$8.67	$10.89
Total	*77,995*	*60.4*	*$7.71*	*$9.08*	*$12.84*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.
*Percent of all Accommodation and Leisure jobs.

Table D9: Top 10 Occupations in the Healthcare Industry

Occupation	Total	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Minimum	Median	Maximum
Registered Nurses	19,610	11.5	$19.13	$26.41	$36.89
Nursing Assistants	11,109	6.5	$7.85	$9.79	$13.04
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	7,048	4.1	$13.21	$17.19	$22.59
Home Health Aides	4,740	2.8	$8.28	$10.27	$11.49
Psychiatric Aides	3,469	2.0	$7.70	$8.42	$10.69
Secretaries	2,957	1.7	$8.87	$13.65	$20.53
Receptionists and Information Clerks	2,763	1.6	$8.37	$11.37	$16.74
Personal and Home Care Aides	2,530	1.5	$7.57	$8.46	$9.39
Child Care Workers	2,454	1.4	$7.63	$8.64	$11.04
Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	2,212	1.3	$7.63	$8.73	$11.48

Total	58,892	34.7	$19.13	$26.41	$36.89

Table D10: Top 10 Occupations in the Natural Resources Industry

Occupation	Total	Percent*	Hourly Wage Minimum	Hourly Wage Median	Hourly Wage Maximum
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	4,554	23.5	$7.68	$8.78	$11.55
Logging Equipment Operators	1,560	8.0	$9.81	$15.25	$21.12
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,078	5.6	$11.49	$17.67	$28.43
Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	738	3.8	$12.39	$17.81	$27.40
Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, and Mining	726	3.7	$15.52	$19.94	$26.90
Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural	651	3.4	$7.73	$9.58	$13.74
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	645	3.3	$16.66	$22.01	$36.40
First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	548	2.8	$12.24	$20.38	$35.75
Agricultural Equipment Operators	419	2.2	$9.03	$15.95	$28.39
Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas	342	1.8	$17.68	$38.43	$62.52
Total	11,261	58.0	$12.02	$18.58	$29.22

New and Emerging Sectors

Table D11: Current Advanced Manufacturing Industry Structure

Industry	Total	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
Transportation Equipment	25,198	30.5	$59,456	122
Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	18,339	22.2	$30,609	234
Machinery Manufacturing	11,899	14.4	$45,926	163
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	6,719	8.1	$47,969	43
Chemical Manufacturing	6,696	8.1	$60,158	138
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	5,740	6.9	$44,180	107
Primary Metal Manufacturing	3,360	4.1	$62,028	41
Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	2,380	2.9	$97,927	40
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	2,380	2.9	$51,223	41
Total	82,711	100.0	$55,497	929

Table D12: Current Healthcare Support Industry Structure

Industry	Total	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
General Warehousing and Storage	9,271	72.7	$35,754	173
Medical, Dental, and Hospital Equipment and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	1,049	8.2	$67,822	110
Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing	943	7.4	$54,205	14
Drugs and Druggists Sundries Merchant Wholesalers	742	5.8	$96,876	76
Surgical Appliance and Supplies Manufacturing	301	2.4	$46,624	20
Surgical and Medical Instrument Manufacturing	206	1.6	$36,367	3
Dental Laboratories	188	1.5	$32,605	39
Ophthalmic Goods Manufacturing	54	0.4	$31,146	4

Total	*12,754*	*100.0*	*$42,986*	*437*

Table D13: Current Tourism Industry Structure

Industry	Total	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
Food Services and Drinking Places	86,534	46.2	$13,225	4,491
Administrative and Support Services	57,544	30.7	$25,483	3,562
Accommodation	30,089	16.1	$24,765	792
Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	11,464	6.1	$19,228	526
Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries	860	0.5	$14,892	116
Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries	729	0.4	$24,117	142
Total	*187,220*	*100.0*	*$20,285*	*9,629*

New and Emerging Occupations

Table D14: Top 10 Occupations in the Advanced Manufacturing Industry

Occupation	Total	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Min.	Median	Max.
Team Assemblers	11,638	14.1	$9.16	$14.42	$25.49
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	3,602	4.4	$12.84	$19.77	$28.01
Upholsterers	3,338	4.0	$10.32	$16.43	$22.57
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	3,192	3.9	$13.35	$22.86	$40.12
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,094	2.5	$7.95	$10.41	$16.62
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	1,886	2.3	$8.73	$13.80	$23.99
Sewing Machine Operators	1,737	2.1	$8.07	$11.86	$17.40
Helpers--Production Workers	1,672	2.0	$8.21	$10.99	$17.49
General and Operations Managers	1,471	1.8	$19.23	$36.41	$87.38
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,391	1.7	$9.05	$13.76	$22.74
Total	*32,021*	*38.7*	*$10.69*	*$17.07*	*$30.18*

Table D15: Top 10 Occupations in the Healthcare Support Industry

Occupation	Total	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Min.	Median	Max.
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,622	20.6	$7.95	$10.41	$16.62
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	957	7.5	$9.59	$12.83	$20.11
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	678	5.3	$7.85	$9.68	$16.17
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	619	4.9	$9.10	$13.04	$18.93
Machine Feeders and Offbearers	526	4.1	$8.32	$12.59	$20.61
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	505	4.0	$11.49	$17.67	$28.43
Packers and Packagers, Hand	366	2.9	$7.86	$9.43	$14.53
First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	268	2.1	$12.54	$21.15	$33.94
Team Assemblers	233	1.8	$9.16	$14.42	$25.49
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	230	1.8	$10.55	$22.46	$44.40
Total	*7,004*	*54.9*	*$9.44*	*$14.37*	*$23.92*

Table D16: Top 10 Occupations in the Tourism Industry

Occupation	Total	Percent*	Hourly Wage Min.	Hourly Wage Median	Hourly Wage Max.
Waiters and Waitresses	18,397	9.8	$7.63	$8.63	$11.02
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	9,756	5.2	$7.60	$8.54	$10.07
Food Preparation Workers	9,676	5.2	$7.63	$8.63	$11.17
Cooks, Fast Food	8,634	4.6	$7.59	$8.49	$9.53
Cooks, Restaurant	7,508	4.0	$7.88	$9.91	$13.94
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	7,318	3.9	$8.23	$11.87	$18.87
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	7,107	3.8	$7.70	$9.05	$13.58
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	5,805	3.1	$7.61	$8.67	$10.89
Security Guards	5,734	3.1	$7.82	$9.82	$16.39
Cashiers	4,717	2.5	$7.71	$8.79	$11.50
Total	*84,652*	*45.2*	*$7.74*	*$9.24*	*$12.70*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

*Percent of all Tourism jobs.

APPENDIX E: CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

Table E1: Demographic and Economic Characteristics of People with Disabilities

	Statewide	
	Number	Percent
Total Disabled Population	474,886	-
Total Ages 18-64	266,622	-
RACE (All Ages)		
White	286,611	60.4
Black	173,602	36.6
American Indian	2,646	0.6
GENDER (Ages 18-64)		
Male	131,152	49.2
Female	135,470	50.8
AGE (Ages 18-64)		
18-34	49,684	18.6
35-64	216,938	81.4
EDUCATION (Ages 25+)		
Less than High School Graduate	137,000	32.6
High School Diploma/GED	141,202	33.6
Some College/Associate Degree	100,859	24.0
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS		
Employment Rate		80.1
Median Earnings		$18,579
TYPE OF DISABILITY (Ages 18-64)[1]		
Hearing Difficulty	49,426	18.5
Vision Difficulty	55,498	20.8
Cognitive Difficulty	110,995	41.6
Ambulatory Difficulty	154,414	57.9
Self-Care Difficulty	50,864	19.1
Independent Living Difficulty	95,494	35.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015.
Note: May not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table E2: Characteristics of Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) Program Work-Eligible Recipients

	Statewide	
	Number	Percent
Total TANF Recipients	37,840	-
Total Ages 18-64	7,828	-
RACE (Ages 18-64)		
Black	6,927	88.5
White	810	10.4
American Indian	30	0.4
Other	61	0.8
GENDER (Ages 18-64)		
Female	7,656	97.8
Male	172	2.2
AGE (Ages 18-64)		
18 - 25	4,214	53.8
26 - 35	2,969	37.9
36 - 45	568	7.3
46 - 64	77	1.0
EDUCATION (Ages 18-64)		
Less than High School Graduate	2,345	30.0
High School Diploma/GED	610	7.8
Some College	3,380	43.2
Not Available	1,493	19.1
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (Ages 18-64)		
Employment Rate		64.5
Median Earnings		$9,474

Source: Mississippi Department of Human Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, 2015.
Note: May not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

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[1] Individuals may have more than one type of disability, so these numbers and percentages, when added, may be greater than the total number of individuals and 100 percent, respectively.

Table E3: Characteristics of Work-Eligible Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Recipients

	Statewide	
	Number	Percent
Total SNAP Recipients	847,089	
Total Ages 18-64	349,960	
RACE (Ages 18-64)		
Black	203,655	58.2
White	139,611	39.9
American Indian	1,690	0.5
Other	5,004	1.4
GENDER (Ages 18-64)		
Female	217,678	62.2
Male	132,282	37.8
AGE (Ages 18-64)		
18 - 25	68,456	19.6
26 - 35	90,882	26.0
36 - 45	75,281	21.5
46 - 64	115,341	33.0
EDUCATION (Ages 18-64)		
Less than High School Graduate	44,807	12.8
High School Diploma/GED	14,478	4.1
Some College	78,432	22.4
Not Available	212,243	60.6
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (Ages 18-64)		
Employment Rate		45.7
Median Earnings		$14,214

Source: Mississippi Department of Human Services, 2015.
Note: May not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table E4: Characteristics of Ex-Offenders

	Statewide	
	Number	Percent
Total Ex-Offenders	10,449	
Total Ages 18-64	10,365	
RACE (Ages 18-64)		
Black	6,277	60.6
White	3,976	38.4
American Indian	20	0.2
Other	92	0.9
GENDER (Ages 18-64)		
Female	1,265	12.2
Male	9,100	87.8
AGE (Ages 18-64)		
18 - 25	1,888	18.2
26 - 35	4,205	40.6
36 - 45	2,480	23.9
46 – 64	1,792	17.3
EDUCATION (Ages 18-64)		
Less than High School Graduate	3,367	32.5
High School Diploma/GED	694	6.7
Some College	1,037	10.0
Not Available	5,267	50.8
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (Ages 18-64)		
Employment Rate		40.7
Median Earnings		$15,739

Source: Mississippi Department of Corrections, 2015.
Note: May not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

APPENDIX F: LABOR MARKET TRENDS

Table F1: Top 20 Occupations in Advanced Manufacturing with Highest Job Growth

Occupation	10-Year Projected Growth[1]	Job Openings in 2015[2]
Team Assemblers	1,661	159
Upholsterers	315	435
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	311	477
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	302	133
Machinists	279	115
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	217	61
Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	204	118
Sewing Machine Operators	183	950
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	151	13
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	143	29
Electricians	143	<10
Industrial Engineers	131	<10
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	125	360
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other	118	52
Tool and Die Makers	104	<10
Rolling Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	95	30
Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing	81	27
Layout Workers, Metal and Plastic	80	33
Production Workers, All Other	75	15
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	72	<10
Total	*4,790*	*3,018*

Sources: [1]Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015; [2]Mississippi Works, 2015.

Table F2: Top 20 Occupations in Healthcare Support with Highest Job Growth

Occupation	10-Year Projected Growth[1]	Job Openings in 2015[2]
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	867	309
Machine Feeders and Offbearers	150	<10
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	142	134
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	127	<10
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	119	11
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	115	41
Packers and Packagers, Hand	113	1,255
First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	88	<10
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	56	<10
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	46	<10
Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	41	<10
Customer Service Representatives	40	<10
General and Operations Managers	39	<10
First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators	37	22
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	30	<10
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	26	<10
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	26	<10
Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping	23	<10
Secretaries	22	<10
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	21	<10
Total	*2,128*	*1,808*

Sources: [1]Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015; [2]Mississippi Works, 2015.

Table F3: Top 20 Occupations in Tourism with the Highest Job Growth

Occupation	10-Year Projected Growth[1]	Job Openings in 2015[2]
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	1,483	1,917
Cooks, Restaurant	1,121	527
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,052	125
Waiters and Waitresses	1,021	731
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,021	1,278
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	866	2,509
Security Guards	706	1,422
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	593	1,003
Customer Service Representatives	527	3,770
Team Assemblers	471	694
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	466	844
Secretaries, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	435	326
Food Preparation Workers	423	396
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	328	380
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	315	504
Helpers--Production Workers	284	1,969
General and Operations Managers	274	251
Gaming Dealers	257	28
Bartenders	249	65
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	230	195
Total	*12,122*	*18,934*

Sources: [1]Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015; [2]Mississippi Works, 2015.

Table F4: Job Growth in Well-Established Sectors

Occupation	10-Year Projected Growth
Wholesale/Retail Trade	
Health and Personal Care Stores	1,861
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	1,632
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	1,528
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	1,497
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	1,125
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores	911
Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers	314
Food and Beverage Stores	169
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	6
Finance	
Rental and Leasing Services	725
Real Estate	203
Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Other Financial Investments and Related Activities	196
Funds, Trusts, and Other Financial Vehicles	182
Non-Advanced Manufacturing	
Textile Mills	668
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	636
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	162
Transportation and Warehousing	
Warehousing and Storage	2,541
Truck Transportation	1,583
Couriers and Messengers	1,177
Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	445
Water Transportation	432
Support Activities for Transportation	295
Natural Resources	

Crop Production	291
Mining (except Oil and Gas)	45
Forestry and Logging	6
Healthcare	
Ambulatory Health Care Services	11,519
Social Assistance	6,991
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	4,446
Hospitals	801
Education Services	
Education Services	8,157
Government	
Local	3,481
State	1,742
Federal	864
Total	*56,631*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Table F5: Top 20 Occupations in Established Sectors with Highest Job Growth

Title	10-Year Projected Growth[1]	Job Openings in 2015[2]
Personal Care Aides	3,986	543
Home Health Aides	2,669	530
Retail Salespersons	2,419	1,848
Team Assemblers	1,883	47
Registered Nurses	1,670	1,695
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,525	1,314
Postsecondary Teachers	1,471	<10
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1,385	10
Nursing Assistants	1,360	1,968
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,330	1,216
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,106	613
Receptionists and Information Clerks	745	113
Secretaries	687	227
Medical Assistants	685	543
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	670	369
Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	657	<10
Medical Secretaries	634	89
General and Operations Managers	563	133
Pharmacy Technicians	533	74
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	515	29
Totals	*26,493*	*11,367*

Sources: [1]Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015; [2]Mississippi Works, 2015.

APPENDIX G: PROJECTED BASELINE PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

	Projected Baseline	PY 2016 / FY 2017			PY 2017 / FY 2018		
		Proposed	Negotiated	Proposed Final Change in Performance	Proposed	Negotiated	Proposed Final Change in Performance
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	%						
Adults	63.5	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Dislocated Workers	59.4	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Youth	47.6	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange	60.4	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Adult Education	36.96	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Rehabilitative Services	40.46	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
TANF	16.38	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)							
Adults	63.3	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Dislocated Workers	69.9	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Youth	56.3	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange	60.5	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Adult Education	39.1	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Rehabilitative Services	39.49	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
TANF	16.44	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit	$						
Adults	3,995.00	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Dislocated Workers	4,409.00	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Youth	1,938.00	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange	3,851.00	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Adult Education	2,657.77	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Rehabilitative Services	3,948.50	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
TANF	2,462.51	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	%						
Adults	28.8	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Dislocated Workers	29.3	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Youth	67.7	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange	N/A						
Adult Education	15.5	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Rehabilitative Services	0.73	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
TANF	1.28	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Measureable Skill Gains	%						
Adults	50.00	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Dislocated Workers	51.9	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Youth	68.3	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange	N/A						
Adult Education	11.06	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Rehabilitative Services	1.14	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
TANF	3.21	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Effectiveness in Serving Employers (Retention Rate)	%						
Adults	70.5	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Dislocated Workers	67.9	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Youth	64.1	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange	66.0	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Adult Education	57.9	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Rehabilitative Services	74.3	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
TANF	57.71	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Phil Bryant
Governor

Mark Henry
Executive Director

WIA COMMUNICATION NUMBER: 14-010

DATE: June 4, 2015

SUBJECT: Program Year 2015 WIOA Local Area Allocations

I.   BACKGROUND:

A. State Allocations

The U.S. Department of Labor has published TEGL 29-14 Change 1which announces the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state allocation for Program Year (PY) 2015. States are required to distribute the PY 2015 allotment for WIOA Youth, Adult, and Dislocated to local workforce development areas. The amount available for the Governor's reserve has been appropriated at 10 percent. Local Workforce Development Boards should refer to TEGL 29-14 Change 1 for additional guidance and explanation.

SOURCE	TOTAL STATE	STATE ACTIVITIES	LOCAL ACTIVITIES
Adult	$ 8,730,734	$ 873,073	$ 7,857,661
Youth	$ 9,151,084	$ 915,108	$ 8,235,976
Dislocated Worker	$ 11,047,184	$ 3,866,514	$ 7,180,670
TOTAL	$ 28,929,002	$ 5,654,695	$ 23,274,307

The allocations to the local areas are calculated based on the formulas described below. The allocation worksheets will be provided via e-mail upon request.

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B. Adult

The WIOA allows the following allocation process:

1. Standard Allocation Formula

    a. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in all areas. The term "area of substantial unemployment" means any area that is of sufficient size and scope to sustain a program of workforce investment activities carried out under this subtitle and that has an average rate of unemployment of at least 6.5 percent for the most recent 12 months.

    b. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in all areas. The term "excess number" means, used with respect to the excess number of unemployed individuals within a State, a higher of (1) the number that represents the number of unemployed individuals in excess of 4.5 percent of the civilian labor force; or (2) the number that represents the number of unemployed individuals in excess of 4.5 percent of the civilian labor force in areas of substantial unemployment.

    c. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged adults in each area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in all areas. The term "disadvantaged adult" means an adult who received income, or is a member of a family that received a total family income that, in relation to family size, does not exceed that higher of: (1) the poverty line; or (2) 70 percent of the lower living standard income level.

2. Transfer Authority

    Under WIOA, DOL allows transfer of up to 100% of funds between Dislocated Worker and Adult funding streams. However, until DOL issues further guidance and/or clarification on transfer authority, LWDBs are limited to 50%.

3. Availability

    Approximately 8.4 percent of funds described below will be available for expenditure no earlier than July 1, 2015. The remaining 91.6 percent will be available for expenditure no earlier than October 1, 2015.

4. Allocation

The following allocation was calculated based on the formula described above. The allocation worksheets will be provided via e-mail upon request.

WIOA ADULT			
Local Workforce Development Area	**Local Allocation**	**Available July 1, 2015**	**Available October 1, 2015**
Delta	$ 1,778,384	$ 148,627	$ 1,629,757
MS Partnership	$ 2,094,541	$ 175,050	$ 1,919,491
Southcentral MS	$ 1,738,219	$ 145,270	$ 1,592,948
Twin Districts	$ 2,246,517	$ 187,751	$ 2,058,766
TOTAL	$ 7,857,661	$ 656,698	$ 7,200,962

C. Youth

The WIOA allows for the following allocation process:

1. Standard Allocation Formula

   a. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in all areas;

   b. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in all areas; and

   c. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged youth in each area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth in all areas.

2. Availability

One hundred percent of the funds described below will be available for expenditure no earlier than April 1, 2015.

3. Allocation

The following allocation was calculated based on that formula described above. The allocation worksheets will be provided via e-mail upon request.

WIOA YOUTH		
Local Workforce Development Area	**Local Allocation**	**Available April 1, 2015**
Delta	$ 1,884,372	$ 1,884,372
MS Partnership	$ 2,212,293	$ 2,212,293
Southcentral MS	$ 1,758,384	$ 1,758,384
Twin Districts	$ 2,380,927	$ 2,380,927
TOTAL	$ 8,235,976	$ 8,235,976

D. Dislocated Workers

1. Allocation Formula

The State shall allocate not less than 65 percent based on an allocation formula prescribed by the Governor. The formula shall use the most recent available information and shall include:

a. Insured unemployment data,
b. Unemployment concentrations,
c. Plant closing and mass layoff data,
d. Declining industries,
e. Farmer-rancher economic hardship data,
f. Long term unemployment data.

The formula used by the state is as follows:

ALLOCATION FACTOR	WEIGHT ASSIGNED IN FORMULA
Insured Unemployment Data	10%
Unemployment Concentrations Data	25%
Plant Closing and Mass Layoff Data	10%
Declining Industries Data	20%
Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship Data	5%
Long-Term Unemployment Data	30%

2. Under WIOA, DOL allows transfer of up to 100% of funds between Dislocated Worker and Adult funding streams. However, until DOL issues further guidance and/or clarification on transfer authority, LWDBs are limited to 50%.

3. Availability

Approximately 15.4 percent of the funds described below will be available for expenditure no earlier than July 1, 2015. The remaining 84.6 percent

will be available for expenditure no earlier than October 1, 2015.

4. Rapid Response

The allocation does not include funds set aside for Rapid Response personnel at the local area. Requests for Rapid Response funds should be directed to the Office of Workforce Services.

5. Allocation

WIOA DISLOCATED WORKER			
Local Workforce Investment Area	Local Allocation	Available July 1, 2015	Available October 1, 2015
Delta	$ 1,456,682	$ 223,710	$ 1,232,972
MS Partnership	$ 1,959,873	$ 300,988	$ 1,658,885
Southcentral MS	$ 1,624,671	$ 249,509	$ 1,375,162
Twin Districts	$ 2,139,444	$ 328,566	$ 1,810,878
TOTAL	$ 7,180,670	$ 1,102,774	$ 6,077,897

E. Funds Availability

The funds described above will be available to the Local Workforce Development Board for expenditure upon receipt of a Notice of Funds Availability (NFA) from the Office of Grant Management.

II.   REQUIRED ACTION AND DUE DATE: None

III.   CONTACT: Questions concerning this instruction should be addressed to Yolonda Boone at 601 321-6050 or yboone@mdes.ms.gov or Celeste Brookshire at 601-321-6599 or cbrookshire@mdes.ms.gov.

Yolonda Boone

_____

Yolonda Boone, Director
Office of Grant Management

APPENDIX I: ASSURANCES/COMPLIANCES

Section I1. Common Assurances

I1A. Conflict of Interest Policy, State Policy #5

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT of EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
State Policy Number 5
CONFLICT of INTEREST
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

I. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This policy sets forth the requirements to ensure that individuals or representatives of organizations entrusted with public funds do not personally or professionally benefit from the award or expenditure of such funds. Individuals or representatives of organizations entrusted with public funds, as referenced above, shall hereinafter be understood to include a State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) member, SWDB staff, a Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) member, and local workforce area staff.

The SWDB and each LWDB must develop a conflict of interest policy that incorporates MDES State Policy Number 5 and meets the minimum federal and state requirements described in Section III, herein.

II. LAWS GOVERNING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A. Federal Requirements

The laws governing conflicts of interest under WIOA are found at *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 113 P.L. 128, Section 101(f) and 101(h)*. These sections state as follows:

A member of a State board may not:
(1) vote on a matter under consideration by the State Board (A) regarding the provision of services by such member (or by an entity that such member represents); or (B) that would provide direct financial benefit to such member or the immediate family of such member; or (2) engage in any other activity determined by the Governor to constitute a conflict of interest as specified in the State plan.

A member of a local board may not:
(1) vote on a matter under consideration by the local board (A) regarding the provision of services by such member (or by an entity that such member represents); or (B) that would provide direct financial benefit to such member or the immediate family of such member; or (2) engage in any other activity determined by the Governor to constitute a conflict of interest as specified in the State plan.

B. State Requirements

State law is more proscriptive than federal law; therefore, the policies of the SWDB or individual LWDBs should include additional State requirements, as outlined below. References to the Ethics Commission Opinions are provided for further clarification.

1. **State Law**

    Mississippi Code Annotated §25-4-105(1) (1972), prohibits a public servant from using his position in government to obtain pecuniary benefit for himself, certain relatives or a "business with which he is associated." A public servant may avoid using his position, and therefore avoid a violation of *Section 25-4-105(1),* by recusing himself from the matter giving rise to the conflict of interest. An abstention is considered a vote with the majority and is *not* a recusal.

    Section 109 of the Mississippi Constitution of 1890, and its statutory parallel, *Mississippi Code Annotated §25-4-105(2),* prohibit a member of a public board from having any direct or indirect interest in a contract with the government funded or otherwise authorized by that board during his or her term or for one year thereafter.

    A recusal will *not* prevent or ameliorate a violation of *Section 109* and *Section 25-4-105(2),* as these sections do not require any affirmative act by an individual member to give rise to a conflict, but merely action by the board. Accordingly, recusal by the affected SWDB or LWDB member will not prevent a violation of these sections.

2. **Mississippi Ethics Commission Opinion 13-014-E**

    In Advisory Opinion 13-014-E, the Mississippi Ethics Commission interpreted the application of Section 109 and Section 25-4-105(2) as follows:

    The LWDB is a public board subject to statutory sections. If the LWDB funds a contract in which a member of that board has a prohibited interest, that member will be in violation of these sections. Any contract, which violates either section, is null and void.

    The owner and CEO of a business will have an interest in all contracts entered by the business. Employees of these businesses also presumably have an interest in all contracts entered by their employer. Accordingly, a business whose owner, CEO, or employee

serves on an LWDB is prohibited by **Section 109** and **Section 25-4-105(2)** from receiving any contract that is funded by the LWDB. This prohibition applies to all contracts funded during the LWDB member's term and for one year after the LWDB member's term.

A recusal will not prevent or ameliorate a violation of Section 109 and Section 25-4-105(2), as these sections do not require any affirmative act by an individual member to give rise to a conflict, but merely action by the board. Accordingly, recusal by the affected SWDB or LWDB member will not prevent a violation of these sections. *See also* Ethics Commission Opinion 06-099-E & 04-076-E.

MDES notes that advisory opinions from the Mississippi Ethics Commission, including No. 13-014-E, are merely advisory and they are merely opinions. They do not have the force of law possessed by a statute or a court decision.

3. **Recusal**

A total and complete recusal requires that the public servant not only avoid debating, discussing or taking action on the subject matter during official meetings or deliberations, but also avoid discussing the subject matter with staff or any other person. This includes casual comments, as well as detailed discussions, made in person, by telephone or by any other means.

Furthermore, the minutes or other record of the meeting should state the recusing member left the room before the matter came before the public body and did not return until after the vote.

III. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The SWDB and each LWDB shall have a conflict of interest policy, which at a minimum meets the requirements shown below:

1. A written code of standards or conduct governing the performance of persons engaged in the award and administration of WIOA contracts and subgrants.

2. No individual in a decision-making capacity shall engage in any activity, including participation in the selection, award, or administration of a subgrant or contract supported by WIOA funds, if a conflict of interest (real, implied, or apparent) would be involved.

3. No member of the SWDB or LWDB shall cast a vote, or participate in any decision- making capacity, on the provision of services by such member (or any organization which that member directly represents), or on any matter which would provide any direct financial benefit to the member, the immediate family of such member, or to the member's organization.

A conflict of interest under paragraphs 2 or 3 would arise when one of the following persons or groups has a financial or other interest, either through ownership or employment, and participates in the selection or award of funding for themselves, their family, or that organization or firm.

- An individual; i.e., employee, officer, or agent,
- Any member of the individual's immediate family (parent, spouse, children, or siblings),
- The individual's business partner, or
- An organization which employs, or is about to employ any of the above individuals (individual has received a job offer from the organization),

4. The officers, employees, agents, or members of the SWDB or LWDB making the awards will neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from awardees, potential awardees, or other parties to agreements.

5. Reference the Mississippi Ethics in Government Laws and their applicability to members of the SWDB and LWDB, including a statement that advises members of all relevant opinions from the Mississippi Ethics Commission and the proper procedure for recusal.

6. The code of conduct shall contain penalties, sanctions, or other disciplinary actions in accordance with state and local law for violations of the provisions against conflict of interest.

IV. REQUIRED ACTION

A. In accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter 35-10, issued by the United States Department of Labor, SWDB and LWDB members are encouraged to regularly review and be aware of the relevant Federal, state, and board rules guiding procurement decisions and other board responsibilities.

B. The SWDB and LWDB must develop a conflict of interest policy that incorporates State Policy Number 5. The SWDB or LWDB policy may be more proscriptive, at the discretion of the board. In either case, the policy and the background information should be reviewed regularly with state and local

boards, and all boards should include this guidance in orientations for new board members.

C. The SWDB and LWDB must develop a Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement form that must be signed by each member of the SWDB and LWDB and local workforce area staff stating that they have been made aware of the federal and state conflict of interest requirements, and will abide by those requirements in the service of these boards.

V. **REFERENCES**

29 U.S.C. 2821(f) (1998)
29 U.S.C. 2832 (g) (1998)

U.S. Department of Labor TEGL 35-10

Section 109, Mississippi Constitution of 1890

Section 25-4-103, Mississippi Code of 1972

Mississippi Ethics Commission Opinion 13-014-E

Mississippi Ethics Commission Opinion 06-099-E

Mississippi Ethics Commission Opinion 04-076-E

VI. **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy shall be effective as of July 1, 2015.

Jacqueline A. Turner
Deputy Executive Director, CFO

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT of EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
State Policy Number 4
SUNSHINE PROVISION POLICY
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

I. **SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

This policy sets forth the requirements to conduct business in an open manner as mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Conducting business in an open manner involves making the activities of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) and the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) available to the public (including individuals with disabilities) on a regular basis via electronic means and open meetings.

II. **STATUTES GOVERNING SUNSHINE PROVISIONS AND APPLICABLE ACTS**

A. **Federal Requirements**

The legislation outlining the Sunshine Provision under WIOA, as prescribed for the SWDB, is found in *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 113 P.L. 128, Section 101(g).*

> "Sunshine Provision. – The State board shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the State board, including information regarding the State plan, or a modification to the State plan, prior to submission of the plan or modification of the plan, respectively, information regarding membership, and, on request, minutes of formal meetings of the State board."

The legislation outlining the Sunshine Provision under WIOA, as prescribed for the LWDBs, is found in *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 113 P.L. 128, , Section 107(e).*

> "Sunshine Provision. – The local board shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the local board, including information regarding the local plan prior to submission of the plan, and regarding membership, the designation and certification of one-stop operators, and the award of grants or contracts to eligible providers of

youth workforce investment activities, and on request, minutes of formal meetings of the local board."

The laws governing open meeting accessibility for the disabled are found at *Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 USC § 12181 et seq.* More specifically, the relevant sections, *28 CFR § 36.201(a) (2010), 28 CFR § 36.104 (2010), 28 CFR § 36.303(a) (2010), 28 C.F.R. § 36.104 (2010)[U.S. Department of Justice Regulation to Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 56 Fed. Reg. 35544 (July 26, 1991)]* are as follows:

"No individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any private entity who owns, leases (or leases to), or operates a place of public accommodation." *28 CFR § 36.201(a) (2010)*

"Public accommodation means a private entity that owns, leases [or leases to], or operates a place of public accommodation." *28 CFR § 36.104 (2010)*

"A public accommodation shall take those steps that may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services, unless the public accommodation can demonstrate that taking those steps would fundamentally alter the nature of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations being offered or would result in an undue burden, i.e., significant difficulty or expense." *28 CFR § 36.303(a) (2010)*

"Qualified interpreter means an interpreter who is able to interpret effectively, accurately and impartially both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary." *28 C.F.R. § 36.104 (2010)*

B. State Requirements

The policies of the SWDB and individual LWDBs must also include State requirements as prescribed in Mississippi's Open Meetings Acts, *Title 25, Chapter 41, Mississippi Code of 1972* and in Mississippi's Public Records Act, *Title 25, Chapter 61, Mississippi Code of 1972*. These acts collectively govern public bodies, state and local, that hold meetings on public matters, and ensure the public's right to access public records. The Mississippi Ethics Commission is given authority to hold hearings, take complaints, issue subpoenas, hold hearings and issue orders subsequent to alleged violations of the Open Meetings Act and the Public Records Act.

1. **State Law- The Open Meetings Act**

    Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-3(a), defines a "public body" as any executive or administrative board, commission, authority, council, department, agency, bureau or any other policy making entity, or committee thereof, of the State of Mississippi, or any political subdivision or municipal corporation of the state, whether such entity be created by statute or executive order, which is supported wholly or in part by public funds or expends public funds, and any standing, interim or special committee of the Mississippi Legislature.

    Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-5, outlines official meetings of public bodies specifically as follows:

    "(1) All official meetings of any public body, unless otherwise provided in this chapter or in the Constitutions of the United States of America or the State of Mississippi, are declared to be public meetings and shall be open to the public at all times unless declared an executive session as provided in Section 25-41-7.

    (2) A public body may conduct any meeting through teleconference or video means. A quorum of a public body as prescribed by law may be at different locations for the purpose of conducting a meeting through teleconference or video means provided participation is available to the general public at one or more public locations specified in the public meeting notice.

    (3)(a) Notice of any meetings held pursuant to subsection (2) of this section shall be provided at least five (5) days in advance of the date scheduled for the meeting. The notice shall include the date, time, place and purpose for the meeting and shall identify all locations for the meeting available to the general public. All persons attending the meeting at any of the public meeting locations shall be afforded the same opportunity to address the public body as persons attending the primary or central location. Any interruption in the teleconference or video broadcast of the meeting shall result in the suspension of action at the meeting until repairs are made and public access restored.

    (b) Five-day notice shall not be required for teleconference or video meetings continued to address an emergency as provided in subsection (5) of this section or to conclude the agenda of a teleconference or video meeting of the public body for which the proper notice has been

given, when the date, time, place and purpose of the continued meeting are set during the meeting prior to adjournment.

(4) An agenda and materials that will be distributed to members of the public body and that have been made available to the staff of the public body in sufficient time for duplication and forwarding to all locations where public access will be provided shall be made available to the public at the time of the meeting. Minutes of all meetings held by teleconference or video means shall be recorded as required by Section 25-41-11. Votes taken during any meeting conducted through teleconference or video means shall be recorded by name in roll-call fashion and included in the minutes. In addition, the public body shall make an audio recording of the meeting, if a teleconference medium is used, or an audio/visual recording, if the meeting is held by video means. The recording shall be preserved by the public body for a period of three (3) years following the date of the meeting and shall be available to the public.

(5) A public body may meet by teleconference or video means as often as needed if an emergency exists and the public body is unable to meet in regular session. Public bodies conducting emergency meetings through teleconference or video means shall comply with the provisions of subsection (4) of this section requiring minutes, recordation and preservation of the audio or audio/visual recording of the meeting. The nature of the emergency shall be stated in the minutes."

Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-9, states that the public body convening the meeting may make and enforce rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of attendees.

Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-11, sets parameters defining minutes and their recording as follows:

"(1) Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of a public body, whether in open or executive session, showing the members present and absent; the date, time and place of the meeting; an accurate recording of any final actions taken at such meeting; and a record, by individual member, of any votes taken; and any other information that the public body requests be included or reflected in the minutes. The minutes shall be recorded within a reasonable time not to exceed thirty (30) days after recess or adjournment and shall be open to public inspection during regular business hours.

(2) Minutes of a meeting conducted by teleconference or video means shall comply with the requirements of Section 25-41-5.

(3) Minutes of legislative committee meetings shall consist of a written record of attendance and final actions taken at such meetings."

Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-13, states that notice of public meetings will contain the place, date, hour and subject matter, but if a public body has regularly scheduled meetings at certain times and places mandated by statute, then no additional notice is required unless a meeting is recessed, or adjourned. In the case that there is an interim meeting or special meeting called, notice must be posted, in a publicly accessibly place, preferably in the building in which the meeting will be held, within one (1) hour of the start of the meeting. This notice must be included in the minutes or other records of the public body. This section also prescribes that public bodies without statutory provisions in place detailing times and places of meetings must detail in the minutes the upcoming times, places and procedure by which its meetings will be held.

2. **State Law- The Public Records Act**

Miss. Code Ann. § 25-61-2, defines the public records policy of the State of Mississippi as allowing the public, unless otherwise specified, access to all non-classified public records. The responsibility of providing access to these records is a duty of each public body. No person, due to automation, shall be denied access to public records. With an increase in technological use and advances, public bodies must provide reasonable access to electronically maintained records, subject to retention policies.

III. PROPOSED POLICY REQUIREMENTS

In order to comply with WIOA's transparency mandates to conduct business in an open manner and make activities of the board available to the public and to garner public trust, the SWDB and each LWDB shall have a sunshine provision policy which, at a minimum, meets the requirements shown below:

1. A written code of standards or conduct governing the procedural direction of all meetings held by or relating to SWDB and LWDBs as prescribed by WIOA.

   a. Specifically that these meetings shall be conducted on a regular basis and as open meetings.

b. Direction of meetings will specifically address the activities of the SWDB and LWDBs in relation to State and local plan activities and modifications. These activities must be addressed, in open meetings, prior to the submission of the plan or modification of the plan, respectively.

2. The SWDB and each LWDB shall establish written protocols defining the collection of meeting minutes, whether held in person, via teleconference or video, or any combination of the aforementioned.

   a. Parameters for storage of these minutes, must also be cited, identified and maintained in a publicly accessible place, preferably in an online format.

   b. Notation of and information regarding all members of SWDB and each LWDB must be identified and made available and easily accessed by the public.

   c. Priority must be given to public accessibility.

   d. All information must also be ADA compliant.

3. Each LWDB shall publicly identify the designation and certification of one-stop operators for the public, accessible at all times.

4. Each LWDB shall publicly provide all information regarding the award of grants or contracts to eligible providers of youth workforce investment activities.

5. The SWDB and each LWDB shall have the ability to provide minutes of formal meetings upon request. All requests for information in braille must be made two weeks in advance to meet the production requirements of the information.

6. No meeting shall be held by either the SWDB or any LWDB in a closed capacity, or in any way deny access to the public. This includes making reasonable accommodations for the disabled as outlined in the ADA requirements outlined in this document.

7. The officers, employees, agents, and members of the SWDB and LWDBs will make every effort to comply with the transparency requirements as defined by WIOA with the intent of establishing trust among all individuals, agencies and entities involved in the State of Mississippi's workforce development system.

8. The code of conduct shall contain penalties, sanctions, or other disciplinary actions in accordance with state and local law for violations of the provisions against open meetings and the public information.

IV. REQUIRED ACTION

A. The SWDB or LWDB must develop a sunshine provision policy that incorporates this State Policy Number 4. The SWDB or LWDB policy may be more proscriptive, at the discretion of the board. In either case, the policy and the background information should be reviewed regularly with state and local boards, and all boards should include this guidance in orientations for new board members.

B. The State shall include in its monitoring of local areas a review of local adherence to the requirements described in this guidance.

C. The State shall verify and ensure SWDB adherence to the requirements described in this guidance.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy shall be effective as of July 1, 2015.

Jacqueline A. Turner
Deputy Executive Director, CFO

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
Transitional State Policy Number 8
WIOA PROGRAMMATIC and FISCAL MONITORING
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

I. **SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

This transitional policy sets forth requirements for the monitoring of all entities receiving Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds in accordance with Sections 183(a-c) of the Act and Federal regulations 2 CFR Part 200 Subparts Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) 31.2 of the Final Rule.

Each Local Workforce Development Area and State subgrantee shall develop a policy to govern its monitoring activities. This document provides guidelines for developing the policy and describes the minimum elements to be included in the policy.

II. **STATE REQUIREMENTS**

A. **State Monitoring Policy**

The Office of Grant Management (OGM) is responsible for monitoring all Local Workforce Development Areas and State subgrantees. On-site reviews will be conducted pursuant to established standard operating procedures to ensure compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Federal regulations, State laws, contractual agreements, State policies, OMB circulars, cost principles, and, when applicable, Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR). Refer to the table below to determine applicability of OMB circulars, cost principles, and audit requirements.

1. **On-site Review Process**

An on-site review is conducted consisting of:

- An entry conference to brief agency officials on the scope of the review and to make appropriate arrangements;

- A review of administrative, fiscal, and programmatic systems and transactions;

- Performance of testwork, based on a review and examination of WIOA records and interviews; and

- An exit conference to inform agency officials of monitoring results.

2. **Monitoring Report**

After each review, a monitoring report will be prepared detailing the

results of the monitoring visit. The report will be completed within three weeks of completion of the review. Indexed working papers will also be prepared to provide supporting documentation for testwork performed and for any findings. The monitoring report will be transmitted to the entity for review, and appropriate corrective action will be requested, if necessary.

3. **Corrective Action Response**

    If any findings were noted during the on-site review, a corrective action response will be required within 45 days from date of the monitoring report. Upon receipt of the entity's corrective action plan, the monitors will review the response and comment on the acceptability of the proposed corrective action. If the corrective action plan is deemed acceptable, the file will be closed. If the corrective action plan or any part thereof is unacceptable, additional corrective action shall be requested. The file will remain open until all corrective action has been accepted.

4. **Acceptance/Non-acceptance of Corrective Action**

    Notice of acceptance or non-acceptance of the proposed corrective action plan will be forwarded within 30 working days of receipt of the plan. If the proposed plan is not accepted, the State may require submission of a subsequent plan to be received within 30 days from the date of the notice.

    If the subsequent plan is deemed unacceptable, the State may again request submission of a new plan within a specified timeframe or take other action as deemed appropriate relevant to the circumstances.

5. **Monitoring Files**

    A monitoring file will be maintained for each monitoring visit.

6. **Follow-up Visits and Verification of Corrective Action**

    Follow-up visits will be conducted, if deemed necessary.

7. **Unannounced Visits**

    Unannounced visits may be conducted, if deemed necessary.

III. **LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA / STATE SUBGRANTEE REQUIREMENTS**

A. **Local Workforce Development Area/State Subgrantee Monitoring Policy**

    WIOA Section 116(d)(4) requires the local board, in partnership with the chief elected official, to conduct monitoring with respect to local programs of youth activities authorized under section 129, local employment and training activities

authorized under section 134, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area.

WIOA Section 184(b) (3&4) and 2 CFR 200 parts 3330-332 of the Federal regulations require each recipient and subrecipient of WIOA Title I funds to conduct monitoring of the WIOA activities of its subrecipients and contractors in order to:

- Determine whether expenditures have been made against the cost categories and within the cost limitations specified in WIOA and Federal regulations;
- Determine whether there is compliance with all applicable requirements; and
- Provide technical assistance as necessary and appropriate.

1. **Scope**

   The Local Workforce Development Area or State sub-grantee shall develop a monitoring policy describing the procedures that will be implemented to ensure compliance with WIOA, Federal regulations, State laws, contractual agreements, State policies, OMB circulars, cost principles, and Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR).

   Procedures for monitoring the following shall be addressed, as applicable:

   - program goals and objectives
   - program quality
   - procurement
   - fiscal accountability
   - labor standards
   - audit/audit resolution
   - actual expenditures against cost categories and limitations
   - grievance procedures
   - equal opportunity
   - provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act
   - eligibility verification as applicable
   - property management
   - internal monitoring
   - administrative procedures
   - program performance
   - other programmatic areas
   - programmatic accountability

2. **Frequency**

The policy shall include procedures to ensure monitoring is completed in a timely manner. Each subgrantee shall be monitored during the program year or during the subgrant period.

B. Local Workforce Development Area/State Subgrantee Monitoring Procedures

1. Monitoring Schedule

The policy shall include procedures to ensure a monitoring schedule is prepared. The schedule should include subcontractors' names and addresses, contract numbers, planned dates of reviews, and names of individuals to perform the reviews. Monitoring schedules shall be submitted to OGM.

2. Review Notification

The policy shall include procedures to ensure written notification of the scheduled on-site review is provided to the entity in advance of the actual review, except when unannounced monitoring visits are deemed necessary.

3. Desk Review Instrument

A written desk review monitoring instrument must be prepared and should precede the on-site monitoring visit. This process will ensure that all pertinent records are reviewed prior to each visit. The policy shall describe the procedures for completing a desk review instrument before the on-site visit.

4. Monitoring Instrument

The policy shall include procedures for the development of an objective monitoring instrument for use in on-site reviews to ensure that pertinent data can be collected and analyzed for all program activities.

5. Documentation of Findings

The policy shall include procedures to ensure findings are adequately documented and include a written description of the deficiency or violation.

6. Monitoring Report

The policy shall include procedures to ensure a monitoring report is prepared following each on-site review. The report should be completed within three weeks of the review and should include the following

elements:

- A face page signed by the monitor(s) and the signature of supervisory level staff or the executive director;
- The dates of the review and areas covered during the review.
- A listing of findings, if applicable. Each finding shall consist of a narrative description of the deficiency or violation noted.
- For each finding, a recommendation which sets forth the most appropriate action to correct the deficiency or violation noted.

7. **Corrective Action**

The policy shall include procedures to ensure monitoring reports are forwarded to the subgrantee with a transmittal letter. If findings were noted in the report, the transmittal letter shall require a written corrective action plan from the subgrantee within 45 days from the date of the report.

8. **Acceptance/Non-acceptance of Corrective Action**

The policy shall describe the procedures that will be used to determine the acceptance or non-acceptance of the subgrantee's corrective action plan. Notification of the determination shall be provided to the subrecipient within 30 working days of receipt of the proposed corrective action plan.

9. **Follow-up Monitoring and Verification of Corrective Action**

The policy shall include procedures to ensure the need for a follow-up monitoring visit will be determined by the nature of the finding and the subgrantee's response to the finding. A follow-up monitoring review shall be designed to determine if the corrective action measures taken were adequate to resolve the noted deficiencies.

10. **Unannounced Visits**

The policy shall describe the procedures for conducting unannounced visits of subgrantees when such visits are deemed necessary.

11. **Monitoring Files**

The policy shall include procedures establishing and maintaining the monitoring files. A separate file shall be maintained for each on-site visit. At a minimum, the files shall contain the following records:

- notification of monitoring visit dates;
- completed desk review instrument;
- signed monitoring report;
- completed monitoring instrument;

- transmittal letter, and if applicable, request for a corrective action plan;
- response from subgrantee, when appropriate;
- letter to subgrantee accepting/rejecting corrective action; and
- working paper file to include supporting documentation.

IV. DESK MONITORING

There may be times when it may not be practical or cost effective to conduct an on-site monitoring visit of a subgrantee. OGM will allow for the limited use of desk monitoring of some subgrantees if all of the following criteria are met:

A. The training program has five or fewer participants;

B. The total cost for the contract or total cost of training is $25,000 or less; and

C. Adequate documentation is obtained and maintained in monitoring files to document:

- eligibility;
- time and attendance;
- trainee progress reports;
- documentation of completion of training program;
- license or certificate earned;
- participant medical and accident insurance;
- placement and wage information; and
- financial records

D. There are no known problems or issues that would warrant an on-site visit; and

E. It has been determined and documented that desk monitoring is the most practical means of monitoring the subgrantee.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy shall be effective as of July 1, 2015. This policy will be revised and reissued after the WIOA final rules are issued and as further DOL/ETA guidance is received.

Jacqueline A. Turner
Jacqueline A. Turner
Deputy Executive Director, CFO

I1D. One-Stop Certification Checklist.

FACILITIES CHECKLIST

FACILITY STANDARDS FOR COMPREHENSIVE SITES,

AFFILIATE SITES, AND ACCESS POINTS

DATE:	
FACILITY NAME:	
ADDRESS:	
SITE CLASSIFICATION:	
MONITOR(S):	
ATTENDING PERSONNEL:	
NOTES:	

FACILITIES CHECKLIST	Yes	No	Comments
I. ADA Compliance (2 pts. Ea)			Comp., FT, PT, Acc.
1. Ramp meets minimum requirements			
2. Restrooms are handicapped accessible			
3. Doorways and hallways meet ADA requirements for accessibility			
4. Room to accommodate participants with special needs			
5. Parking spaces are designated for handicapped individuals			
II. Signage (2 pts. Ea)			Comp., FT, PT, Acc.
1. Facility signage displays name (WIN Job Center) and assures customer recognition of the location			
2. Board-approved common name and logo is included on all forms, communications, and publicity media that is released to the general public to ensure consistent identification			
III. Customer Flow (2 pts. Ea)			
A. Job Seeker Process			Comp., FT, PT
1. Procedures have been developed to ensure timely service for all customers			
2. Provides a menu of services for the customers' information and inspection			
3. Provides procedures for customer registration			
4. Provides procedures for providing core services			
5. Offers a flowchart showing the steps the customer follow from entry through core, intensive and training services			
6. Provides a description of the referral process			

FACILITIES CHECKLIST	Yes	No	Comments
7. Provides confidentiality policy for customer information			
8. Provides a description of the grievance procedures			
9. Provides reasonable accommodations to meet the special needs of customers			
B. Employer Processes			Comp., FT, PT
1. Offers employer services menu			
2. Employer contacts are coordinated and non-duplicative, ensuring employer information is shared among partners			
3. A single point of contact has been established for each employer			
4. A format has been established for recording employer contacts			
5. Marketing efforts for the comprehensive and affiliate sites are joint efforts of the participating local programs and agencies to employers.			
IV. Services			
A. Services Required for Comprehensive and Full-Time Affiliates			(1 pt. Ea)
1. Site staff assists customers with the application process and ensure that the customer follows through with the process and enters the appropriate services			
2. WIOA adult and dislocated funds are not used to duplicate services traditionally provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act			
3. Determination of whether individuals are eligible to receive assistance under this subtitle (core)			
4. Outreach, intake, and orientation to WIOA information (core)			

FACILITIES CHECKLIST	Yes	No	Comments
5. Offers assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs			
6. Offers job search and placement assistance and appropriate career counseling (core)			
7. Offers labor market information including job vacancy lists, job skills necessary to obtain jobs, and relating to local occupations in demand (core) [website]			
8. Provides performance information and performance cost information on eligible providers			
9. Provides information regarding how the local area is performing on the local performance measures and any additional performance information with respect to the one-stop delivery system			
10. Provides information on the availability of supportive services			
11. Provides information about unemployment insurance and claims (core)			
12. Offers assistance in establishing eligibility for non WIOA funded training and education (core)			
13. Offers minimum of 12 months follow-up services for individuals who are placed in unsubsidized employment (core)			
14. Offers access to Wagner-Peyser Services			
15. Provides access to intensive services			
16. Provides access to training services			

FACILITIES CHECKLIST	Yes	No	Comments
B. Services Required For Part-Time Affiliate Sites (2 pts. Ea)			
1. Site staff assists customers with the application process and ensures that the customer follows through with the process and enters the appropriate services			
2. Offers access to Core Services			
3. Offers access to Wagner-Peyser Services			
4. Provides information about unemployment insurance and claims			
5. Provides referrals to full-time sites for WIOA services not available at part-time sites			
6. Site shall be linked with the full-service site electronically or technologically, and services of the affiliated site should be integrated with a full-service site			
C. Requirements for Access Points (2 pts. Ea)			
1. Shall provide information on the availability of core services, including handing out brochures, providing displays, etc.			
2. Is linked electronically or technologically with a comprehensive or affiliate site; (internet)			
3. Will be located in a publicly accessible site, such as a public library, courthouse, etc.			
V. Equipment (4 pts.)		Comp., FT, PT, Access	
1. Facility has adequate equipment and furnishings on site			

FACILITIES CHECKLIST	Yes	No	Comments
VI. Layout			
A. Requirements for Comprehensive, Full-Time, and Part-Time Sites (3 pts. Ea)			
1. Site had adequate area to serve individual customers			
2. Site has common reception area			
B. Requirements for Comprehensive and Full-Time Sites (1 pts. Ea)			
1. Site has a greeter/receptionist			
2. Site provides self-serve resource area or room			
3. Available private meeting space for employer interviews			
4. Common Space for all partners			
5. Space for Itinerant Staff			
C. Requirement for Comprehensive Sites (2 pts. Ea)			
1. Site has area to serve groups of customers			
VII. Resource Area			
A. Requirements for All Sites (2 pts. Ea)			
1. Telephone(s)			
2. Bulletin Board with job listings			
3. Internet linked computer(s)			
B. Requirements for Comprehensive Sites & Full-Time Affiliate Sites (comp 1;ft 2 pts)			
1. Access to Fax Machine			
2. Access to Photocopier			
3. TV/VCR			
4. Appropriate software for career search, aptitude tests, employability skills			
5. Access to Printer			
6. Tables and/or desks for customers			

FACILITIES CHECKLIST	Yes	No	Comments
7. Reference materials on jobs, training, resume examples, and related information			
8. Local Media (i.e. newspapers) with local job offerings			
C. Requirements for Comprehensive Sites (2 pts. Ea)			
1. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)			
2. Foreign Language Interpreter (available)			
3. Sign Language Interpreter (available)			
VIII. Parking (1 pt.) Comp., FT, PT, Acc.			
1. Site had adequate and convenient parking space to facilitate access by the job seeker and employer			
IX. Hours of Operation (2 pts. Ea) Comp., FT, PT, Acc			
1. Do the hours of operation facilitate access by the job seeker and employer			
2. Is site closed on any days other than state approved holidays?			

Section I2. General Requirements

I2A. Local Workforce Development Area Designation Policy, Policy #1

MISSISSIPPI

Policy Number 1

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA DESIGNATION POLICY

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Office of Grant Management

II.   SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Section 106 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the Governor to designate Local Workforce Development Areas within the state through consultation with the State Workforce Development Board and after consultation with the chief elected officials and comments from the general public as described in Section 102(b)(2)(E)(ii)(II). For the purposes of this policy, the term "Governor" shall mean the Governor or his designee. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance regarding the initial and subsequent designation of Local Workforce Development Areas in Mississippi.

II. REQUIREMENTS

WIOA provides for three types of local workforce development area designation: Initial Designation, Subsequent Designation, and Designation on Recommendation of the State

Board. The Governor *shall* approve requests for initial and subsequent designation submitted by chief elected officials, provided the area under consideration meets the applicable eligibility criteria. Under the third designation type, the Governor *may* approve such requests from any unit of general local government on recommendation from the State Workforce Development Board.

A. Initial Designation [Section 106(b)(2)]:

During the first two (2) full program years following the date of enactment of the Act, July 22, 2014, the Governor *shall* approve a request for initial designation as a local area from any area that **(a)** was designated as a local area for purposes of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for the two-year period preceding the date of enactment of this Act, **(b)** has performed successfully, and **(c)** sustained fiscal integrity.

2. "The term ''performed successfully,'' used with respect to a local area, means the local area met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) (or, if applicable, core indicators of performance described in section 136(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as in effect the day before the date of enactment of this Act) for each of the last 2 consecutive years for which data are available preceding the determination of performance under this paragraph." *(The local area has achieved at least 80 percent of their local performance goal on each performance measure for Program Year 2012 and Program Year 2013 as stated in Section 106(e)(1) of the WIOA.)*

2. "The term "sustained fiscal integrity," per Section 106(e)(2) is used with respect to a local area, means that the Secretary has not made a formal determination, during either of the last two (2) consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misexpended funds provided under subtitle B (or, if applicable, Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 as in effect prior to the effective date of such subtitle B) due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration."

B. **Subsequent Designation [Section 106(b)(3)]:**

After the two full program years initial designation period, the Governor *shall* approve a request for subsequent designation from such local area, if such area –

1. performed successfully;

2. sustained fiscal integrity;

3. and in the case of a local area in a planning region, met the requirements described at Section 106(c)(1).

C. **Governor Not Prohibited:**

If justification exists to explain why a local area(s) did not meet or exceed the adjusted levels of performance under the Initial or Subsequent Designation clauses, the Governor *may* approve such local area designation. Nothing in the requirements to approve certain initial or subsequent designations of local areas shall be construed as prohibiting the Governor from approving such areas as may be recommended by the State board or the chief elected officials and which conform to the majority but not all of the requirements.

D. **Designation on Recommendation of State Board and Approval of Governor**

[Section 106(b)(1)]:

The Governor *may* approve a request for a local area designation from any unit of general local government or combination of such units if the State Board determines that such area should be so designated. In making the designation of local areas, the Governor must give considerations consisting of the extent to which the areas:

1. are consistent with labor market areas in the State;

2. are consistent with regional economic development areas in the State; and

3. have available the Federal and non-Federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under subtitle B and other applicable provisions of WIOA, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools.

E. **Regions [Section 106(a)]:**

Before the second full program year after the date of enactment of the Act, in order for a State to receive an allotment under Section 127(b) or 132(b) and as part of the process for developing the State Plan, a State *shall* identify regions in the State after consultation with the local boards and chief elected officials in the local areas and consistent with the considerations described in Section 106(b)(1)(B). The State *shall* also identify regions consistent with the requirements of Section 106 (a)(2).

F. **State Appeals Process [Section 106(b)(5)]:**

If an existing local workforce area under the WIA requests but is not granted designation as a local workforce development area under WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or Section 106(b)(3), the unit (or combination of units) of general local government or grant recipient may submit an appeal to the State Board under an appeal process established in the State Plan.

The written appeal must explain the appellant's opinion that the denial is contrary to the designation provisions of WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or 106(b)(3). Entities may not appeal a denial if their designation request does not meet the requirements of Section 106(b)(2) or 106(b)(3). The State Workforce Board will issue a determination within thirty (30) days of receipt of an appeal.

If the appeal to the State Board does not result in designation, the appellant, if appealing an initial designation under WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or subsequent designation under Section 106(b)(3), may request review by the Secretary of Labor. An appeal to the Secretary must be submitted by the appellant or grant recipient no later than 30 days after receipt of written

notification from the State Board that the appeal has been denied. Appeals must be submitted by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC 20210, Attention: Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the State Board.

If the Secretary determines that the appellant was not accorded procedural rights under the appeal process established under the above section, or that the area meets the requirements for initial or subsequent designation in WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or 106(b)(3), the Secretary may require that the area be designated as a workforce development area. The Secretary must issue a written decision to the Governor.

III.   EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy shall be effective immediately upon signature.

Yolonda Boone   3/2/2015
Director   Date
Office of Grant Management

Attachment: Request for Designation as a Workforce Development Area Checklist

I3A. WIOA Communication 15-009 – Transitioning WIA ETPs to WIOA ETPs.

Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Phil Bryant
Governor

Mark Henry
Executive Director

WIOA COMMUNICATION NUMBER: 15-009

I. **DATE:** August 20, 2015

II. **SUBJECT:** In order to promote continuity of training services, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 41-14 on June 26, 2015 regarding the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements for Training Provider Eligibility. This TEGL requires that the State establish procedures for training provider initial and continued eligibility. The State is required to provide transition opportunities for current eligible training providers and to integrate Registered Apprenticeship programs onto the list of eligible training providers.

III. **BACKGROUND:** The State and the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) use the online Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) system to process the registration of training providers, the application of the training providers' programs of study, and the continued eligibility of training providers' programs of study. The State will continue to use these established online processes for current and future eligible training providers and their programs of study. In order to expand the training opportunities, DOL encourages the State and LWDAs to include Registered Apprenticeship training programs on the ETPL. Registered Apprenticeship programs do not have to meet the State's established performance minimums in State Policy 5 Attachment A. Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors must indicate their interest in being an eligible training provider.

IV. **REQUIRED ACTION AND DUE DATE:** The State is requiring all eligible training providers previously eligible under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to sign a new Certificate of Assurances. This document has been modified to include the WIOA's additional performance indicators. WIA eligible training providers that wish to be transitioned to WIOA and eligible to receive Title I training funds must sign the new Certificate of Assurances and return it to the State office no later than the close of the Open Enrollment and Application period ending September 15, 2015. Training providers of apprenticeship programs will follow the same registration process and initial application process as other eligible training providers in order for their information to be included in the

Helping Mississippians Get Jobs

State's ETPL system, available to the public, and to be authorized to receive Title I training funds. LWDAs are to identify and reach out to the Registered Apprenticeship training program sponsors within their local areas. The State will verify with the Office of Apprenticeship the status of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. A revised State Policy Number 5 will follow this communication to include the required actions, additional performance indicators for the State's eligible training providers, and inclusion of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors and programs. Please share this communication with the appropriate staff.

V. **CONTACT:** Questions concerning this instruction should be directed to Michael Herndon at (601) 321-6478 or mherndon@mdes.ms.gov.

VI. **ATTACHMENTS:** None.

Jacqueline A. Turner
Deputy Executive Director, CFO
Mississippi Department of Employment Security

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT of EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
State Policy Number 7
PRIORITY of SERVICE for
WIOA ADULT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

I.   SCOPE AND PURPOSE

To establish a policy for determining priority of services for adults receiving direct, monetary services such as support services or training under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

II.   REQUIREMENTS

WIOA section 134(c)(3)(E) establishes the need for the local Workforce Investment Area to have a system of priority for services to adults:

> "With respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities ... priority shall be given to recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient for receipt of career services ... and training services. The appropriate local board and the Governor shall direct the one-stop operators in the local area with regard to making determinations related to such priority."

Proposed § 680.600(b) requires States and local areas to establish criteria for providing priority to individualized career services and training services with WIOA adult funds under title I. The criteria may include other resources and funds for providing career and training-related services in the local area, as well as the needs of specific groups in the local area, as well as other factors the local areas determines appropriate.

Proposed § 680.600(c) clarifies that while priority must be given under WIOA adult funds to low-income individuals, public assistance recipients, or individuals who are basic skills deficient for individualized career services and training services, the Local Board and Governor may establish a process that also gives priority to other individuals.

A.   Background

The Adult Program under Title I of WIOA provides workforce development services to adults to increase their employment, retention in employment, and earnings and also support their occupational skill attainment and career advancement. Local workforce development boards are charged with strategic

planning and oversight activities in support of workforce and economic development.

WIOA specifies that services for adults will be provided through One-Stop Career Centers. Services such as career guidance and workforce information may also be provided virtually. WIOA authorizes two types of service that are potentially available to job seekers:

1. Career Services - includes outreach, job search and placement assistance, provision of labor market information, comprehensive assessments, development of individual employment plans, counseling and career planning, and other services specified in §134(c)(2).

2. Training Services - includes Occupational Skills Training, On-the-Job Training activities, Customized Training, Individual Training Accounts, and other training services specified in §134(c)(3)(D).

Priority for both career and training services must be given recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the federal requirements specified in Section II, above.

Funds allocated for WIA Dislocated Workers or TAA eligible individuals are not subject to this Policy.

B. Compliance with the Jobs for Veterans Act

Mississippi's workforce system will provide priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses, as specified in the Jobs for Veterans Act and its implementing regulations at 20 CFR part 1010, and articulated in State Policy Number 6 - Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses.

When Veterans Priority is applied in conjunction with Priority of Service for WIOA Adult Program Participants, veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient will receive first priority. The second priority would be recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient who are not veterans or eligible spouses.

C. Local Board Requirements

Local Workforce Development Boards are required to develop and include in their local plan, policies that implement Priority of Service for WIOA Adult Program Participants for the one Stop Centers and a service delivery plan for the local training providers.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy shall be effective as of July 1, 2015.

IV. APPROVAL

Jacqueline A. Turner
Deputy Executive Director, CFO

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
State Policy Number 11
WIOA ALLOCATION POLICY
Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

I. **SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and information to Local Workforce Development Areas regarding the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title 1 allotments for operating Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and Rapid Response activities. The funds allocated to the local areas for youth, adult, and dislocated worker activities will be allocated based on the formulas specified in WIOA Section 128(b)(2)(A)(I) and 132(b)(2)(A)(I), respectively. The State will consult with the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) on the development of allocation formulas for the distribution and operation of approved WIOA activities.

II. **REQUIREMENTS FOR WIOA ALLOCATION AND DISTRIBUTION**

A. **Adult**

The WIOA allows the following allocation process:

1. Standard Allocation Formula

   a. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in all areas. The term "area of substantial unemployment" means any area that is of sufficient size and scope to sustain a program of workforce investment activities carried out under this subtitle and that has an average rate of unemployment of at least 6.5 percent for the most recent 12 months.

   b. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in all areas. The term "excess number" means, used with respect to the excess number of unemployed individuals within a State, a higher of: (1) the number that represents the number of unemployed individuals in excess of 4.5 percent of the civilian labor force; or (2) the number that represents the number of unemployed individuals in excess of 4.5 percent of the civilian labor force in areas of substantial unemployment.

   c. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged adults in each area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in all areas. The term "disadvantaged adult" means

an adult who received income, or is a member of a family that received a total family income that, in relation to family size, does not exceed the higher of: (1) the poverty line; or (2) 70 percent of the lower living standard income level.

B. Youth

The WIOA allows for the following allocation process:

1. Standard Allocation Formula

   a. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in all areas;

   b. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in all areas; and

   c. 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged youth in each area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth in all areas.

C. Dislocated Worker

1. Allocation Formula

   The State shall allocate not less than 60 percent based on an allocation formula prescribed by the Governor. The formula shall use the most recent available information and shall include:

   a. Insured unemployment,
   b. Unemployment concentrations,
   c. Plant closing and mass layoff,
   d. Declining industries,
   e. Farmer-rancher economic hardship,
   f. Long term unemployment.

ALLOCATION FACTOR	WEIGHT ASSIGNED IN FORMULA
Insured Unemployment Data	10%
Unemployment Concentrations Data	25%
Plant Closing and Mass Layoff Data	10%
Declining Industries Data	20%
Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship Data	5%
Long-Term Unemployment Data	30%

2.   Transfer Authority
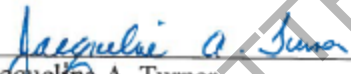
DOL allows transfer of up to 100% of funds between Dislocated Worker and Adult funding streams.

D.   Distribution of Rapid Response Funds

As described in WIOA Part 682, the State will reserve up to 25% of dislocated worker funds for rapid response activities. Once the State has reserved adequate funds for rapid response activities, the remainder of the funds may be used by the state to provide funds to local areas that experience increased numbers of unemployed individuals due to natural disasters, plant closings, mass layoffs or other events for provision of direct services to participants.

III.   EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective July 1, 2015.

Jacqueline A. Turner
Deputy Executive Director, CFO

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT of EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
State Policy Number 6
PRIORITY OF SERVICE
For VETERANS and ELIGIBLE SPOUSES
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

I.   SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the procedures for providing priority of service to veterans and the eligible spouses of veterans with respect to qualified job training programs.

II.   REQUIREMENTS

The requirement to provide priority of service applies to all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Wagner-Peyser funded activities, including technology-assisted activities; the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP); Indian and Native American Programs (INAP); National Farmworker Jobs Training Programs (NFJP); Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs (TAA); job training programs funded through the Women's Bureau, and any other current or future qualified job training program.

Additionally, all program operators are required to ensure that priority of service is applied by all sub-recipients of DOL funds. All program activities issued or executed by program operators, regardless of how they are procured, must be administered in compliance with priority of service requirements.

A.   Background

The Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA), Public Law (P.L.) 107-288 was signed into law in November 2002, establishing a priority of service requirement for covered persons, as defined by this statute, in qualified job training programs.

The Department of Labor, in December 2008, published 20 CFR Part 1010 to reflect the statutory requirement of section 605 of the Veteran's Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006, (P.L. 109-461), implementing priority of service via regulation.

The Final Rule took effect in January 2009, stating that recipients of funds subject to these regulations should review and, if necessary, enhance their current policies to ensure adequate protocols are in place.

B.   **Definitions**

1. Priority of Service

    With respect to any qualified job training program, a covered person
    shall be given priority over a non-covered person for the receipt of
    employment training and placement services provided under that
    program.

2. Covered Person

    As defined in Federal Rule (20 CFR Part 1010), a covered person means
    a veteran or eligible spouse of a veteran.

3. Veteran

    A veteran is defined as a person who served in the active military, naval,
    or air service, who was discharged or released under conditions other
    than dishonorable.

4. Eligible Spouse

    a. The spouse of any persons who died of a service-connected
        disability

    b. The spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on
        active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is
        listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so
        listed for a total of more than 90 days:

        *   missing in action

        *   captured in the line of duty by hostile force; or

        *   forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign
            government or power

    c. The spouse of any persons who have a total disability permanent
        in nature resulting from a service-connected disability; or

    d. The spouse of a veteran who died while a disability so evaluated
        was in existence.

    The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) has indicated for
    clarification concerning (a) and (d) above that the re-marriage of the
    spouse would not terminate their eligibility. However, if a spouse

becomes divorced from a veteran under (b) and (c) above, eligibility for priority of service is terminated.

It is further understood that this policy does not exclude from eligibility spouses who were not citizens at the time that the veteran was discharged or retired, nor does it stipulate that a spouse had to be married to a veteran at the time of his or her discharge or retirement.

5.   Qualified Job Training Program

Any program or service for workforce preparation, development or delivery that is directly funded, in whole or in part, by the USDOL.

C.   Implementing Priority of Service

The regulations provide that priority of service means the right of eligible covered persons to take precedence over eligible non-covered persons in obtaining services. They further specify that taking precedence may mean:

- The covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person; or

- If the service or resource is limited, the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person.

The regulations specify how priority of service is to be applied across three different types of qualified job training programs:

- Universal access programs that do not target specific groups;

- Discretionary targeting programs that focus on certain groups but are not mandated to serve target group members before other eligible individuals; and,

- Statutory targeting programs that are mandated by federal law to provide priority or preference to certain groups.

D.   Identifying and Informing Covered Persons

All recipients of funds for qualified job training programs are required to identify covered persons at the point of entry to programs to enable them to take full advantage of priority of service. The USDOL will not prescribe how this is to be done. Program operators are reminded, however, that self-registration systems are not, at this stage, to require documents to be produced that verify status, unless the point of entry is also the point at which program eligibility determination and registration or enrollment takes place. Even then, the

applicant should be permitted to enroll and follow-up subsequently with the verification of his or her status. Point of entry will include physical locations as well as websites and other virtual service delivery resources.

Protocol should require that the receptionist or office manager ask each applicant if he or she is a veteran or eligible spouse. Staff should also explain to each applicant that veterans and eligible spouses get priority of service, and describe any eligibility requirements for those services or programs.

E. **Local Board Requirements**

Local Workforce Development Boards are required to develop and include in their local plan, policies which implement priority of service for the one Stop Centers and a service delivery plan for the local training providers.

III. **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy shall be effective as of July 1, 2015.

IV. **APPROVAL**

Jacqueline A. Turner
Deputy Executive Director, CFO

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
Transitional State Policy Number 8
WIOA PROGRAMMATIC and FISCAL MONITORING
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

I. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This transitional policy sets forth requirements for the monitoring of all entities receiving Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds in accordance with Sections 183(a-c) of the Act and Federal regulations 2 CFR Part 200 Subparts Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) 31.2 of the Final Rule.

Each Local Workforce Development Area and State subgrantee shall develop a policy to govern its monitoring activities. This document provides guidelines for developing the policy and describes the minimum elements to be included in the policy.

II. STATE REQUIREMENTS

A. State Monitoring Policy

The Office of Grant Management (OGM) is responsible for monitoring all Local Workforce Development Areas and State subgrantees. On-site reviews will be conducted pursuant to established standard operating procedures to ensure compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Federal regulations, State laws, contractual agreements, State policies, OMB circulars, cost principles, and, when applicable, Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR). Refer to the table below to determine applicability of OMB circulars, cost principles, and audit requirements.

1. On-site Review Process

An on-site review is conducted consisting of:

- An entry conference to brief agency officials on the scope of the review and to make appropriate arrangements;

- A review of administrative, fiscal, and programmatic systems and transactions;

- Performance of testwork, based on a review and examination of WIOA records and interviews; and

- An exit conference to inform agency officials of monitoring results.

2. Monitoring Report

After each review, a monitoring report will be prepared detailing the

results of the monitoring visit. The report will be completed within three weeks of completion of the review. Indexed working papers will also be prepared to provide supporting documentation for testwork performed and for any findings. The monitoring report will be transmitted to the entity for review, and appropriate corrective action will be requested, if necessary.

3.   **Corrective Action Response**

If any findings were noted during the on-site review, a corrective action response will be required within 45 days from date of the monitoring report. Upon receipt of the entity's corrective action plan, the monitors will review the response and comment on the acceptability of the proposed corrective action. If the corrective action plan is deemed acceptable, the file will be closed. If the corrective action plan or any part thereof is unacceptable, additional corrective action shall be requested. The file will remain open until all corrective action has been accepted.

4.   **Acceptance/Non-acceptance of Corrective Action**

Notice of acceptance or non-acceptance of the proposed corrective action plan will be forwarded within 30 working days of receipt of the plan. If the proposed plan is not accepted, the State may require submission of a subsequent plan to be received within 30 days from the date of the notice.

If the subsequent plan is deemed unacceptable, the State may again request submission of a new plan within a specified timeframe or take other action as deemed appropriate relevant to the circumstances.

5.   **Monitoring Files**

A monitoring file will be maintained for each monitoring visit.

6.   **Follow-up Visits and Verification of Corrective Action**

Follow-up visits will be conducted, if deemed necessary.

7.   **Unannounced Visits**

Unannounced visits may be conducted, if deemed necessary.

III.   **LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA / STATE SUBGRANTEE REQUIREMENTS**

A.   **Local Workforce Development Area/State Subgrantee Monitoring Policy**

WIOA Section 116(d)(4) requires the local board, in partnership with the chief elected official, to conduct monitoring with respect to local programs of youth activities authorized under section 129, local employment and training activities

authorized under section 134, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area.

WIOA Section 184(b) (3&4) and 2 CFR 200 parts 3330-332 of the Federal regulations require each recipient and subrecipient of WIOA Title I funds to conduct monitoring of the WIOA activities of its subrecipients and contractors in order to:

- Determine whether expenditures have been made against the cost categories and within the cost limitations specified in WIOA and Federal regulations;
- Determine whether there is compliance with all applicable requirements; and
- Provide technical assistance as necessary and appropriate.

1. **Scope**

   The Local Workforce Development Area or State sub-grantee shall develop a monitoring policy describing the procedures that will be implemented to ensure compliance with WIOA, Federal regulations, State laws, contractual agreements, State policies, OMB circulars, cost principles, and Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR).

   Procedures for monitoring the following shall be addressed, as applicable:

   - program goals and objectives
   - program quality
   - procurement
   - fiscal accountability
   - labor standards
   - audit/audit resolution
   - actual expenditures against cost categories and limitations
   - grievance procedures
   - equal opportunity
   - provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act
   - eligibility verification as applicable
   - property management
   - internal monitoring
   - administrative procedures
   - program performance
   - other programmatic areas
   - programmatic accountability

2. **Frequency**

The policy shall include procedures to ensure monitoring is completed in a timely manner. Each subgrantee shall be monitored during the program year or during the subgrant period.

B. **Local Workforce Development Area/State Subgrantee Monitoring Procedures**

1. **Monitoring Schedule**

The policy shall include procedures to ensure a monitoring schedule is prepared. The schedule should include subcontractors' names and addresses, contract numbers, planned dates of reviews, and names of individuals to perform the reviews. Monitoring schedules shall be submitted to OGM.

2. **Review Notification**

The policy shall include procedures to ensure written notification of the scheduled on-site review is provided to the entity in advance of the actual review, except when unannounced monitoring visits are deemed necessary.

3. **Desk Review Instrument**

A written desk review monitoring instrument must be prepared and should precede the on-site monitoring visit. This process will ensure that all pertinent records are reviewed prior to each visit. The policy shall describe the procedures for completing a desk review instrument before the on-site visit.

4. **Monitoring Instrument**

The policy shall include procedures for the development of an objective monitoring instrument for use in on-site reviews to ensure that pertinent data can be collected and analyzed for all program activities.

5. **Documentation of Findings**

The policy shall include procedures to ensure findings are adequately documented and include a written description of the deficiency or violation.

6. **Monitoring Report**

The policy shall include procedures to ensure a monitoring report is prepared following each on-site review. The report should be completed within three weeks of the review and should include the following

elements:

- A face page signed by the monitor(s) and the signature of supervisory level staff or the executive director;
- The dates of the review and areas covered during the review.
- A listing of findings, if applicable. Each finding shall consist of a narrative description of the deficiency or violation noted.
- For each finding, a recommendation which sets forth the most appropriate action to correct the deficiency or violation noted.

7. **Corrective Action**

The policy shall include procedures to ensure monitoring reports are forwarded to the subgrantee with a transmittal letter. If findings were noted in the report, the transmittal letter shall require a written corrective action plan from the subgrantee within 45 days from the date of the report.

8. **Acceptance/Non-acceptance of Corrective Action**

The policy shall describe the procedures that will be used to determine the acceptance or non-acceptance of the subgrantee's corrective action plan. Notification of the determination shall be provided to the subrecipient within 30 working days of receipt of the proposed corrective action plan.

9. **Follow-up Monitoring and Verification of Corrective Action**

The policy shall include procedures to ensure the need for a follow-up monitoring visit will be determined by the nature of the finding and the subgrantee's response to the finding. A follow-up monitoring review shall be designed to determine if the corrective action measures taken were adequate to resolve the noted deficiencies.

10. **Unannounced Visits**

The policy shall describe the procedures for conducting unannounced visits of subgrantees when such visits are deemed necessary.

11. **Monitoring Files**

The policy shall include procedures establishing and maintaining the monitoring files. A separate file shall be maintained for each on-site visit. At a minimum, the files shall contain the following records:

- notification of monitoring visit dates;
- completed desk review instrument;
- signed monitoring report;
- completed monitoring instrument;

- transmittal letter, and if applicable, request for a corrective action plan;
- response from subgrantee, when appropriate;
- letter to subgrantee accepting/rejecting corrective action; and
- working paper file to include supporting documentation.

IV.   DESK MONITORING

There may be times when it may not be practical or cost effective to conduct an on-site monitoring visit of a subgrantee. OGM will allow for the limited use of <u>desk monitoring</u> of some subgrantees if <u>all</u> of the following criteria are met:

A.   The training program has five or fewer participants;

B.   The total cost for the contract or total cost of training is $25,000 or less; and

C.   Adequate documentation is obtained and maintained in monitoring files to document:

- eligibility;
- time and attendance;
- trainee progress reports;
- documentation of completion of training program;
- license or certificate earned;
- participant medical and accident insurance;
- placement and wage information; and
- financial records

D.   There are no known problems or issues that would warrant an on-site visit; and

E.   It has been determined and documented that desk monitoring is the most practical means of monitoring the subgrantee.

V.   EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy shall be effective as of July 1, 2015. This policy will be revised and reissued after the WIOA final rules are issued and as further DOL/ETA guidance is received.

Jacqueline A. Turner
Deputy Executive Director, CFO

I3F. WIOA Youth Eligibility Policy, Transition State Policy #13.

Section I4. Wagner-Peyser Assurances.

I4A. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MDES and MDRS.

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

Providing the freedom to live

June 19, 2013

Ms. Dovie Reed
State WIA Equal Opportunity Officer
MS Department of Employment Security
P.O. Box 1699
Jackson, MS 39215-1699

RE: Access to WINGS

Dear Ms. Reed:

Please find enclosed two signed originals of the Memorandum of Understanding between our two agencies concerning accessibility in the State's workforce system. Once Mr. Henry has signed the two enclosed documents, please return one signed original to us for our files. If you should have any questions, please contact me at (601) 853-5302 or cgoodin@mdrs.ms.gov.

Sincerely,

Cindy Goodin
Program Coordinator

Enclosures

1281 Highway 51 • Madison, MS 39110 • Post Office Box 1698 • Jackson, MS 39215-1698 • Telephone: (601) 853-5100 Voice or TDD

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES
&
THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
CONCERNING
IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998 SECTION 188, SECTION 504, AND
THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, AS AMENDED

This Memorandum of Understanding (hereafter MOU) outlines a partnership between THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (MDRS) and the MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY (MDES), entered into on **a voluntary, non-legally binding basis**, expressing a mutual agreement to work together in a positive spirit to continually improve the lifestyle, acceptance and accessibility of persons with a disability within the Mississippi Workforce Investment Network. This MOU is effective upon execution by both parties, and will remain in effect until June 30, 2016.

Background:

Over the years, MDRS and MDES have demonstrated their commitment to persons with disabilities in many ways and in various programs. With the enactment of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004, a partnership was forged to ensure that all stakeholders in Mississippi's Workforce system are afforded the same services, rights, privileges and benefits. The goal is to continue to strengthen awareness of contributions in the workforce and society in general by people with disabilities.

General Areas of Partnership:

A major focus of the partnership is the obligation to eliminate discrimination on the basis of a disability. The guiding principle for this partnership ensures that each individual with a disability participates in the most integrated setting appropriate to that individual.

The partnership agreement includes the following:

- MDES provides assurances that communication with persons with disabilities is as effective as with others - (List of certified interpreters of Sign Language for the State of Mississippi (http://www.odhh.org/interpreter-registration/).
- MDES provides assurances that accessible computer workstations, including adaptive software, currently located in WIN Job Centers and the MDES State Office will be evaluated at the same time as all other computer workstations for the latest technology and software updates, and will install any needed upgrades as resources permit.
- MDRS performs Accessibility Surveys in WIN Job Centers and the MDES State Office to determine if there are any structural barriers that are architectural and/or communicational in nature, upon request and as MDRS resources and staff workloads permit.

- MDRS provides limited general advice and guidance with assistive technology which allows equal access to information, services, and activities within the Mississippi Workforce Investment Network to people with disabilities. MDRS will direct MDES and other partners in the State's workforce network to other available resources for more in-depth advice and guidance pertaining to assistive technology. Other available resources include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) Job Accommodation Network (JAN), askjan.org 2) Alliance for Technology Access (ATA),ataccess.org; and, 3) Southeast ADA Center, ADAsoutheast.org
- MDRS provides limited general advice and guidance regarding adaptive hardware and software used to accommodate disabilities. MDRS staff will answer general questions regarding computers and adaptive software. (Examples are workstation setup for adaptive software and hardware such as Screen Reader software (JAWS), Screen Magnification software (ZoomText), adaptive mice and keyboards, and adjustable height desks.) More in-depth questions should be directed to other assistive technology resources such as those resources listed above or to vendors of assistive technology such as computers and adaptive software.
- The partnership provides educational and outreach activities with the goal of improving quality of life for those with a disability and building awareness of those without disabilities.

Other Terms and Conditions

A. **Termination.** Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement to the contrary, this Agreement may be terminated by either party within thirty (30) days by written notice or at any time during the performance period of this MOU.

B. **Amendment.** This MOU may not be amended or modified in any respect except by an instrument in writing signed by both parties hereto.

C. **Best Efforts.** MDES agrees to exert its best efforts in the performance of its obligations under this MOU. However, MDES disclaims any liability associated with the performance or non-performance of this MOU, or the consequences of any error or mistake on its part. Moreover, the execution by MDES of this MOU shall not be construed to create a cause of action for any party, whether public and/or private.

D. **Confidentiality.** The use or disclosure of any information deemed confidential under State or Federal law is prohibited, except to the extent necessary to administer the terms and conditions of this MOU, or to the extent required by law. In addition, any individual who is in possession of said information will take all necessary precautions to prevent disclosure to unauthorized individuals.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this MOU to be duly executed on this the 24 day of June , 2013.

H.S. "Butch" McMillan
Executive Director
MDRS
1281 Highway 51
Madison, MS 39110

Signature: _____

Mark Henry
Executive Director
MDES
1235 Echelon Parkway
Jackson, MS 39213

Signature: _____

Section I5. Adult Basic Education Program Specific Requirements.

I5A. Monitoring Checklist.

ABE Monitoring Instrument

Program Monitored: _____ Date Monitored: _____

Monitor: _____ Reviewed by: _____ Date Reviewed: _____

I. Financial Administration	Yes	No	Comments/Examples
1. Current copies of the budget are kept by the fiscal staff.			
2. Separate accountability is maintained for contract or grant funds.			
3. Reports required by state agency are prepared and submitted in a timely fashion.			
4. Bi-monthly financial and programmatic reports are signed by an authorized official. a) Does the program utilize ABE funds as match for any type of funding?			
5. The current level of expenditures in the program is appropriate for the amount of time that has elapsed in the program year.			
6. Are more than 20% of funds expended for GED preparatory instruction?			
7. A minimum of 95% of federal and state funds is utilized for direct instructional activities; no more than 5% of federal/state funds are utilized for support services.			
8. All amounts charged to the program are allowable as per the line items contained in the budget and cumulative amounts charged do not exceed budget.			
9. Has the charge been properly allocated to the appropriate budget category, or in the case of charges shared between programs, to the appropriate program?			
10. Is there supporting documentation for all charges?			
11. Do the amounts shown on the reports agree with the supporting documents used to complete the reports, i.e., agency records, worksheets, etc.?			

12. Are all funds received accounted for in deposits or wire transfers? Trace all cash receipts to the bank deposits.			
13. Does a comparison of the receipt date and deposit date of funds received indicate that funds were deposited promptly?			
a) Are the expenditure reports consistent with the general ledger and disbursements journal? Compare the expenditure reports with the general ledger and disbursements journal. Compare the expenditures with the contract. b) Were any costs incurred outside the effective dates of the contract or grant?			
14. Do time and attendance records support employee's wages?			
15. Has the invoice been coded or marked / canceled in such a way as to avoid double payment of the charge?			
16. Is there evidence of conflict of interest?			
17. The organization is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1961?			
18. Does the sub-grantee have a formal policy of non-discrimination?			
19. For sub-grantees employing 15 or more persons, has a person been designated to oversee civil rights compliance?			
20. Is an EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) poster visible at the site?			
21. All certification documents have been received by the State Office (lobbying, debarment, etc.)			

22. The entity is in compliance with the American Disabilities Act of 1990.
   a. Title I – Employment
   b. Title II – Public Service
   c. Title III – Public Accommodations			

23. There is a formal organizational structure for conducting the program, with names, qualifications, and duties of personnel on file.			

24. Do written job descriptions exist for the staff?			
25. Are approved personnel policies written and are they uniformly available to the staff?			
26. The agency utilizes a written standard and operating procedure for fiscal management and complies with state audit requirements (copies of the last complete audit available with any noted findings).			
27. The appropriate agency representatives are adequately bonded, i.e., the coverage must be lower of the following options: a. Highest amount of funds to be received by check or drawn down during the planned program year, or b. $100,000			

II. Supervision			
	Yes	**No**	**Comments/Examples**
1. Administrative support services in the form of supervision, secretarial, bookkeeping, or janitorial services, employee benefits, utilities, communications, and staff development are provided for the adult education program.			
2. Adult Education Administrator holds a Master's Degree or a four-year degree from an accredited college/university combined with one year of experience in a related field.			
3. An advisory council/participatory planning committee meets a minimum of two times per year to assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and activities, with minutes of meetings on file.			
4. Review and feedback of progress with higher level administrators, memos from supervisors, board agenda items and internal program evaluations, in meeting program objectives, are provided on a periodic basis.			
5. Documentation of a plan for staff development listing local needs is on file. a. Does the program utilize the designated trainer in the area as part of the regular staff development program?			
6. Through questionnaires or surveys, the instructional staff is allowed to evaluate staff development activities.			
7. Program and staff is directly monitored and evaluated by local supervisory staff on a regular basis using an approved instrument (P.A.S.) for monitoring.			
8. Program supervisory staff has a definite percentage of their time and resources committed to the ABE program.			
9. Supervisory staff plans and coordinates with other Adult Education Programs within their service area.			
10. Do program supervisor's use and evaluate performance indicators in the contract agreement?			
11. Do supervisors conduct a program self-study?			
12. Do program supervisors use AEMS/NRS Data for program improvement?			
13. Does the program only use the AEMS State approved unified data system and forms to ensure data quality?			
III. Instructional Staff			
	Yes	**No**	**Comments and Examples**

1. Staff meets established state and local degree requirements (teacher(s) holding B.S. degree, aide(s) having GED or high school diploma).			
2. Documentation of each teacher's staff development and evaluation is on file with a minimum of twenty hours of training within a program year.			
3. Have all teachers completed Teacher Orientation Certification and copies of certification are on file?			
4. List types of in-service training or staff development that is being provided.			
5. Instructors provide opportunity for learner feedback and utilize recommendations when possible.			
6. Staff is competent in planning, organizing and directing and evaluating adult education activities for a variety of students.			
7. Staff is competent in AEMS/NRS recordkeeping and reporting procedures?			
IV. Instructional Program			
	Yes	**No**	**Comments and Examples**
1. Individual student records, consisting of test scores, progress reports, student's work, goals, assignments, achievements, and other essential information are maintained.			
2. Each learner is initially tested and post-tested after <u>40</u> hours of instruction; evaluation of progress is completed and discussed with each participant, i.e. assessment instrument utilized.			
3. Student personal/progress data is on file and used to measure program effectiveness and includes completed achievement in these areas: a) Obtained GED b) Entered other educational or training program c) Learned English language (ESL programs only) d) Received US Citizenship e) Registered to vote or voted for the first time f) Obtained a job g) Changed to or upgrade to better job			

h) Removed from public assistance			
i) Read more to children (family literacy programs only)			
j) Greater involvement in children's schooling (family literacy programs only)			
4. A student's attendance is reported on the monthly enrollment form with hours and level listed.			
5. Classes are consolidated when continued enrollment falls below eight.			
6. Provision is made for special materials or instructional assistance for handicapped students when required.			
7. Up-to-date instructional materials, which have proven effective for the education of adults, are chosen.			
8. There is emphasis upon provision of educational opportunities for adults who: a) Lack the level of literacy skills requisite to effective citizenship b) Lack the level of literacy skills requisite to productive employment-workplace competencies. c) Lack skills for proficiency in English (ESL classes)			
9. Program objectives are stated in measureable and numerical terms.			
10. Instruction is provided in writing, social studies, science, mathematics, and interpretation of literature and the arts.			
11. Instruction is provided with emphasis on developing problem-solving and decision-making abilities as well as life-coping skills.			
12. Instruction in employability skills is provided and instructional methods and curriculum are utilized.			
13. Computer-managed instruction of technology-assisted instruction is provided. This type of instruction cannot be provided because: ☐ Computers are not available ☐ Computer are available with no access. List reasons why computers are available with no access: _____ _____			

_____ _____			
14. Interviews of each learner are conducted by the instructor for the purpose of obtaining necessary information for completion of cumulative folders, interview forms, and reports, which indicate learner's needs and goals. Individual file includes a short paragraph in the handwriting of the learner's needs and goals. Individual file includes a short paragraph in the handwriting of the learner whenever possible, giving goals and reasons for entering the system.			
15. Does the instructional program properly utilize only AEMS/NRS forms and reporting procedures?			

Monitoring Notes:

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Section I6. Vocational Rehabilitation Assurances

I6A. VR/VRB Policy 1.4 – Public Hearing Proceedings on Proposed Policy Changes that Substantially Impact Service to Clients.

1.4   PUBLIC HEARING PROCEEDINGS ON PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES THAT SUBSTANTIALLY IMPACT SERVICES TO CLIENTS

1. Scope. - The following policy and procedures apply to all public hearings held for the purpose of providing the public with an opportunity to make oral presentations on proposed new policies and amendments to existing policies before the Department (MDRS) that substantially impact services to clients.

2. When Public Hearing Proceedings will be Scheduled on Proposed Policies. The Department will conduct a public hearing proceeding within thirty (30) days after the first notice of public hearing is run in certain regional and statewide newspapers on proposed policy or amendment to existing policies that substantially impact services to clients.

3. Requested Format. Each request to comment must be printed or typewritten, or must be in legible handwriting. Each request to comment must be submitted on standard business letter-size paper (8-1/2 inches by 11 inches). Requests to comment may be in the form of a letter addressed to the MDRS Executive Director and signed by the requestor(s).

4. Notification of Public Hearing Proceedings. The date, time and place of all public hearing proceedings will be announced via notice in certain regional and statewide newspapers, public service announcements via Mississippi Public Radio, notice on the MDRS website, and press releases to numerous consumer organizations who represent or serve people with disabilities. The public hearing proceeding will be scheduled within thirty (30) days after the first notice of public hearing is run in certain regional and statewide newspapers.

5. Presiding Officer. The Executive Director, or his/her designee, who is familiar with the substance of the proposed policy, shall preside at the public hearing proceeding on a proposed policy.

6. Public Presentations and Participation.

    (a)   At a public hearing proceeding on a proposed policy, persons may make oral statements and make documentary and physical submissions, which may include data, views, comments or arguments concerning the proposed policy.

(b)   Persons wishing to make oral presentations at such a proceeding shall notify the Department at least one business day prior to the proceeding and indicate the general subject of their presentations. The presiding officer at his or her discretion may allow individuals to participate that have not previously contacted the Department.

(c)   At the proceeding, those who participate shall indicate their names and addresses, identify any persons or organizations they may represent, and provide any other information relating to their participation deemed appropriate by the presiding officer.

(d)   The presiding officer may place time limitations on individual oral presentations when necessary to assure the orderly and expeditious conduct of the public hearing proceeding. To encourage joint oral presentations and to avoid repetition, additional time may be provided for persons whose presentations represent the views of other individuals as well as their own views.

(e)   Persons making oral presentations are encouraged to avoid restating matters that have already been submitted in writing.

(f)   There shall be no interruption of a participant who has been given the floor by the presiding officer, except that the presiding officer may in his or her discretion interrupt or end the participant's time where the orderly conduct of the proceeding so requires.

7. Conduct of Oral Proceeding.

(a)   Presiding officer. The presiding officer shall have authority to conduct the proceeding at his or her discretion for the orderly conduct of the proceeding. The presiding officer shall (i) call proceeding to order; (ii) give a brief synopsis of the proposed policy, a statement of the statutory authority for the proposed policy; (iii) call on those individuals who have contacted the Department about speaking on or against the proposed policy; (iv) allow for rebuttal statements following all participant's comments; (v) adjourn the proceeding.

(b) Questions. The presiding officer, where time permits and to facilitate the exchange of information, may open the floor to questions or general discussion. The presiding officer may question participants and permit the questioning of participants by other participants about any matter relating to that policy-making proceeding, including any prior written submissions made by those participants in that proceeding; but no participant shall be required to answer any question.

(c)   Physical and Documentary Submissions. Submissions presented by participants in a public hearing proceeding shall be submitted to the presiding officer. Such submissions become the property of the Department and are subject to the Department's public records request procedure.

(d)   Recording. The Department may record oral proceedings by stenographic or electronic means.

1.1   <u>General Policies</u>

All policies in this manual were reviewed by the State Rehabilitation Council in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and with applicable federal regulations.

1.1.9   Agreements with Other Agencies and Organizations, including the Mississippi Workforce Investment System

Counselors shall comply with the provisions of agreements between MDRS and other agencies and organizations; including those in the Mississippi Workforce Investment System. These agreements provide for interagency cooperation which may include establishing interagency working groups; coordinating policies, practices, and procedures; identifying available resources; setting up a comprehensive information and referral system; and defining the financial responsibility of each agency for paying for necessary services and resolving disputes. (Section 101(a)(11) of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act Amendments)

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services will make available an information and referral system adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals who do not meet the Agency's order of selection criteria for receiving vocational rehabilitation services if the Agency is operating on an order of selection, are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance (which may include counseling and referral for job placement) using appropriate modes of communication to assist them in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment; and will refer individuals with disabilities to other appropriate Federal and State programs, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

In making these referrals, MDRS will refer the individual to Federal or State programs, including programs carried out by other components of the statewide workforce investment system, best suited to address the specific employment needs of an individual with a disability, and provide the individual who is being referred—

1. A notice of the referral by MDRS to the agency carrying out the program;

2. Information identifying a specific point of contact within the agency to which the individual is being referred; and

3. Information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

In providing the information and referral services under this section to eligible individuals who are not in the priority category or categories to receive vocational rehabilitation services under an order of selection, if one is in effect, MDRS will maintain and report data on the number of eligible individuals who did not meet the Agency's order of selection criteria for receiving vocational rehabilitation services and did receive information and referral services.

4. MDRS shall maintain a list of interpreters fluent in languages spoken by the targeted populations.

5. District Managers shall maintain formal relationships with historically Black Colleges and Universities in their service area by assigning a liaison person(s) to encourage referrals, job placement, training, outreach, and recruitment.

MDRS has an agency-wide Cultural Diversity Committee that is responsible for the following:

1. developing strategies for outreach in the district offices to be implemented by the staff designated outreach workers;

2. establishing reporting formats for each district office to summarize outreach activities, which occurred during the quarter;

3. reviewing the quarterly outreach reports and submitting a summary to the MDRS Executive Director; and,

1.1.1   Nondiscrimination

No individual or group of individuals is excluded or found ineligible on the basis of sex, age, race, creed, color, religion, or, national origin, type of disability, duration of residence in Mississippi, public assistance status, citizenship, type of expected employment outcome, source of referral, particular service needs or anticipated costs of services required, or income level of an applicant or applicant's family.   This applies to all locations in which rehabilitation services are provided by this agency, including one-stop centers.

7.0   Services

Substantiality of Services Policy:

The definition of substantiality of services includes all the needs that should be met in the IPE, its amendments, and otherwise in the case record. These needs should include both those pertaining to the vocational abilities of the individual and those relating to the barriers to employment posed by the disability or disabilities. Substantial services are those services that address an individual's major needs as identified in the assessment process or later in the case record that the counselor and the client agree have to be met in order for the individual to achieve an employment outcome consistent with that individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. The services required to meet the needs of an individual should be planned on the IPE and/or its amendments, regardless of the source of payment or service provider. The source of payment and service provider must be listed on the IPE for each service.

Specific Vocational Rehabilitation Services are any services described in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) necessary to assist an individual in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including:

1.   assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology.

2.   an assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;

3.   vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice as defined in the OVR/OVRB Resource Guide, Section 4.4 page 21;

4.   referral and other services necessary to assist applicants and eligible individuals to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system and to advise those individuals about Client Assistance Programs (OVR/OVRB Policy Manual Section 1.1.9; OVR/OVRB Resource Guide Section 4.4 page 28

& Form MDRS-VR-02, Information and Referral, following Section 2.7.3 of the Resource Guide);

5. Physical and mental restoration services, to the extent that financial support is not readily available from a source other than the Agency (such as through health insurance or a comparable service or benefit.

6. vocational and other training services, including the provision of personal and vocational adjustment, books, tools, and other training material, except that no training services provided at an institution of higher learning shall be paid with funds under this title unless maximum efforts have been made by the counselor and the individual to secure grant assistance, in whole or in part, from other sources to pay for such training;

7. maintenance for additional costs incurred while participating in an assessment for determining eligibility and rehabilitation needs or while under an IPE as defined in the *OVR/OVRB Resource Guide, Section 4.4, page 28*;

8. transportation, including adequate training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems, that is provided in connection with the provision of any other service described in this section and needed by the individual to achieve an employment outcome as defined in the *OVR/OVRB Resource Guide, Section 4.4, page 36*;

9. vocational rehabilitation services to family members of an applicant or eligible individual if necessary to enable the applicant or eligible individual to achieve an employment outcome;

10. interpreter services, including sign language and oral interpreter services, for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and tactile interpreting services for individuals who are deaf-blind provided by qualified personnel;

11. reader services, rehabilitation teaching services and orientation and mobility services for individuals who are blind;

12. job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services as defined in the OVR/OVRB *Resource Guide, Section 3.11*;

13. supported employment services in accordance with the definition in the *OVR/OVRB Resource Guide, Section 4.4, pages 34 – 35*;

14. personal assistance services in accordance with the definition in the *OVR/OVRB Resource Guide, Section 4.4, page 31*;

15. post-employment services in accordance with the definition in the *OVR/OVRB Resource Guide, Section 4.4, page 32 - 33*;

16. occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stock and supplies;

17. rehabilitation technology services including vehicular modifications, telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices in accordance with the definition in the *OVR/OVRB Resource Guide, Section 4.4, page 33 & Section 3.2*;

18. transition services in accordance with the definition in the *OVR/OVRB Resource Guide, Section 4.4, page 35 - 36 & Section 3.17*;

19. technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analysis, develop business plans, and otherwise provide resources, to the extent such resources are authorized to be provided through the statewide workforce investment system, to eligible individuals who are pursuing self-employment or telecommuting or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome;

20. Other goods and services determined necessary for the individual with a disability to achieve an employment outcome.

(Authority: Section 103(a) of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 723(a)

8.1 <u>Financial Needs Tests / Comparable Services and Benefits</u>

MDRS chooses to consider the financial need of clients or applicants who are receiving services through Trial Work Experiences or during an Extended Evaluation for purposes of determining the extent of their participation in the costs of vocational rehabilitation services, other than those services identified below. The *OVR/OVRB Resource Guide* explains the method for determining the financial need of an eligible individual; and specifies the types of vocational rehabilitation services for which MDRS has established a financial needs test;

Policies are applied uniformly to all individuals in similar circumstances. Policies do not require different levels of need for different geographic regions in the State, and policies ensure that the level of an individual's participation in the cost of vocational rehabilitation services is:

1. reasonable;

2. based on the individual's financial need, including consideration of any disability-related expenses paid by the individual; and,

3. not so high as to effectively deny the individual a necessary service.

MDRS does not apply a financial needs test, or require the financial participation of the individual as a condition for furnishing the following vocational rehabilitation services:

1. assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services, except those non-assessment services that are provided to an individual with a significant disability during either an exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations through the use of Trial Work Experiences or an Extended Evaluation;

   a. assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs;

   b. vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance;

   c. referral and other services;

   d. interpreter services;

   e. reader services;

    f. job-related services;

    g. personal assistance services; or

2. as a condition for furnishing any vocational rehabilitation service if the individual in need of the service has been determined eligible for Social Security benefits under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act.

Comparable Services and Benefits are defined in the *OVR/OVRB Resource Guide.*

In all cases full consideration will be given to any comparable services and benefits available under any other program including those of other workforce agencies. This includes maximum utilization of public or other vocational/ technical training facilities to meet, in whole or part, the cost of any vocational rehabilitation service(s) provided to the individual. MDRS cannot supplement

payments from any other source(s) in excess of the prevailing fee for services being purchased.

Appropriate comparable benefits must be used when purchasing services, as long as the determination of whether comparable services and benefits are available under any other program would interrupt or delay:

1. the progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome in the individualized plan for employment of the individual;

2. an immediate job placement; or,

3. the provision of such service to any individual at extreme medical risk.

Exceptions are as follows:

1. assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;

2. counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice;

3 referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies including other workforce agencies through cooperative agreements, if such services are not available through this agency;

4. job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services; ~~and,~~

5. rehabilitation technology, including telecommunication, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and,

6. post-employment services consisting of the aforementioned services (in items 1– 5 in this list.)

6.4   Development of the IPE

When an individual is determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, the IPE shall be completed. An IPE shall be a written document prepared on current forms provided by the Agency as outlined in Section 361.45(b)(2) of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act Amendments regarding general requirements.

The eligible individual or his/her representative will be provided information, in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication, regarding the individual's options for developing an IPE including:

1. information on the availability of assistance, to the extent determined to be appropriate by the eligible individual, from a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor in developing all or part of the IPE for the individual, and the availability of technical assistance in developing all or part of the IPE for the individual;

2. a description of the full range of components as defined in Section 361.48 that shall be included in an IPE; and,

3. as appropriate--

    a. an explanation of Agency guidelines and criteria associated with financial commitments concerning an Individualized Plan for Employment;

    b. additional information the eligible individual requests or the Agency determines to be necessary;

    c. information on the availability of assistance in completing designated Agency forms required in developing an IPE; and,

    d. a description of the rights and remedies available to such an individual including, if appropriate, a description of the availability of a Client Assistance Program and information about how to contact the CAP.

An IPE for a student with a disability receiving special education services is developed--

    a.   In consideration of the student's IEP; and

    b.   In accordance with the plans, policies, procedures, and terms of the interagency agreement between MDRS and the local school district.

In planning transition services for students, the IPE for a student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services must be developed and approved (i.e., agreed to and signed by the individual and the counselor) before the student leaves the school setting and as early as possible during the transition planning process.

I6H. VR/VRB Policy 1.1.2 - Informed Choice.

1.1.2   Informed Choice

MDRS provides applicants and clients with opportunities to exercise informed choice throughout the VR process, including making decisions about the employment goal, VR services, service

providers, settings for employment and service provision, and methods for procuring services.

To enable an individual to make such decisions, MDRS provides information, support and assistance needed by the individual. MDRS has implemented policies, procedures, and practices and developed resources that enable applicants and clients to exercise informed choice throughout the entire VR process; these policies, procedures, and practices are consistent with Federal statutory and regulatory requirements.

Specifically, MDRS ensures that the individual, or if appropriate, the individual through his or her representative:

- makes decisions related to the assessment process and to selection of the employment outcome and the settings in which employment occurs, vocational rehabilitation services, service providers, the settings for service provision, and the methods for procuring services;

- has a range of options from which to make these decisions or, to the extent possible, the opportunity to create new options that will meet the individual's specific rehabilitation needs;

- has access to sufficient information about the consequences of various options;

- has skills for evaluating the information and for making decisions, or, to the extent possible, the opportunity to develop such skills or support and assistance in carrying out these functions;

- makes decisions in ways that reflect the individuals strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and career interests; and

- takes personal responsibility, to the extent possible, for implementing the chosen options.

For individual Areas of Responsibility, see the *OVR/OVRB Resource Guide.*

5. Each district shall provide in-service training periodically to increase awareness, sensitivity, and attitudinal shift or change on multi-cultural issues for counselors and support staff.

6. MDRS shall recruit qualified staff of various ethnic origins to fill professional staff vacancies.

1.1.8 **Services to American Indians Who Are Disabled**

MDRS will provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians with disabilities residing in the State to the same extent as the State provides such services to other significant segments of the population of individuals with disabilities residing in the State. Vocational rehabilitation services will continue to be provided, including as appropriate, services traditionally used by Indian tribes, to American Indians with disabilities on reservations eligible for services by special tribal programs under other sections of the Rehabilitation Act. (Section 101(a) (13) and 130 of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act Amendments)

1.1.12 Establishment and Construction Authority

MDRS through its Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind officially exercises the option of Establishment or Construction Authority as provided for in the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. In utilizing such special authority, MDRS will adhere to all applicable rules and regulations as set forth by the State of Mississippi, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the U.S. Department of Education.

MDRS will use this authority for the establishment, development, or improvements of community rehabilitation programs, including, under special circumstances, the construction of a facility and the provision of other services (including services offered at community rehabilitation programs) which promise to contribute substantially to the rehabilitation of a group of individuals but which are not related directly to the individualized rehabilitation program of any one individual with a

disability. Such programs will be used to provide services that promote integration and competitive employment. (Section 103(b)(2) and Section 104 of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act Amendments)

I6K. VR/VRB Policy 9.1.1 - Criteria for Closing Case Records as Rehabilitated.

9.1.1   Criteria

The minimum criteria, which must be met for an individual to be determined, rehabilitated are the following:

1. The individual has been determined to be eligible.

2. The individual was provided an evaluation of vocational rehabilitation potential, and counseling and guidance as essential vocational rehabilitation services.

3. The provision of services under the IPE has contributed significantly to the achievement of specific employment outcome that is consistent with the client's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice.

4. The employment outcome is in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the client's informed choice, and the client has maintained the employment outcome for a period of at least 90 days. At the end of the 90-day period, the individual and the counselor consider the employment to be satisfactory and agree that the individual is performing well on the job.

5. Additional Supported Employment provisions in relation to employment are--

   a. employment must be competitive work and for the maximum number of hours possible based on the individual's abilities and capability; and,

   b. the client received on-going support services prior to closure and continues to need on-going support.

6.7   Basic IPE Contents

Regardless of the approach selected by an eligible individual to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment, an IPE shall, at a minimum, contain mandatory components consisting of--

1.   a description of the specific employment outcome that is chosen by the eligible individual, and, to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated setting and for which the individual is compensated at, or above, the minimum wage;

2.   a description of the specific vocational rehabilitation services that are-

   a.   needed to achieve a specific employment outcome, including, as appropriate, provision of assistive technology devices and services, and personal assistance services, including training in the management of such services;

   b.   provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the service involved and is consistent with the informed choice of the eligible individual; and,

   c.   time lines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of the services;

3.   a description of the entity chosen by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, and the methods used to procure such services;

4.   a description of criteria to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome;

5.   the terms and conditions of the IPE, including, as appropriate, information describing;

   a.   the responsibilities of the Agency;

   b.   the responsibilities of the eligible individual, including--

i.   the responsibilities the eligible individual will assume in relation to the employment outcome of the individual;

ii.   if applicable, the participation of the eligible individual in paying for the costs of the plan;

iii.   the responsibility of the eligible individual with regard to applying for and securing comparable benefits; and,

c.   the responsibilities of other entities as the result of arrangements made pursuant to comparable services or benefit requirement;

6.   for an eligible individual with the most significant disabilities for whom an employment outcome in a supported employment setting has been determined to be appropriate, information identifying--

a.   the extended services needed by the eligible individual; and,

b.   the source of extended services or, to the extent that the source of the extended services cannot be identified at the time of the development of the IPE, a description of the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that such source will become available; and,

7.   as determined to be necessary, a statement of projected need for post-employment services.

5.5   Comprehensive Assessment

A comprehensive assessment shall be performed, to the extent necessary, in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the individual's needs and informed choice, to determine eligibility for and the scope of, vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services. The assessment shall be sufficient to determine, and the case record shall document, whether an individual has a physical or mental impairment that for the individual constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment. The assessment will include an appraisal of the individual based, to the extent possible, on available medical information, and, as appropriate, evaluation by qualified personnel of the potential to benefit from rehabilitation services.

To the extent additional data is necessary to make a determination of the employment outcomes, and the objectives, nature, and scope of vocational rehabilitation services, to be included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, a comprehensive assessment will be conducted.

The comprehensive assessment may include:

1.   Diagnostic testing;

2.   The provision of rehabilitation technology services;

3.   The assessment of an assortment of work-related factors in "real job" situations where possible and/or appropriate to determine the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice, including the need for supported employment of the eligible individual.

4.   To the degree needed, an assessment of the personality, interests, career choices, interpersonal skills, intelligence and related functional capacities, educational achievements, work experience, vocational aptitudes, personal and social adjustments, and employment opportunities of the individual, and the medical, psychiatric, psychological, and other pertinent vocational, educational, cultural, social, recreational, and environmental factors, that affect the employment and rehabilitation needs of the individual;

5.   To the degree needed, an appraisal of the patterns of work behavior of the individual and services needed for the individual

to acquire occupational skills, and to develop work attitudes, work habits, work tolerance, and social behavior patterns necessary for successful job performance, including the utilization of work in real job situations to assess and develop the capacities of the individual to perform adequately in the work environment.

6. An exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations, which shall be assessed periodically during Trial Work Experiences, including experiences in which the individual is provided appropriate supports and training.

In all cases of mental or emotional disorders an examination will be provided by a physician skilled in the diagnosis and treatment of such disorders, or by a psychologist licensed or certified in accordance with state laws and regulations. Any assessment to determine eligibility for supported employment must be supplementary to an assessment to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services. Whether performed to ascertain the scope of rehabilitation services or to determine eligibility, a comprehensive assessment is limited to information necessary to identify the rehabilitation needs of and develop the Individualized Plan for Employment.

OVR/OVRB RESOURCE GUIDE	
Case Services/Programs	**Section 3**

3.19 SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Supported Employment (SE) is a specialized placement and training program for the most significantly disabled individual......the individual for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred due to the severity of his/her disability.

The program is a cooperative effort between the Agency, community programs, agencies, and individuals called "third parties" with which the Agency has signed agreements for referrals and the provision of extended services.

If it is determined that the individual's disability is such that he/she needs on-going support services in order to maintain employment, consideration should be given to the Supported Employment program. Supported Employment clients are eligible for any of the traditional vocational rehabilitation services available to other Agency clients.

3.19.1 SE TERMINOLOGY

Competitive Employment means work---
   (i) In the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting; and
   (ii) For which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

Supported Employment requires no more than eight individuals with disabilities be clustered in an employment setting.

Extended Employment means --- work in a non-integrated or sheltered setting for a public or private nonprofit agency or organization that provides compensation in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Extended employment may also be used as a support service to enable an individual to continue to train or prepare for competitive employment, unless the individual through informed choice chooses to remain in extended employment.

Extended Services are on-going supports which are provided to an individual who is successfully rehabilitated into employment. These services are provided by third-party entities, and they are needed in order to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment.

Integrated work setting means job sites where most co-workers are not disabled and individuals with disabilities are not part of a work group of other individuals with disabilities.

Supported Employment services will include placement in an integrated work setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Job Trainers provide one-on-one intensive job skills training and support, both on and off the job, for individuals with mental retardation, severe learning disabilities, cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities and mental illness. This training includes social skills, along with other training that would be essential to a person with a most significant disability obtaining and maintaining a job. Job trainers are hired on a part-time, temporary, as needed basis.

Natural Supports are those formal and informal mechanisms existing in a work environment that can be drawn upon to increase and sustain an employee's performance through the use of active assistance and/or approval or sanctioning of a worker's achievements.

Person Centered Planning (PCP) is a process of profiling and planning with an individual in order to increase self-management opportunities, community involvement and life satisfaction for the individual. A plan of action is adopted in order to determine and achieve goals by addressing the needs, strengths and experiences of the individual.

Successful Rehabilitation occurs when the individual maintains a supported employment placement for 90 days after making the transition to permanent employment.

Support means any appropriate service such as job site training, short-term transportation assistance, family support, or any other service necessary for job success, throughout the "term of employment".

Supported Employment means competitive work in an integrated work setting for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Transitional Employment is a series of temporary job placements in competitive work, in integrated work settings with on-going supports until job permanency is achieved for individuals with Serious Mental Illness.

Vocational Training Instructors (VTI) are responsible, in coordination with the supported employment counselor, for job development and placement for supported employment eligible clients. Although the supported employment counselor has the primary responsibility of securing a trainer, VTIs primarily handle the hiring of trainers and day-to-day management of the placement and trainer.

3.19.2   SERVICES

Supported Employment services mean on-going support and other appropriate services needed to support and maintain an individual with the most significant disability in employment.

Person-centered planning should be considered for every Supported Employment client as a possible means for providing both the client and the counselor with additional information. This information can be utilized for a number of purposes, e.g., as a means of gathering additional information for eligibility determination, for development of a plan for employment, for determining support needs that will require referral to other agencies or organizations, and to map out future career options, etc..

Supported Employment services are generally provided for a period not to exceed 18 months, unless due to special circumstances a longer period is necessary to achieve job stabilization. This must be jointly agreed to by the individual and the rehabilitation counselor and established in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) before an individual with the most significant disabilities makes the transition to extended services. Counselors should carefully document the cases when joint agreement arrangements are finalized to go beyond the 18-month period of time. If a longer period of time is warranted, the following should be given consideration: only when the client has made substantial progress toward meeting the hours-per-week work goal provided for in the IPE, the client is stabilized on the job, and extended services are available and can be provided without a break in services.

The use of a Job Trainer at the work site is an integral part of supported employment services. This individual is responsible for learning the job prior to the client coming to work, then teaching the job to the client. The trainer not only teaches the work skills needed at the job site but will help the client become adjusted to the new work environment. The trainer will help the client develop relationships with co-workers and supervisory staff. The trainer will also identify and promote the utilization of natural supports in the work environment. If the client cannot meet production standards, the trainer is there to ensure the employer that the work will be done to the business' quality and quantity standards. As the client becomes more independent at the work site and is able to perform most of the job tasks with minimum intervention by the trainer, the trainer will fade assistance until the case can be closed.

Personal assistance services (PAS) enable the employee to perform the daily living activities on or off the job that the individual would typically perform without assistance if the individual did not have a disability. Examples of these services are job functions such as activities of daily living aid, business travel companion, office services specialist or meeting assistant. The services must be necessary to the achievement of an employment outcome and may be provided only while the individual is receiving other vocational rehabilitation services. They are not to be construed to be supports that are considered a reasonable accommodation and therefore paid for by the employer or supports considered personal in nature and funded by Medicare or other

funding sources. PAS are to be authorized for in the same manner as that a job trainer. In some instances, it may be possible for the job trainer to also perform the duties of the personal assistant. The same fee schedule used in paying job trainers will be utilized in paying for the PAS. In developing the IPE, an agreement will be made addressing each of the following issues:

▪ The name of the extended service provider -- specifically addressing the provision of Personal Assistant Services to be provided following VR case closure (If no extended service provider has been identified at the time of the development of the IPE, refer to the Flow Chart for SE Services - I.B.4.and III.B.5);

▪ The specific Personal Assistant Services that will be provided;

▪ The duration of the provision of Personal Assistant Services by VR

3.19.3   FLOW-CHART FOR SE SERVICES

I.   Referral

    A.   Referral received from Third-Party Agency.

        1.   Schedule appointment for application.
        2.   Conduct interview, advise client of services available and discussion of client's informed choice in these services; get client release form to obtain records from other sources, (mental health center, state hospital, physician/ hospital, etc.).
        3.   Conduct evaluation for VR services, authorizing for services or information not available through other agencies.

    B.   Referral received from General VR program, Deaf Services, Deaf/Blind or Transition counselor.

        1.   General VR or Specialty counselor staffs the case with the SE counselor.
        2.   SE counselor assesses the case for eligibility for SE services. If the two counselors agree that SE should serve the case, the case will be transferred to the SE counselor using the established case transfer procedures. Cases transferred from any specialty area, for example, Deaf /Blind program, if determined eligible for SE services should be retained by the SE counselor. The Specialty counselor and the SE counselor should work closely on the case and the Specialty counselor should provide technical assistance to the SE counselor to ensure the client receives appropriate services.

3.   If any questions arise about the eligibility of the client for SE services, the two counselors will refer the case to their respective supervisors who will, together, determine the feasibility of the client for SE, the adequacy of the evaluation process, need for additional evaluating information, etc., and decide how the case will be handled.

4.   In those cases when a client needs Supported Employment services but is not being served by a third-party, the SE counselor will explain the SE Program, services and options to the client as soon as possible after the referral has been made to the SE Program. The SE counselor will also, advise the client about the availability of third-party resources in that area. The counselor will assist the client with obtaining a third-party sponsor for extended services and must include on the IPE the source and description of the on-going support needed by the client to maintain the employment. Third-party agreements will be initiated by the SE counselor and negotiated at the local level regardless of whether there is a Cooperative Agreement with the Parent State Agency. Third-party agreements will be finalized by State Office staff. If no third-party can be located who is willing to provide needed services, the case may be closed as Unsuccessfully Rehabilitated after staffing with the District Manager. The SE counselor will document the attempts to assist the client in this way in the closure letter.

C.   Referral received from VRB counselor:

Generally, it is appropriate for all SE eligible individual's cases to be handled by the SE counselor. In specialty areas, such as deaf, deaf/blind and blind, the case is handled with consultation from the appropriate specialty disability counselor on specific issues related to the individual's needs. However, in those instances where it is advisable, and is the client's choice, for their case to be retained by the VRB counselor for the receipt of supported employment services, the SE counselor will work closely with the VRB counselor to advise and consult on matters related to the use of SE funds for the hiring, managing and paying for job trainers and any other procedural matters related to SE services. The decision to transfer the SE case to the VRB counselor should be made after staffing with the District Manager. Upon transfer of the SE case to the VRB counselor, the State Coordinator for Supported Employment will be notified by the District Manager, and an allotment of SE funds will be made to the VRB counselor who will handle the case.

NOTE: After any referral to supported employment, the counselor should check the appropriate place on the Special Programs page in AACE indicating this is now a supported employment case. (In the instance of a transferred case,

where the IPE has already been developed, the IPE should be amended with the client to reflect appropriate SE services; the counselor should record this as an SE case on the IPE and also on the Special Programs page in AACE.)

II.   ELIGIBILITY

Individuals with severe disabilities who are appropriate to receive supported employment services must meet the eligibility requirements established for the VR program and meet the Order of Selection, Category I –

    A.   Be an individual who has never been competitively employed; and/or

    B.   traditional competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a severe disability; and

    C.   who, because of the nature and severity of the disability, needs intensive on-going support services that may include job trainer services, in order to obtain and maintain competitive employment, and

    D.   who, because of the nature and severity of the disability needs extended services that continue after VR services ends, in order to maintain successful employment.

III.   IPE DEVELOPMENT

    A.   IPE Meeting - At the time of the IPE development the SE counselor should meet either individually or jointly with the following entities:

        1.   Client and, if necessary, client's parents or guardian, advocate or representative.
        2.   If possible, a representative from the source who will be providing and/or funding the extended services.
        3.   Representative(s) from the Mental Health Center who will be providing Transitional Employment/Supported Employment services.

    B.   Writing of the IPE.

        1.   The SE counselors need to utilize the information from assessments, including information gathered from Person Center Planning, and input from the client in establishing a vocational goal. The IPE should include a brief rationale as to the reason that the particular vocational goal was selected. The SE counselor, along with the client, will estimate an anticipated time during which the client is expected to reach the goal.

2.   Each service that will be provided will be listed. These services should include all the supports needed by the supported employment client in order to reach the stated goal and should include at a minimum, two of the following:
   a.   Placement Services
   b.   Training: Supportive Services (inc. Job Coach)
   c.   Counseling and Guidance
   d.   Extended Employment
   e.   Extended Services (this service may be listed under "Other Goods and Services" and then customize the service by specifying Extended Services.
   f.   Other appropriate services

Every Supported/Transitional Employment IPE should include Extended Services and Rehabilitation Counseling.

3.   The source of funding for each service, the estimated cost of the service(s) or the utilization of comparable benefits must be listed.
4.   Information should be included which indicates any understandings and responsibilities between the client and the SE counselor or any other individual or entity deemed critical to the success of the vocational program.
5.   Extended Services, which are on-going services, should be indicated as such on the IPE. A <u>Memorandum of Understanding-Extended Services Agreement</u> should be developed for each Supported/Transitional Employment client and a copy should be kept in the client's file. These agreements should be coordinated through the State Office. Extended Services can be provided by more than one source. Sources for Extended Service provision may include:
   a. state agencies,
   b. private non-profit organizations,
   c. employers, co-workers, families or friends,
   d. any other appropriate resource not funded by the Agency.

Counselors have the primary responsibility for negotiating these agreements; however, they must be formalized and signed by the Director of the Agency. Telephone or write the State Coordinator for Supported Employment to obtain copies of the agreements and to obtain details on putting these agreements in place. The beginning date for extended services should coincide with the date of movement of the case into employed status. Generally it is best to have these agreements in place at the time of the IPE development, or before, however they are required before closure of a successfully rehabilitated case and a copy of said

signed Extended Service Agreement should be placed in client's file upon closure as successfully rehabilitated. If it is not possible to identify the source of the extended service provider at the time the IPE is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that such sources will become available, should be addressed in the IPE.

IV.   PLACEMENT

The responsibility for placement of SE clients lies primarily with the SE counselor with assistance by the Vocational Training Instructors (VTIs). The decision to place a client into a TEP versus a permanent employment situation will be done after careful consideration of the client's condition and with input from the third party representative. The decision to place a client in a particular job must be based on an assessment and documented in the case file.

V.   TRAINING

       A.   Securing Job Trainer, as well as overseeing work performance of the trainer regarding the actual knowledge and implementation of training, will be the primary responsibility of the SE counselor. However, the VTI will need to be responsive to the day-to-day management of the placement, contacting the SE counselor assistance when needed.

       B.   The SE counselor, with assistance of the VTI, will be responsible for ensuring that all trainers are adequately educated in how to provide appropriate training.

VI.   AUTHORIZATIONS FOR TRAINER SERVICES

       A.   The vendor for all job trainer authorizations will be AbilityWorks - Jackson-Reimbursement

       B.   The following forms should be completed and mailed to Pen Mayfield, MDRS Finance Department, P. O. Box 1698, Jackson, MS 39215-1698 - upon appointment of a Job Trainer to work with a client:

             1.   Application for Employment
             2.   I-9 form, with copies of driver's license and social security card. (The Counselor should sign the I-9 Form under Section 2 "Signature of Employer or Authorized Representative).
             3.   W-4 Federal Withholding Form
             4.   State Withholding Tax Form
             5.   Drug-Free Workplace Form

These forms may be sent either in advance of, or along with the initial Authorization for Services for a Job Trainer. It should be noted that a copy of the Workers' Compensation Notice of Coverage should be furnished to the Job Trainer when hired.

a.   After authorizing for a planned service indicate the Job Trainer's name in the General Comments – Section 3 of the Authorization.

b.   A 13.57 percent processing fee to AbilityWorks –Jackson-Reimbursement should be added to the unit cost (per hour rate) for job trainers and added to the total estimated cost for job trainer services. The processing fee should be calculated in the following manner:

(per hour rate) x 13.57% = (processing fee) + (per hour rate) =
(hourly service fee) x (no. of hours) = (total service cost) .

C.   The procedures for processing payments through AbilityWorks - Jackson-Reimbursement are as follows:

Step 1:   Upon completion of a work period (2 weeks in most instances) the SE counselor will obtain signatures of the Job Trainer and the client on the Job Trainer Time Sheet. The Time Sheet should also be verified for accuracy and signed by a VR/SE staff member. After checking the Job Trainer Time Sheet for accuracy, a Statement of Account should be prepared that matches the amount of the Job Trainer Time Sheet. If the original Authorization does not match the amount to be paid indicated on the Job Trainer Time Sheet, the Authorization should be modified to agree with the amount on the Job Trainer Time Sheet.

Step 2:   The SOA should be completed indicating the type, the amount and dates of service. Then the SOA should be approved for payment in AACE, signed by the approving SE counselor, attached to the Job Trainer Time Sheet and mailed as previously instructed (mail only one Authorization/SOA, and one original Time Sheet per client).

Step 3:   Finance will write the check to the Job Trainer based on the information they receive after checking it for accuracy, (if errors are found by Finance they will mail the documents back to the counselor for corrections, delaying payment to the Job Trainer).

Finance will process payments to job trainers on Thursday of each week. All Authorizations/SOAs received by 10:30 a.m. on Thursday will be processed and

mailed by 5:00 P.M. that day. Authorizations/SOAs received after noon on Thursday will be held over to the next Thursday for processing.

VII.   STATUS MOVEMENT

Supported Employment cases should be moved through the VR case statuses as indicated below:

     A.   After eligibility determination is completed place the case in eligibility status.

     B.   After the IPE is planned, developed, and signed, the case will be moved to service status.

     C.   The case is moved to employment status when the client meets the criteria for movement into extended services and the Job Trainer has faded completely. This occurs when the client has demonstrated that he/she can perform the job to the employer's expectations. Also, there should be a concurrent agreement between client, counselor, VTI, job trainer and extended service provider that the client can perform the essential functions of his job with the provisions of extended services. This agreement should be the outcome of a meeting between the above parties and any other appropriate parties. Also, at this time, if the Extended Service Agreement has not been previously executed, it can be executed by the appropriate parties and placed in the file. In every instance, a copy of the Extended Service Agreement should be placed in the client's file upon being determined successfully rehabilitated.

     D.   The case is closed rehabilitated when the client has been in employed status for at least 90 days and continues to perform the job with minimal assistance from the extended service provider and is considered successful by the employer.

VIII.   SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT CLOSURES

The following Supported Employment <u>special outcome criteria</u> must be met in order to close a case rehabilitated in Supported Employment:

- working in the competitive labor market;
- working in an integrated work setting; and
- receiving extended services at the time of closure.

It is an integral part of the closure process that the SE counselor ensures that the client is transitioned to the appropriate third party for on-going support services. The case file will be well documented showing this effort.

NOTE: When supported employment cases are closed in AACE, the counselor needs to be sure the SE outcome is completed correctly on the closure page.

3.19.4   SE Clients in Community Rehabilitation Programs

VR clients who are determined to be eligible for supported employment while receiving services of a CRP should be referred to the appropriate Supported Employment counselor (The SE counselor should be involved in routine staffing at AbilityWorks when informed by the vocational evaluator that Supported Employment is being considered as a service option for a client). When the supported employment counselor determines that the client is eligible, the case should be transferred to a Supported Employment caseload. The client should be fully informed about the Supported Employment Program before the case transfer is made. The client should be informed whether continued evaluation at the CRP is needed. If the placement is not appropriate the client should be terminated from the CRP before or simultaneously with transfer to the SE caseload.

Generally, placement at a CRP is not appropriate for a SE client because it is not consistent with the place/train model, however in some instances placement of a SE client at a CRP may be appropriate for a particular assessment to, for example, observe behaviors, work habits, build rapport with the client, etc., or in rare instances remediate functional limitations. This may be done while the case is in eligibility status for the purpose of gathering information for IPE development, or in service status to provide specific training for remediation of functional limitations discovered after a client has been in a regular supported employment job and it has been determined that the CRP is the **only suitable environment** in which this remediation can take place.

The decision to refer a client to a CRP should be made in consultation with the District Manager. An assessment or remediation plan should be developed that is specific to address the needs of the client and should coincide with the time limitations which apply to all CRP referrals. The client should be fully informed of the reason for the referral and that the placement is not a permanent job. Since the client is SE eligible a job trainer will be provided while in the CRP to assist the client and the CRP staff in the assessment. It is expected that referrals of SE clients to CRPs will be limited and should be made only when placement in a competitive, community based job is not a timely and feasible option.

To refer a client to a CRP follow the procedures outlined in the CRP section of this manual that describes the referral process. Referral of a SE client to a CRP requires District Manager review.

3.19.5   TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Under the definition of Supported Employment, **Transitional Employment** is an allowable service option for individuals with **Serious Mental Illness** (SMI). Transitional Employment is a series of temporary placements in competitive work, in integrated work settings, with on-going support services. In transitional employment, the provision of on-going support services must include **continuing sequential job placements until job permanency is achieved.**

Transitional employment may be the best service option for an individual with chronic mental illness whom:

- is uncertain about choosing an appropriate vocational goal,
- is fearful or tentative about his/her abilities to maintain employment, and/or,
- is an individual for whom traditional work adjustment services would have been considered the best pre-employment preparation service.

If a permanent job is not procured before the end of the 18-month period of VR time limited services, the extended services provider is responsible for procuring and maintaining the permanent job placement. There are few vocational services for individuals with mental illness (outside of the services offered through the Agency) that can fund job development or placement activities. Consequently, counselors should encourage permanent placement for most individuals prior to case closure, to ensure that the individual has access to funding for permanent job placement.

Generally, individuals who are motivated to work and have clear ideas regarding the type of work they would like to do should be treated as regular Supported Employment placements.

Section I7. Jobs for Veterans State Grants Requirements.

I7A. Addendum for Mandatory Training Requirements.

Addendum for Mandatory Training Requirement

NAME	PROGRAM	HIRED (AGENCY)	ASSIGNED (PROGRAM)	COMPLETION	CLASS	DATE
Theodora Anderson	LVER	10/01/2001	03/01/2005	09/19/2006	Distant Orientation to Veteran Services	05/03/2005
					Labor & Employment Specialist	05/09/2006
					Promoting Partnerships for Employment	09/19/2006
					Case Management	10/17/2006
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	03/12/2007
					Competitive Grantees Conference 2007	08/07/2007
					Symposium	11/28/2012
Walter L. Berryhill	DVOP	04/02/2001	10/01/2013	10/21/003	Labor & Employment Specialist	08/19/2003
					Case Management	10/21/2003
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	04/12/2004
					Promoting Partnerships for Employment	07/31/2007
					Orientation to Veterans Services/MS	12/16/2009
					Job Coaching for Offender Populations/MS	12/17/2009
Emma J. Breitbarth	DVOP	10/01/2012	10/01/2012	06/18/2013	Distant Orientation to Veteran Services	10/22/2012
					Labor & Employment Specialist	03/05/2013
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	03/18/2013
					Case Management	06/18/2013
Gloria A. Cannon	LVER	07/01/2001	01/01/2003	04/24/2007	Labor & Employment Specialist	12/09/2003
					TAP	02/09/2004

Name	Title				Training	Date
					Case Management	04/20/2004
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	02/12/2007
					Promoting Partnerships for Employment	04/24/2007
					Orientation to Veterans Services/MS	12/16/2009
					Job Coaching for Offender Populations/MS	12/17/2009
Brandy Lynn Denton	DVOP	05/01/2014	05/01/2014	07/29/2014	Intensive Services	07/08/2014
					Facilitating Veteran Employment	07/29/2014
Donna Sharon Dollarhide	DVOP	10/16/2010	10/01/2013	03/27/2012	Labor & Employment Specialist	05/03/2011
					Promoting Partnerships for Employment	05/24/2011
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	06/06/2011
					Case Management	03/27/2012
					Symposium	11/28/2012
Donald D. Dunaway	DVOP	08/01/2011	08/01/2011	03/27/2012	Orientation to Veterans Services/MS	12/16/2009
					Job Coaching for Offender Populations/MS	12/17/2009
					Distant Orientation to Veteran Services	02/21/2012
					Labor & Employment Specialist	02/28/2012
					Promoting Partnerships for Employment	03/20/2012
					Case Management	03/27/2012
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	07/09/2012
Larry G. Harris	DVOP	04/16/2001	09/04/2001	05/26/2003	Labor & Employment Specialist	06/26/2001
					Case Management	05/06/2003
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	06/16/2003
					TAP	02/09/2004
					Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program	05/18/2004

Name	Title	Date	Date	Date	Course	Course Date
					Promoting Partnerships for Employment	04/24/2007
					Orientation to Veterans Services/MS	12/16/2009
					Job Coaching for Offender Populations/MS	12/17/2009
					Advanced Personal Financial Readiness	08/09/2010
					TAP Personal Finance	08/28/2012
Larry G. Lee	DVOP	06/16/2014	06/16/2014	08/19/2014	Orientation to Veterans Services/MS	12/16/2009
					Job Coaching for Offender Populations/MS	12/17/2009
					Labor & Employment Specialist	03/23/2010
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	06/07/2010
					Promoting Partnerships for Employment	02/08/2011
					Case Management	03/27/2012
					Intensive Services	08/19/2014
Kevin McClellan Massey	DVOP	11/16/2011	11/16/2011	03/20/2012	Labor & Employment Specialist	02/28/2012
					Case Management	03/20/2012
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	03/18/2013
Charles Erick Mc Gaughy	DVOP	12/16/2013	12/16/2013	06/03/2014	Distant Orientation to Veteran Services	01/09/2014
					Labor & Employment Specialist	04/22/2014
					Intensive Services	06/03/2014
Shakera D. Mc Kay	DVOP	01/16/2014	01/16/2014	07/08/2014	Distant Orientation to Veteran Services	02/03/2014
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	05/05/2014
					Facilitating Veteran Employment	06/03/2014
					Intensive Services	07/08/2014
					US Navy PreSeparation	02/25/2013
John E. Olson	DVOP	11/07/2011	11/07/2011	03/27/2012	Labor & Employment Specialist	02/28/2012

Name	Title				Training	Date
Lawrence Lavontae Robinson	DVOP	06/16/2014	06/16/2014	9/15/2014	Case Management	03/27/2012
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	06/04/2012
					Facilitating Veteran Employment	07/22/2014
Pete P. Simon Jr	DVOP	10/16/2007	04/01/2008	02/23/2010	Labor & Employment Specialist	06/23/2009
					Job Coaching for Offender Populations/MS	12/17/2009
					Case Management	02/23/2010
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	08/06/2012
Michael P. Sturgeon	DVOP	11/09/2009	11/09/2009	01/24/2012	Orientation to Veterans Services/MS	12/16/2009
					Job Coaching for Offender Populations/MS	12/17/2009
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	06/07/2010
					Labor & Employment Specialist	06/22/2010
					Case Management	01/24/2012
Tommy Townsend	DVOP	10/01/2011	07/01/2013	Pending IS	Pool Listing	
					Distant Orientation to Veteran Services	07/25/2013
					Labor & Employment Specialist	09/10/2013
Melvin Woods	DVOP	12/16/1999	10/01/2013	03/23/2003	Labor & Employment Specialist	04/30/2002
					Case Management	03/25/2003
					Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program	05/18/2004
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	02/12/2007
					Promoting Partnerships for Employment	06/12/2007
					Orientation to Veterans Services/MS	12/16/2009
					Job Coaching for Offender Populations/MS	12/17/2009
					Basic Veterans Benefits On-Line	03/18/2013

Section I8. Unemployment Insurance Program Specific Requirements.

I8A. Unemployment Insurance Transmittal Letter.

Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Phil Bryant
Governor

Mark Henry
Executive Director

Les Range
Regional Administrator
U. S. Department of Labor/ETA
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street, S. W., Room 6M12
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3104

Dear Mr. Range:

Please find attached the Fiscal Year 2016 Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) for the State of Mississippi.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Maranda Holmes at 601-321-6149.

Sincerely,

Timothy Rush
Director, Office of Reemployment Assistance

Helping Mississippians Get Jobs

Henry J. Kirksey Building • 1235 Echelon Parkway • Jackson, Mississippi 39213
Post Office Box 1699 • Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1699 • (601) 321-6000
MDES is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer

I8B. Worksheet UI-1.

ETA UI1 STAFF HOURS

STATE: MS	REGION: 03		REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING: 09/30/2016	
ANNUAL HOURS PER STAFF YEAR AND QUARTERLY DISTRIBUTION				
	Annual	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
Hours Worked	1,756.33	439.08	439.08	439.08	439.09
Hours Paid	2,088.00	522.00	522.00	522.00	522.00

SUBMITTED FOR FEDERAL REVIEW

MISSISSIPPI
STATE QUALITY SERVICE PLAN
FY 2016
STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) is dedicated to improving the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program to provide superior service to our customers. Mississippi has prepared Corrective Action Plan, CAP, in its FY 2016 SQSP for, First Payment Promptness, First Payment Intrastate 14/21 Days, Nonmonetary Determination in 21 Days, Effective Audit Measure, and Data Validation. Mississippi addresses "Make Timely Benefit Payments, Establish Tax Accounts Promptly, Detect Benefit Overpayments, Facilitate the Reemployment of UI Claimants" in the narrative.

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security has a straightforward mission to serve the state's workforce broker by bringing people and jobs together. Our vision is to "Help Mississippians Get Jobs". That includes the unemployed, the underemployed and those looking for better jobs to improve their economic standing.

We achieved this through participating in U.S. Department of Labor initiatives that fund staff assisted re-employment efforts for those receiving unemployment benefits. We recognize long term employment is created only by employers. We demonstrate our diligent commitment to connecting workers with those jobs by providing job placement and training to workers and personnel services to businesses. We manage the state's Unemployment Insurance trust fund and pay Unemployment Insurance benefits, an income stream that helps keep families and communities afloat during tough economic times.

MDES has partnered with businesses, communities, elected officials and the State Workforce Investment Board to strengthen the state's ability to attract and retain business. Mississippi has been identified as being or becoming an environment for manufacturing, and MDES is making certain that its services are focused to take advantage of this opportunity.

Workforce policy and resources are moving in the direction of developing national, portable, industry-recognized credentials. The workforce system feeds into the credentialing process. We're working with businesses, industries and economic development organizations to align and leverage our assets.

As a State Workforce Investment Board partner, MDES continues to provide a forum to convene businesses, economic development agencies, educational institutions, workforce development service providers and other community leaders to collaboratively address and improve the broad range of workforce issues facing Mississippi and its communities.

MDES is a marketing organization and as such must provide great customer service. We market employers and workers to each other. Each is our customer, and each demands highly skilled staff providing the best and highest level of state-of-the-art technology to make these connections.

MDES is continuously developing and improving tools that help the unemployed — those receiving unemployment benefits and others who have exhausted or do not qualify for unemployment benefits. We are one of three pilot states to join the functionality of the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system and the Employment Service (ES) System into a seamless experience for our customers. With this development, MDES' customers will enter through the ES system, fully register for work and then be directed to secure services for Unemployment Insurance, if needed into one seamless experience for the customer. Joining these systems will provide additional integrity to the unemployment benefits program by allowing MDES more easily to monitor Unemployment Insurance recipients' job-hunting efforts. Our goal is to take workers from the unemployment rolls to Mississippi employers' payrolls.

MISSISSIPPI'S RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY OF LABOR'S AREAS OF PROGRAM EMPHASIS (FEDERAL PROGRAM EMPHASIS):

Make timely and accurate benefit payments to unemployed workers, establish tax accounts promptly, detect benefit overpayment and facilitate their reemployment.

- ## *Make Timely Benefit Payments*

Intrastate first payments made within 14/21 days: For performance year ending March 31, 2015, Mississippi achieved a level of 85.0%. Mississippi continues in its efforts to restructure the nonmonetary unit through the blending of investigation and adjudication processes. Due to frequent staff turnover this has evolved into an ongoing assessment and training process. Mississippi recently implemented two new processes which include a weekly work search requirement and an online application verification process. While these new processes will be effective measures in preventing fraud and ensuring active work searches are being conducted it has resulted in increased nonmonetary workload. MDES is working on additional system enhancements and auto adjudication measures to help more efficiently manage and resolve the additional workload and thus make more timely benefit payments.

- ## *Establish Tax Accounts Promptly*

Employer Tax Performance: For the performance year ending March 31, 2015, Mississippi is at 85.6%. GPRA goal of status determinations for new employers made within 90 days of the end of the first quarter in which liability occurred is 70%. The modifications made to the online registration program and assigning employer account numbers is completed. These modifications will improve the timeliness of new employer status determinations. Various status processes have been reviewed and adjusted and new processes are currently being implemented to help more quickly identify new businesses and organizational changes. One of the recent process changes has made staff members aware of information errors provided by employers which now results in investigation and often more timely registration. Field Staff will begin coordinating with local Chamber of Commerce divisions to obtain monthly listings of new businesses in the area. Additionally we have been and will continue to promote employer outreach programs to educate employers of the importance of proper and timely registration of their businesses.

- ## *Detect Benefit Overpayments*

Overpayments: The GPRA goal for overpayments detected will be at least 67.9% of the estimated detectable, recoverable overpayments. The BPC component is the one-year period ending March 31, 2015. During this period of time, 76.19% of the estimated amounts of overpayments were established. MDES implemented a procedure for communicating with individuals when there is a 'match' on State and National Directory of New Hire crossmatches. The claimant is contacted for information at the same time a request the Wage Request forms (BPC-99) is forwarded to the employer. This proactive approach has resulted in MDES detecting overpayments of benefits earlier in the claims series. The creation of an Integrity Task Force has led to more in-depth discussion of additional measures that will improve the detection of benefit overpayments.

- ## *Facilitate the Reemployment of UI Claimants*

The latest report available indicates 63.1% of Mississippi claimants employed in the quarter following the quarter in which a first payment made. MDES is committed to reemploying UI claimants through an integrated/interconnected workforce system, ES-UI Integration program. During the claim intake process, each claimant questioned about their work history, the length of time worked in each provided position, primary occupation and the distance they are willing to commute. Upon completion of the UI initial claim, a list of job opportunities on file in MDES's ES system matching the claimant's responses is populated and the claimant provided the opportunity to view specific details and apply for the jobs listed. The claimant is provided with a list of job openings matching their preferences each time they log in to the UI system.

Additional Goals of the SESA:

Six additional areas been targeted as priority items. The desired result of these targeted areas is to improve the economic security of the State of Mississippi.

1. **Technical improvements to our systems and technologies**

Mississippi developed two state-of-the-art technology systems during the last five years. Chief among them is the UI system, a Web-based Unemployment Insurance program that allowed the agency to improve process efficiencies. The UI system allows individuals to file for unemployment benefits through the call center or internet. Internet filing continues to grow at a strong rate. MDES invested in a smart phone application technology in order to assist our growing customers demand and provide exceptional customer service.

Mississippi, Rhode Island and Maine, MRM, consortium began in FY 2013 and is a four year project. The purpose is for the development of an automated information technology system for the Unemployment Insurance program with may be used as a national model. Mississippi's UI system is the base/core system utilized to enhance, extend and build-out a model, complete UI IT system, which served the initial consortium but can also be adopted for shared and common operational use by any other interested U.S. jurisdictions. Phase I of the Benefits' requirements gathering, review of deliverables, design and analysis have been completed. Phase I consist of claim intake, monetary, non-monetary and appeals. Phase I has been completed.

Phase II of the Benefits requirements gathering was completed in 2014. This phase included payments, overpayments, repayments, chargeback, collections. Mississippi is scheduled to go live with Phase II in September 2015. Maine is scheduled to go live with Benefits Phase 1 and II in November 2015 and Rhode Island in February 2016.

2. **Reemployment Services Program**
The Reemployment system identifies claimants who are likely to exhaust unemployment insurance benefits and makes extensive reemployment services available to them to increase their chances of gaining re-employment early. The U. S. Department of Labor has launched a major initiative to establish an integrated, comprehensive reemployment services system involving various programs, including UI and ES. The objective of the program is to provide reemployment to UI beneficiaries, reduce the UI Benefit duration and minimize erroneous benefit payments.

MDES received grants to implement the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Initiative for unemployment insurance recipients. Participants are scheduled for one-on-one assessments at WIN Job Centers early in their unemployment claim series. The assessment involves a joint beneficiary staff review of unemployment and job service data to verify accuracy and eligibility, use of labor market information for targeted job search assistance, development of a job search plan, and as necessary, referrals to additional reemployment services provided by MDES or partner organizations. MDES has implemented Keep Mississippi Working (KMW) program. It is believed that following up with the participant sooner and more frequently will increase their chances of returning to work sooner.

3. **Addressing Worker Misclassification**
As a result of the automation of the audit processes in the UI modernization system, an audit referral program has been implemented to help identify employers with suspicious business practices. The identifying misclassified workers process has been proven effective. We will continue this audit referral program which to date has resulted in 100% change audits with many misclassified workers. Additionally we are reviewing various industry types to help identify areas where misclassified workers may commonly be found to broaden our audit efforts.

4. **Proposed improvements in quality of service in specific areas of operations as measured by standards set by the U. S. Department of Labor**
The U. S. Department of Labor imposes federal standards to the states to measure performance in several key areas. There are benchmarks in each area that must be met each year. If any goal is not met, a program improvement plan must be submitted. MDES plans to make continued improvements in every measurable UI process. With initial and weekly certifications being available through online self-service applications, more staff time will focus on quality of service to help attain these goals.

5. **Unemployment Insurance Program Integrity**
The U. S. Department of Labor made an immediate call to action to all states to ensure that UI Integrity is a top priority and to develop state specific strategies to bring down the UI improper payment rate. MDES has made it a priority to focus on preventing, detecting and collecting UI overpayments. Several integrity measures have been implemented to reduce improper payments. MDES has applied for supplemental funding to assist with other integrity initiatives. The Treasury Offset Program (TOP) is one of the integrity initiatives implemented.

MDES will continue to use the Integrity Task Force Committee, which under the leadership of the Task Force Officer, to identify areas of safeguards, reduce the risk and improve the recovery of improper payments. Prevention is primary focjus of the Taskforce especially since the recent fraud claims Mississippi has encountered. Another primary focus at this time is the Benefit Year Earnings (BYE). Information is provided to our customers regarding the importance of reporting BYE information and how to do this electronically, including the use of SIDES.

6. **Management of the UI Trust Fund**
Mississippi Code requires the agency to manage the Mississippi Unemployment Trust Fund so that funds will be available to pay benefits with the lowest possible taxes imposed on employers. As of July 2015, Mississippi's UI Trust Fund is rated as one of the most solvent in the United States, ensuring Mississippi's continued ability to meet the demands of higher than normal unemployment. This has been accomplished while continuing to lower and retain low unemployment tax burden on Mississippi employers.

Assurances:

a. Assurance of Equal Opportunity (EO)
b. Assurance of Administrative Requirements and Allowable Cost Standards
c. Assurance of Management Systems, Reporting and Recordkeeping
d. Assurance of Program Quality
e. Assurance on Use of Unobligated Funds
f. Assurance of Prohibition of Lobbying Costs (29 CFR Part 93)
g. Drug-Free Workplace (29 CFR Part 98)
h. Assurance of Contingency Planning:
   - Information Technology (IT) Contingency Plan Implemented: September 2012 - Currently under revision - March 2015
   - IT Contingency Plan Reviewed / Updated: September 2012 - Currently under revision - March 2015
   - IT Contingency Plan Tested: Disaster Recovery: June 2013 – Currently under revision - June 2015
i. Assurance of Conformity and Compliance
j. Assurance of Automated Information Systems Security:
   - Risk Assessment Conducted: January 2013 – Currently under revision - March 2015
   - System Security Plan Reviewed / Updated: In progress - September 2014
k. Assurance of Confidentiality

I8D SQSP CAPs and Quarterly Report

State: Mississippi | **Federal Fiscal Year: 2015 SQSP Monitoring Report**

MEASURE/PROGRAM AREA:

First Payment Promptness

Performance Measures		CAP based on 03/31/2015 performance	Quarter 1 12/31/2015	Quarter 2 3/31/2016	Quarter 3 6/30/2016	Quarter 4 9/30/2016	Quarter 5 12/31/2016	Quarter 6 3/31/2017	Quarter 7 6/30/2017	Quarter 8 9/30/2017
First Payment Promptness: % of all 1st payments within 14/21 days after the compensable week. ALP > 87%	3/31/2015	85.0%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%
	Target	87.0%								
	Actual									
First Payment Promptness, 14/21 days Intrastate UI full weeks	3/31/2015	84.7%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%
	Target	87.5%								
	Actual									
First Payment Promptness, 35 days Intrastate UI full weeks	3/31/2015									
	Target									
	Actual									
First Payment Promptness, 14/21 days Interstate UI full weeks	3/31/2015									
	Target									
	Actual									
First Payment Promptness, 35 days Interstate UI full weeks	3/31/2015									
	Target									
	Actual									

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

A. MDES continues to experience a backlog in investigations due to staff turnover and new eligibility requirements creating additional workload. These factors have caused increased backlog. In filling staff vacancies the available applicants have little UI knowledge thus requiring additional training and delaying maximum productivity.

B. MDES is utilizing staff with UI experience from other departments to increase the number of staff focused on issue resolution. Also, we are implementing procedural changes and modifying workflow distribution to more quickly eliminate backlog and increase first payment timeliness.

C. A special task force team is identifying and resolving the older work items. Staff were empowered and involved in this plan to foster a sense of ownership and commitment to resolution of the backlog and help determine best practices.

D. New reporting tools are in progress that will allow management to more easily identify and assign workload based on work item type and length of time pending. New productivity standards were established to encourage maximum productivity and additional daily and weekly reports are being shared with staff.

NOTE: Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.
(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)

Milestones	Completion Date
1. Ongoing monitoring of investigation and adjudication process efficiency directly affecting first payment time lapse.	09/30/2017
Quarter 1 status report:	
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	

	Completion Date
2. Provide ongoing nonmonetary and adjudication training to all staff as well as any additional training needed as deficiencies are detected.	09/30/2017
Quarter 1 status report:	
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	

	Completion Date
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	
3. Increase investigation and adjudication staff through identifying and promoting qualified staff.	09/30/2017
Quarter 1 status report:	
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	

	Completion Date
4. Work with technology team to ensure MDES are maximizing system functionality to decrease issue resolution time and increase first payment processing.	09/30/2017
Quarter 1 status report:	
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	

SUBMITTED FOR FEDERAL REVIEW

State: Mississippi

Federal Fiscal Year: 2015 SQSP Monitoring Report

MEASURE/PROGRAM AREA:

Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness

Performance Measure		3/31/2015	CAP based on 03/31/2015 performance	**Performance Level**							
				12/31/2015 Quarter 1	3/31/2016 Quarter 2	6/30/2016 Quarter 3	9/30/2016 Quarter 4	12/31/2016 Quarter 5	3/31/2017 Quarter 6	6/30/2017 Quarter 7	9/30/2017 Quarter 8
Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness Core Measure ≥ 80% of Nonmonetary Determinations made within 21 days of issue detection date	Target	75.8%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
	Actual										

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

A. The implementation of a more stringent work search requirement and seasonal workload fluctuations resulted in a significant investigation workload increase. This compounded a preexisting backlog.

B. MDES is reviewing and adjusting procedures to streamline the investigation process to expedite case resolution while maintaining the acceptable level of performance. Primary focus is being placed on productivity to alleviate the backlog and bring workload to a more manageable level.

C. Continuing staff turnover and providing assistance with Call Center services has negated previous efforts to improve timeliness through monitoring adjustments and special training efforts. Though staff turnover continues to be an issue, the need for assistance with Call Center services is declining so more time and effort can now be spent on the determination process. Also additional staff from other areas has been temporarily reassigned to assist with the investigations backlog.

D. Additional reporting and monitoring has been implemented and technological enhancements are in progress to help management more effectively assess individual and group productivity and timeliness.

NOTE: Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.

(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)

Milestones	**Completion Date**
1. Ongoing training for investigation, adjudication and the blending of these processes as appropriate.	09/30/2017

Quarter 1 status report:

Quarter 2 status report:

Quarter 3 status report:

	Completion Date
Quarter 4 status report:	03/31/2016
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	

2. Utilize modified productivity reports to monitor and address problem areas.

	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report:	09/30/2017
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	

3. Increase investigation and adjudication staff through hiring and cross training of intake staff.

	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report:	06/30/2016
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	

4. More precise monitoring of the age of pending issues to optimize timeliness of determinations.

Quarter 1 status report:

Quarter 2 status report:

Quarter 3 status report:

Quarter 4 status report:

Quarter 5 status report:

Quarter 6 status report:

Quarter 7 status report:

Quarter 8 status report:

Completion Date

Quarter 1 status report:

Quarter 2 status report:

Quarter 3 status report:

Quarter 4 status report:

Quarter 5 status report:

Quarter 6 status report:

Quarter 7 status report:

Quarter 8 status report:

Completion Date

Quarter 1 status report:

Quarter 2 status report:

Quarter 3 status report:

Quarter 4 status report:

Quarter 5 status report:

Quarter 6 status report:

Quarter 7 status report:

State: Mississippi | **Federal Fiscal Year: 2015 SQSP Monitoring Report**

MEASURE/PROGRAM AREA:

Effective Audit Measure

Performance Level

Performance Measures		3/31/2015	CAP based on 3/31/2015 performance	12/31/2015 Quarter 1	3/31/2016 Quarter 2	6/30/2016 Quarter 3	9/30/2016 Quarter 4	12/31/2016 Quarter 5	3/31/2017 Quarter 6	6/30/2017 Quarter 7	9/30/2017 Quarter 8
Effective Audit Measure	Target		Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Actual	Failed									

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

A. The reason for the deficiency was due to an increased workload and an increased non-compliance by employers. The Audit and Compliance department has four auditors and supervisor in the unit. In 2014, Mississippi experienced an increase in workload that warranted additional staff.

B. The actions/activities which will be undertaken to improve performance are currently underway with the replacement of two vacant auditors. In addition, in order to reduce non-compliance, an solicitation for two additional auditors has been issued.

C. New auditors will be trained extensively and will have the skills to investigate and address non-compliance issues. The supervisory staff will continue to monitor staff performance on a monthly basis to ensure the required skill sets are present and to ensure continued retention of necessary skills.

D. In order to reduce non-compliance issues discovered during an audit, the department is searching for additional staffing. Adding two auditors will provide the buffer necessary to insure deficiencies do not occur in the future. The two additional auditors will allow the department to focus on areas where there are high levels of non-compliance and work to educate employers and bring those areas into compliance.

NOTE: Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.

(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)

Milestones	Completion Date
1. All open positions filled.	3/31/2016

Quarter 1 status report:

	Completion Date
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	
2. Fill two new auditors positions.	3/31/2016
Quarter 1 status report:	
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	
3. Successfully meet all factors.	12/31/2015
Quarter 1 status report:	

State: MS				Federal Fiscal Year: 2015 SQSP Monitoring Report							

MEASURE/PROGRAM AREA:
Benefits Data Validation

Performance Level

Performance Measures		CAP based on 03/31/2015 performance	12/31/2015 Quarter 1	3/31/2016 Quarter 2	6/30/2016 Quarter 3	9/30/2016 Quarter 4	12/31/2016 Quarter 5	3/31/2017 Quarter 6	6/30/2017 Quarter 7	9/30/2017 Quarter 8
Population 5 (Nonmonetary Determinations and Redeterminations)	3/31/2015	Failed	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Target	Pass								
	Actual									
Population 12 (Overpayment Established by Cause)	3/31/2015	Failed	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Target	Pass								
	Actual									
	3/31/2015									
	Target									
	Actual									
	3/31/2015									
	Target									
	Actual									
	3/31/2015									
	Target									
	Actual									

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

A. Population 5 is failed because no redetermination allowed decision is mailed to claimant. Population 12 report validation failed high dollar overpayment counts and dollar amounts.

B. System enhancements were completed to generate allowed nonmonetary redeterminations decisions in population 5 in June 2015. Populations 12 file specifications will be modified to correct the extract file. (should this be will be modified? Any discussion with OTDI on the necessary mods?)

C. Population 5 enhancement was part of the consortium, with 2 other state workforce agencies, which was completed in May 2015. The UI System was change to provide allowed decision for redetermination of claims. Population 12 needs some minor changes in layout to modify the high dollar amount. Population 12 will be modified by September 2015.

D. Data Validation is monitored and tested to insure accuracy of ETA reports.

NOTE: Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and (Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)

MILESTONES (Actions & Activities)

The actions/activities listed below should demonstrate the steps planned to improve performance summarized in Summary "B", above.

	Completion Date
1. Testing of Population 5.	12/31/2015
Quarter 1 status report:	
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	

	Completion Date
2. Modify high dollar on the ETA 227 and test reporting.	03/31/2016
Quarter 1 status report:	
Quarter 2 status report:	

State: MS

MEASURE/PROGRAM AREA:

Tax Data Validation

Federal Fiscal Year: 2015 SQSP Monitoring Report

Performance Level

Performance Measures		CAP based on 03/31/2015 performance	12/31/2015 Quarter 1	3/31/2016 Quarter 2	6/30/2016 Quarter 3	9/30/2016 Quarter 4	12/31/2016 Quarter 5	3/31/2017 Quarter 6	6/30/2017 Quarter 7	9/30/2017 Quarter 8
Population 3 (Status Determinations)	3/31/2015	Failed								
	Target	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Actual									
Population 4 (Accounts Receivables)	3/31/2015	Failed								
	Target	Pass	Fail	Fail	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Actual									
Population 5 (Field Audits)	3/31/2015	Failed								
	Target	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Actual									
Module 4 (TPS Quality Sample Validation)	3/31/2015	Failed								
	Target	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Actual									
	3/31/2015									
	Target									
	Actual									

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

A. Populations 3, 4, 5, and Module 4 failed. Population 3 has discrepancies due to how the registration was completed and further discussion with employer is needed. Population 4 file layouts are incomplete. Population 5 report validation failed due to some manual audit changes not captured in the UI system and it was added on the ETA 581 report. Module 4 random sampling selection and interval method failed.

B. Tax unit will review and create new batches for population files. The Developers are working on Population 4 account receivable transactions and rewriting batch specifications. Changes for field audit for Population 5 will be completed before the 581 Report is submitted.

C. The layout for Population 4 contains too many errors to validate. The Tax unit is evaluating how the files are being received and changes made to the accounts during any given quarter.

D. Testing is ongoing to validate reporting discrepancies.

NOTE: Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.

(Remaining Major Actions in this cell .)

MILESTONES (Actions & Activities)

The actions/activities listed below should demonstrate the steps planned to improve performance summarized in Summary "B", above.

	Completion Date
1. Testing on Population 3 is ongoing to provide the correct status determination date for the successor procedures.	12/31/2015
Quarter 1 status report:	
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	

	Completion Date
2. Developers are reviewing the file layouts and rewriting the batch specifications for Population 4.	03/31/2016
Quarter 1 status report:	
Quarter 2 status report:	

	Completion Date
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	
Quarter 5 status report:	
Quarter 6 status report:	
Quarter 7 status report:	
Quarter 8 status report:	
3. All audits corrections for Population 5 need to be completed before the 581 Report is submitted.	12/31/2015
Quarter 1 status report:	
Quarter 2 status report:	
Quarter 3 status report:	
Quarter 4 status report:	

Quarter 5 status report:

Quarter 6 status report:

Quarter 7 status report:

Quarter 8 status report:

	Completion Date
4. Developers will review current selection method and apply one of DOL random selection formulas.	12/31/2015

Quarter 1 status report:

Quarter 2 status report:

Quarter 3 status report:

Quarter 4 status report:

Quarter 5 status report:

Quarter 6 status report:

SUBMITTED FOR FEDERAL REVIEW

State: Mississippi	Federal Fiscal Year: 2016		

Root Causes: *(List the top three root causes of improper payments in the state for the most recent IPIA period (July 1 thru June 30), and the percentage change for each cause compared to the prior year's IPIA rate. Use the following link to access the IPIA data, http://www.dol.gov/dol/maps/Data.htm)*

Root Cause #1: Benefit Year Earnings	Enter Percentage Change:	1.03%
Root Cause #2: Seperatlons Issues	Enter Percentage Change:	1.25%
Root Cause #3: Able and Available	Enter Percentage Change:	.04%

Accountable Agency Official(s): Timothy Rush

Summary: (Provide a summary of the plan that the state has designed. The summary should include outreach efforts planned by the agency to inform all UI and workforce staff, and employers of the strategic plan to ensure everyone understands the importance of maintaining program integrity.)

The UI Integrity Taskforce has been reorganized, with changes in personnel and a renewed mission to develop stragetic actions to address improper payments. MDES will stress the importance of the integrity program through messaging to all agency staff and emphasize that all staff are responsible for maintaining integrity in their respective areas. MDES is partnering with USDOL in a new technical assistance initiative to lower BYE improper payments and reduce improper payment rates. Messaging to both employers and claimants to provide increased awareness of the importance of properly reporting of potential issues and earning information.

Instructions for the following section: In each individual section below, enter a Root Casue, from above, and the top three focused Strategies that will be employed to correct or reduce this cause of overpayments. An additional line is available in each section to include other significant strategies that target the root cause.

Root Cause #1: Benefit Year Earnings

Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
1. Claimant Messaging	Modify Benefit Rights Interview document and information in claims application process to emphasize the requirements for reporting earnings and the penalites for failing to properly report earnings.	March 31, 2016	Technology
2. Employer Messaging	Modify website to make the link for reporting new hire information more prominent; inform employers of the importance of reporting new hire information promptly.	October 31, 2015	Technology
3. Partner with Third Parties Administrators (TPAs)	Form alliances with TPAs to impmplement a crossmatch that will identify individuals who return to work immediately upon payroll first period (sooner than SDNH/NDNH crossmatch), to prevent overpayments when individuals return to work.	Ongoing	Technology
Additional:			

Root Cause #2: Separation Issues

Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
1. Staff training	Educate and train staff to ask probing questions to obtain comprehensive information from customers so that all separation issues are identified and addressed in a timely manner	Ongoing	Human Capital
2. Market SIDES participation to employers	Explain to employer the importance and benefit of timely reponse to request for separation information, and the advantages of using SIDES to provide this information.	Ongoing	Human Capital
3. Employers messaging	Educate employers regarding available resources on the MDES website - the capability of submitting information at any time to report separation from work and refusal of work; automated action is taken to document the issues.	Ongoing	Technology and Human Capital

Additional:			

Root Cause #3: Able and Available

Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
1. Enhanced Eligibility Review process	Provide additional training for staff performing eligibilty reviews to detect potential able and available issues and address promptly.	Ongoing	Human Capital
2. Utilize work search audit process	Staff will be attentive to detecting able and available issues durning the work search audit verification and address those issues promptly.	Ongoing	Human Capital
3. Incarceration crossmatch	Conduct crossmatch of incarcerated individuals and UI recipients to indenitify potentially ineligible individuals.	Ongoing	Technology and Human Capital
Additional:			

I8E Assurances

Assurances:

l. Assurance of Equal Opportunity (EO)
m. Assurance of Administrative Requirements and Allowable Cost Standards
n. Assurance of Management Systems, Reporting and Recordkeeping
o. Assurance of Program Quality
p. Assurance on Use of Unobligated Funds
q. Assurance of Prohibition of Lobbying Costs (29 CFR Part 93)
r. Drug-Free Workplace (29 CFR Part 98)
s. Assurance of Contingency Planning:
   - Information Technology (IT) Contingency Plan Implemented: OTS is contracting with a third party vendor to write the IT contingency plan. The IT processes were reviewed first quarter 2015and has been submitted for inclusion to the Agency Contingency Plan.
   - IT Contingency Plan Reviewed / Updated: March 2015
   - IT Contingency Plan Tested: Disaster Recovery: June 2013 – The agency is currently upgrading its infrastructure. After the upgrade is complete, the plan will be tested.
t. Assurance of Conformity and Compliance
u. Assurance of Automated Information Systems Security
   - Risk Assessment Conducted: An external risk assessment was conducted during the second quarter of 2015. The agency is currently upgrading its infrastructure. After the upgrade is complete a full risk assessment will be conducted by a third party vendor. Target date January 2016.
   - System Security Plan Reviewed / Updated: Currently under review. Review to be complete by August 2015.
v. Assurance of Confidentiality

I8F. Worksheet SF 424.

OMB Number: 4040-0004
Expiration Date: 8/31/2016

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 1. Type of Submission:	* 2. Type of Application:	* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):
☐ Preapplication	☐ New	[.]
☐ Application	☐ Continuation	* Other (Specify):
☐ Changed/Corrected Application	☐ Revision	[ ]

* 3. Date Received:	4. Applicant Identifier:
[ ]	[ ]

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:	5b. Federal Award Identifier:
[ ]	[ ]

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State: [ ]	7. State Application Identifier: [ ]

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name: Mississippi Department of Emploment Security

* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):	* c. Organizational DUNS:
64-6000765	8781931500000

d. Address:

* Street1:	1235 Echelon Parkway
Street2:	
* City:	Jackson
County/Parish:	Hinds
* State:	MS: Mississippi
Province:	
* Country:	USA: UNITED STATES
* Zip / Postal Code:	39213-0000

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:	Division Name:
Office of Customer Support	

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:	Mr.	* First Name:	Dale
Middle Name:	L		
* Last Name:	Smith		
Suffix:			

Title: Deputy Executive Director, COO

Organizational Affiliation:
[ ]

* Telephone Number: (601) 321-6167	Fax Number: [ ]

* Email: dsmith@mdes.ms.gov

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:

A: State Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

* 10. Name of Federal Agency:

U.S. Department of Labor

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

17.255

CFDA Title

Unemployment Insurance

* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:

UIPL-21-15

* Title

Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance (UI) Resource Planning Targets and Guidelines

13. Competition Identification Number:

Title

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

[Add Attachment] [Delete Attachment] [View Attachment]

* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:

Unemployment Insurance

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

[Add Attachments] [Delete Attachments] [View Attachments]

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

16. Congressional Districts Of:

* a. Applicant: Second

* b. Program/Project: All/US

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

[Add Attachment] [Delete Attachment] [View Attachment]

17. Proposed Project:

* a. Start Date: 10/01/2015

* b. End Date: 09/30/2016

18. Estimated Funding ($):

* a. Federal	18,983,149.00
* b. Applicant	
* c. State	
* d. Local	
* e. Other	
* f. Program Income	
* g. TOTAL	18,983,149.00

* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?

[ ] a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on

[ ] b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.

[X] c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)

[ ] Yes   [X] No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

[Add Attachment] [Delete Attachment] [View Attachment]

21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

[X] ** I AGREE

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix:	Mr.
* First Name	Mark
Middle Name	
* Last Name:	Henry
Suffix:	
* Title	Executive Director
* Telephone Number	(601)321-6003
Fax Number:	(601)321-6004
* Email	dsmith@mdes.ms.gov

* Signature of Authorized Representative: *Mark Henry*

* Date Signed: 8/25/15

I8G Worksheet SF 424A

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. Unemployment Insurance	17.225	$	$	$ 18,983,149.00	$	$ 18,983,149.00
2.						
3.						
4.						
5. Totals		$	$	$ 18,983,149.00	$	$ 18,983,149.00

SUBMITTED FOR FEDERAL REVIEW

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total (5)
	(1) Unemployment Insurance	(2)	(3)	(4)	
a. Personnel	$	$	$ 7,942,653.00	$	$ 7,942,653.00
b. Fringe Benefits			2,647,552.00		2,647,552.00
c. Travel			157,105.00		157,105.00
d. Equipment			27,240.00		27,240.00
e. Supplies			60,288.00		60,288.00
f. Contractual			1,973,640.00		1,973,640.00
g. Construction					
h. Other			3,781,283.00		3,781,283.00
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	$	$	$ 16,589,761.00	$	$ 16,589,761.00
j. Indirect Charges			2,393,388.00		2,393,388.00
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	$	$	$ 18,983,149.00	$	$ 18,983,149.00
7. Program Income	$	$	$	$	$

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Prescribed by OMB (Circular A -102) Page 1A

SECTION C - NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES

(a) Grant Program	(b) Applicant	(c) State	(d) Other Sources	(e) TOTALS
8. Unemployment insurance	$	$	$	$
9.				
10.				
11.				
12. TOTAL (sum of lines 8-11)	$	$	$	$

SECTION D - FORECASTED CASH NEEDS

	Total for 1st Year	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
13. Federal	$ 18,983,149.00	$ 4,745,787.00	$ 4,745,787.00	$ 4,745,787.00	$ 4,745,788.00
14. Non-Federal	$				
15. TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	$ 18,983,149.00	$ 4,745,787.00	$ 4,745,787.00	$ 4,745,787.00	$ 4,745,788.00

SECTION E - BUDGET ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT

(a) Grant Program	FUTURE FUNDING PERIODS (YEARS)			
	(b) First	(c) Second	(d) Third	(e) Fourth
16. Unemployment Insurance	$	$	$	$
17.				
18.				
19.				
20. TOTAL (sum of lines 16 - 19)	$	$	$	$

SECTION F - OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION

21. Direct Charges: 16,589,761	22. Indirect Charges: 2,393,388

23. Remarks:

I8H. MDES Organizational Chart.

I8I. SQSP Signature Page.

U.S. Department of Labor

SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE

OMB Approval No. 1205-0132   Expires 12/31/2017

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Employment and Training Administration	FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2016	STATE MS

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE STATE QUALITY SERVICE PLAN SIGNATURE PAGE

This Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) is entered into between the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and

<div align="center">

MISSISSIPP
(STATE'S NAME)

</div>

The Unemployment Insurance SQSP is part of the State's overall operating plan and, during this Federal fiscal year, the State agency will adhere to and carry out the standards set forth in Federal UI Law as interpreted by the DOL, and adhere to the Federal requirements related to the use of granted funds.

All work performed under this agreement will be in accordance with the assurances and descriptions of activities as identified in the SQSP Handbook and will be subject to its terms.

TYPED NAME AND TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
STATE ADMINISTRATOR Mark Henry Executive Director	*Mark Henry*	August 25, 2015
DOL APPROVING OFFICIAL		
DOL APPROVING OFFICIAL		

I9A. PY 2014 Equitable Distribution List by National and State Grantee with Counties

PY 2015 Equitable Distribution List by National and State Grantee with Counties

*Latest data from www.SCSEPED.org for PY15 with enrollments as of end of 2nd quarter.
**PY16 information will change due to federally mandated competition for national grantee slot allocations.

County	State Grant Auth Pos	State Grant Enrolled Q2 2015	State Grant Variance	Experience Works Auth Pos	EW Enrolled Q2 2015	EW Variance	NCBA Auth Pos	NCBA Enrolled Q2 2015	NCBA Variance	Senior Service America Auth Pos	SSA Enrolled Q2 2015	SSA Variance	National Grantees Auth Pos	National Grantees Enrolled Q2 2015	National Grantees Variance
Adams	3	3								6	7	1	6	7	1
Alcorn	8	10	2										0	0	0
Amite										4	2	-2	4	2	-2
Attala				6	4	-2							6	4	-2
Benton				2	6	4							2	6	4
Bolivar							10	9	-1				10	9	-1
Calhoun				6	7	1							6	7	1
Carroll				4	4								4	4	0
Chickasaw				4	6	2							4	6	2
Choctaw				2	3	1							2	3	1
Claiborne										3	5	2	3	5	2
Clarke										5	2	-3	5	2	-3
Clay				6	5	-1							6	5	-1
Coahoma							7	2	-5				7	2	-5
Copiah										6	8	2	6	8	2
Covington	5	4	-1										0	0	0
DeSoto	5	4	-1				6	3	-3				6	3	-3
Forrest	4	3	-1							8	11	3	8	11	3
Franklin										2	1	-1	2	1	-1
George										3	3		3	3	0
Greene										3	4	1	3	4	1
Grenada	5	5											0	0	0
Hancock										7	7		7	7	0
Harrison	4	5	1							17	16	-1	17	16	-1
Hinds	5	6	1							30	39	9	30	39	9
Holmes								7						7	0
Humphreys							3	7	4				3	7	4

County						
Issaquena				0	0	0
Itawamba				5	3	-2
Jackson				16	13	-3
Jasper				6	3	-3
Jefferson	3	4	1	3	4	1
Jefferson Davis	4	4		0	0	0
Jones				11	11	0
Kemper				4	0	-4
Lafayette	5	1	-4	5	1	-4
Lamar				7	5	-2
Lauderdale	3	2	-1	11	22	11
Lawrence				3	5	2
Leake	5	1	-4	5	1	-4
Lee	10	12	2	0	0	0
Leflore	10	11	1	10	11	1
Lincoln	9	8	-1	6	7	1
Lowndes				0	0	0
Madison	9	11	2	9	11	2
Marion				9	10	1
Marshall	6	7	1	6	7	1
Monroe	9	14	5	9	14	5
Montgomery	3	4	1	3	4	1
Neshoba				6	6	0
Newton	4	1	-3	4	3	-1
Noxubee	4	3	-1	4	3	-1
Oktibbeha	5	9	4	5	9	4
Panola	6	4	-2	6	4	-2
Pearl River	5	2	-3	7	6	-1
Perry				3	2	-1
Pike				9	12	3
Pontotoc	6	6		0	0	0
Prentiss	6	5	-1	6	5	-1
Quitman	3	2	-1	3	2	-1
Rankin	3	1	-2	10	0	-10

County													
Scott											6	0	-6
Sharkey											1	4	3
Simpson											7	4	-3
Smith											3	0	-3
Stone											2	2	0
Sunflower	3	3									5	2	-3
Tallahatchie	4	3	-1								0	0	0
Tate											5	4	-1
Tippah	6	4	-2								0	0	0
Tishomingo				5	2	-3					5	2	-3
Tunica											2	1	-1
Union	6	4	-2								0	0	0
Walthall											4	1	-3
Warren											10	1	-9
Washington	5	5									8	7	-1
Wayne											7	6	-1
Webster				3	2	-1					3	2	-1
Wilkinson											2	1	-1
Winston				5	10	5					5	10	5
Yalobusha				3	3						3	3	0
Yazoo											7	1	-6

Mississippi's Area Agencies Aging

Area Agencies on Aging were created under the Older Americans' Act of 1965. The overall purpose of an area agency on aging is to develop a comprehensive system of services whereby older adults will be able to remain in their own home as long as possible, thereby avoiding premature institutionalization. Mississippi has ten (10) area agencies on aging and all of them are housed in Planning and Development Districts.

Area Agency On Aging	Directors	Phone Number	Website	Counties Served
Central MS Area Agency on Aging Post Office Box 4935 Jackson, MS 39296	Chelsea Crittle	(601) 981-1511 1-800-315-3103	www.cmpdd.org	Copiah, Hinds, Madison, Rankin, Simpson, Warren, Yazoo
East Central Area Agency on Aging Post Office Box 499 Newton, MS 39345	Rosie Coleman	(601) 683-2401 1-800-264-2007		Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Scott, Smith
Golden Triangle Area Agency on Aging Post Office Box 828 Starkville, MS 39760-0828	Bobby Gann	(662) 324-4650 (662) 323-2636 (toll free within a 55 mile radius) 1-888-324-9000	www.gtpdd.com	Choctaw, Clay, Lowndes, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Webster, Winston

North Central Area Agency on Aging 711 South Applegate Winona, MS 38967	Darlena Allen	(662) 283-2675 (662) 283-2771 (toll free within a 55 mile radius) 1-888-427-0714		Attala, Carroll, Grenada, Holmes, Le Flore, Montgomery, Yalobusha
North Delta Area Agency on Aging Post Office Box 1488 Batesville, MS 38601-1488	Rod Gordon	(662) 561-4100 1-800-844-2433	www.ndpdd.com	Coahoma, Desoto, Panola, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica
Northeast MS Area Agency on Aging Post Office Box 600 Booneville, MS 38829	Jane Perrigo	(662) 728-7038 1-800-745-6961		Alcorn, Benton, Marshall, Prentiss, Tippah, Tishomingo
South Delta Area Agency on Aging Post Office Box 1776 Greenville, MS 38702-1776	Sylvia Jackson	(662) 378-3831 1-800-898-3055	www.sdpdd.com	Bolivar, Humphreys, Issaquena, Sharkey, Sunflower, Washington
Southern MS Area Planning & Development District 9229 Highway 49 Gulfport, MS 39503	Tee McCovey, Workforce Director	(228) 868-2326 1-800-444-8014	www.smpdd.com	Covington, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Stone, Wayne
Southwest MS Area Agency on Aging 100 South Wall Street Natchez, MS 39120	Yolanda Campbell	(601) 446-6044 1-800-338-2049		Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Franklin, Jefferson, Lawerence, Lincoln, Pike, Walthall, Wilkinson
Three Rivers Area Agency on Aging Post Office Box 690 Pontotoc, MS 38663	Cleveland Joseph	(662) 489-2415 (662) 489-6911 (toll free within a 55 mile radius) 1-877-489-6911	www.trpdd.com	Calhoun, Chickasaw, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Monroe, Pontotoc, Union

Chelsea Crittle
Central MS Area Agency on Aging
Post Office Box 4935
Jackson, MS 39296

Jane Perrigo
Northeast MS Area Agency on
Aging
Post Office Box 600
Booneville, MS 38829

Rosie Coleman
East Central Area Agency on Aging
Post Office Box 499
Newton, MS 39345

Sylvia Jackson
South Delta Area Agency on Aging
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Greenville, MS 38702-1776

Bobby Gann
Golden Triangle Area Agency on
Aging
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Tee McCovey, Workforce Director
Southern MS Planning &
Development District
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Gulfport, MS 39503

Darlena Allen
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Aging
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Winona, MS 38967

Yolanda Campbell
Southwest MS Area Agency on
Aging
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Natchez, MS 39120

Rod Gordon
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Batesville, MS 38601-1488

Cleveland Joseph
Three Rivers Area Agency on Aging
Post Office Box 690
Pontotoc, MS 38663

I9C. Termination Policy

<div align="center">

Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

State Termination Policy

</div>

I.   SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This policy sets forth the State's procedures for termination of participants in the SCSEP based on the guidance set forth in the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006 and the SCSEP Final Rule.

II.   PARTICIPANT INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION POLICY

There are six (6) reasons a participant may be involuntarily terminated from the SCSEP. The reasons are listed below along with an explanation. This Termination Policy will be followed fairly and equitably when involuntarily terminating participants. Participants will not be terminated based on age; there is no upper age limit for participation in the SCSEP. Except as noted below in the case of serious violations, participants will receive progressive discipline and an opportunity for corrective action before a formal termination notice is issued. In all cases, participants will receive a 30 day termination letter notifying them of the date of exit, the reason for the termination, and the right to appeal under Mississippi Department of Employment Security grievance procedure. A copy of the grievance procedure will be attached to the termination letter. Participants will receive both a copy and a verbal explanation of the Involuntary Termination Policy during orientation. This policy is based on the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006 and the SCSEP Final Rule.

Types of Involuntary Terminations

A participant can be involuntarily terminated from the SCSEP for six (6) reasons. The reasons are:

1. Knowingly providing false information in the eligibility process
2. Being incorrectly determined eligible at enrollment or the annual recertification
3. Being determined no longer eligible at recertification
4. Reaching the maximum 48 months enrollment limit
5. Becoming employed during enrollment
6. For cause, including refusing to accept a reasonable number of job offers or referrals to unsubsidized employment based on the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) (with no

extenuating circumstances hindering the participant from moving to unsubsidized employment)

1. Termination Due to Knowingly Providing False Information in the Eligibility Process

A participant may be terminated for fraudulent actions, such as intentionally providing inaccurate information to qualify for the SCSEP. If this occurs, the participant will be placed on Leave without Pay immediately, and a 30 day notification of termination will be sent to the participant.

2. Termination Due to Being Incorrectly Determined Eligible

A participant will be terminated if found ineligible for participation in the SCSEP either after enrollment or after the annual recertification through no fault of the participant. A participant may be enrolled or deemed eligible for continued enrollment based on an error in determining program eligibility, e.g. income may be recorded or calculated inaccurately. When this occurs, the participant will be notified regarding the error and immediately sent a 30 day notification of termination letter. The participant will be able to continue participating in the program until the date of exit as noted in the letter.

3. Termination Due to No Longer Being Eligible

Annually, or more frequently if there is a substantial change in circumstances, each participant is recertified to determine if he or she continues to be eligible for participation. During the recertification, a participant may be determined no longer eligible due to a change in eligibility criteria such as income, family of one due to a change in disability status, employment status, and number of household members. The participant will be notified and immediately sent a 30 day notification of termination letter. The participant will be able to continue participating in the program until the date of exit as noted in the letter.

4. Termination Due to 48 Month Participation Limitation

A participant will be terminated when he or she meets the 48 month maximum participation date. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security's Individual Durational Limit Policy does NOT provide for the issuance of waivers. A waiver factor qualifies the participant for a temporary 12 month extension. When a participant approaches the 48 month maximum participation limit, he or she will be sent a 30 day notification of termination letter 30 days before the 48 month maximum participation

date. The participant will be able to continue participating in the program until the date of exit as noted in the letter.

5. Termination Due to Becoming Employed During Enrollment

To qualify for enrollment in the SCSEP, a participant has to be unemployed; all participants are informed that they may not be employed while participating in the program and that they must notify the program representative immediately upon becoming employed. A participant who is discovered to be employed while enrolled without having notified the program of the employment will be terminated from the program. If this occurs, the participant will be placed on Leave without Pay immediately, and a 30 day notification of termination will be sent to the participant.

6. Termination for Cause
There are several reasons to terminate a participant "for-cause." When warranted, a participant may be terminated for certain behaviors and/or conduct. The following are specific reasons; however, other similar reasons that demonstrate willful misconduct or an intentional disregard of program rules may cause involuntary termination:

• IEP related reasons: Refusing to accept a reasonable number of job offers or referrals to unsubsidized employment or for not complying with the Individual Employment Plan (IEP). A participant may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination when he or she refuses a total of three job offers and/or referrals to job openings and/or to follow through with objectives to achieve goals that are based on the IEP. If the participant fails, without good cause, to cooperate fully with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security's subgrantee staff to accomplish the goals of his or her service strategy, an IEP-related termination "for-cause" may be in order. Examples of lack of cooperation with staff to accomplish IEP service strategies may include but are not limited to the following when provided for in the participant's IEP:

o Refusing to search for a job

o Sabotaging a job interview, for example, a participant tells the interviewer that he or she is not interested in the job or tells the interviewer that he or she is not qualified.

o Refusing or not participating fully in training opportunities

o Refusing to transfer to a new community service training assignment

o Refusing to register at the One-Stop/Job Service

o Refusing to take advantage of WIA opportunities

o Refusing to accept or lack of follow-through in obtaining supportive services that will enhance the participant's ability to participate in a community service assignment consistent with the IEP

o Refusing to cooperate with other IEP-related referrals

o Refusal to cooperate with the assessment or IEP process, e.g., refusing to participate in completing the assessment and training development plan

- Non-IEP related reasons:

  - Refusal to cooperate in recertifying eligibility, for example, refusing to provide required document to determine continued eligibility or refusing to attend or be available for the recertification appointment.

  - Failure or refusal to perform assigned duties, e.g., refusing without good cause to do assignments that are part of the training description and required to increase skills and knowledge.

  - Falsification of official records, such as timesheets, for example, intentionally signing the signature of the host agency supervisor on a timesheet or other official document, or including hours on a time sheet that are not accurate.

  - Intentional disclosure of confidential or private information obtained from the host agency, grantee, or local project, for example, informing others of information that is supposed to be kept private or confidential.

  - Frequent tardiness or unauthorized absences, including reporting to the assignment late or not reporting to the assignment and not informing the supervisor. Generally, three instances of absence without good cause or without proper notice may warrant termination.

  - Insubordination, defined as intentionally refusing to carry out the direction or instructions of a host agency supervisor or MDES subgrant staff member, provided there were no extenuating circumstances and the directions or instructions were reasonable.

  - Workplace harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, or disability.

  - Obscene, abusive, harassing, or threatening language or behavior.

  - Physical violence or intentional destruction of property, for example, being violent and threatening to or carrying out threats that physically harm individuals or property.

  - Theft, meaning illegal taking or withholding the property of another without permission.

  - Causing an imminent threat to health or safety of self or others.

- Non-compliance with the drug and alcohol free policy of the Host Agency, which prohibits participants from consuming, selling, purchasing, manufacturing, distributing, possessing or using any illegal or non-prescribed drug or from being under the influence of alcohol and or drugs while performing their host agency assignment or while carrying out objectives required by the IEP. Legally prescribed medications are excluded if they do not affect the participant's ability to perform his or her duties or protect the safety of the participant or others.

- Exceeding approved Leave without Pay by failing to return from an approved break by the required date without due notice or good cause.

III. **Participant Corrective Action and Warning**

A participant will be given an opportunity to correct his or her behavior or conduct, or his or her failure to comply with the IEP requirements, except in cases involving serious harm or imminent threat to health, safety, property, etc. At any point, if a participant makes positive efforts or the participant's lack of action is justified, corrective action will be discontinued. The following steps for corrective action will be taken:

- Step 1: First Formal Warning

  If a participant displays behavior or conduct outlined in the reasons for "for-cause" terminations or refuses to comply with the IEP requirements, the participant will be given a verbal warning and counseled to correct his or her actions. Absent extenuating circumstances, the participant will be informed in writing by the State Manager or State Director of the requirement to correct his or her behavior or conduct.

- Step 2: Second Formal Warning

  When a participant for a second time displays behaviors or conduct outlined in the reasons for "for-cause" terminations or refuses to comply with the IEP requirements, the participant will be verbally warned and counseled to correct his or her actions. Absent extenuating circumstances, the State Director will send the participant a written warning that he or she has 30 days from the date of the letter to correct his or her behavior or conduct. In the case of an IEP violation, the participant may be directed to complete specific IEP-related task. The written warning will include a statement that failure to make improvement or complete the IEP-related tasks will result in termination.

- Step 3: When a participant does not make improvement in his or her actions or for a third time displays behavior or conduct outlined in the reasons for "for-cause" terminations, a letter will be sent notifying the participant that he or she will be exited 30 days from the date of the letter.

For example, a participant's training goal is to become computer literate in preparation for a clerical position. First the Employment and Training Coordinator (ETC) identified a community service assignment at the library but the participant refused it because she wouldn't have her own cubicle (she would be in an open area) so she turned down that opportunity. Next, the ETC identified a training site in a school, but the participant turned down that opportunity. Finally, the ETC tried the local museum, and the participant refused the training assignment at the museum, too. The ETC spoke with the participant, and she had no legitimate reason for refusing the training offered at various assignments. After the first refusal, the ETC asked the State Director to send the participant the first written warning letter. The State Director sent her the second warning letter stating that she risked being terminated if she continued to fail to follow her IEP or to take corrective action. When Ms. Short turned down a third assignment and there was no extenuating circumstance, the State Director sent a 30-day notification of termination letter.

IV.   **For-Cause Terminations that Require Immediate Removal from Host Agency and Leave without Pay Pending Termination**

When a participant's violation of the SCSEP Termination Policy is of a serious nature, immediate action to remove the participant from the host agency may be required. In this case, the participant will be placed on leave without pay and a written 30-day notice of termination sent. Examples of circumstances warranting immediate removal from the host agency and leave without pay include, but are not limited to:

- Gross misconduct such as violating the Host Agency's Drug and Alcohol Policy or intentionally endangering the lives of themselves or others, or

- Violence, including but not limited to physical or extreme verbal violence at the training site.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE:

This policy is effective April 1, 2013.

Mississippi Department of Employment Security
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
State Programmatic Grievances and Complaints Policy

I. **SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

This policy sets forth the State's procedures for grievances or complaints alleging violations of the requirements of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (OAA) from participants and other interested or affected parties based on the guidance set forth at OAA sections 306(a)(10) and 307(a)(5)(B) and at 20 CFR, 641.910.

II. **PARTICIPANTS' RIGHT TO FILE A GRIEVANCE OR COMPLAINT**

Participants in Older Americans Act programs, including SCSEP, have the right to file grievances or complaints regarding specific actions or activities affecting their personal participation in the program or the conduct of the program as it relates to all participants at a given site or location without fear of reprisal.

1) Participants may file grievances orally or in writing.

2) Presentation of the grievance: An authorized representative, including a caregiver, may present a grievance on behalf of a participant. If the client chooses this option, s/he shall accompany the representative to every meeting at which the complaint is discussed.

3) Resolution: Every effort shall be made to resolve grievances at the lowest level of authority to avoid the creation of burdensome documentation and ineffective use of staff time. Complaints shall be directed as appropriate to the situation to the following authorities in the order indicated:

- site manager or director or case manager;

- program or project director;

- subcontract agency director;

- area agency on aging director;

- the State SCSEP Director or her/his designee.

4) Grievances relating to alleged violations of a client's rights provided by law may be directed to the Office of Grant Management of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, only after efforts to resolve the matter locally have failed. This does not remove the right of the individual to pursue other avenues of redress, such as filing with the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

5) Timeframes for filing: Grievances may be filed at any time. If the issue is related to an event which occurred at a specific time and place, the participant(s) shall notify the site manager or other appropriate authority within ten days of the event having occurred of the intent to file the complaint.

III.   FORM AND CONTENT OF GRIEVANCES

A. Oral grievances

An oral grievance shall state in sufficient detail the basis for the complaint and the reasons the participant objects to the action or circumstances in question. AAAs/ providers shall supply to a written outline to prepare for the oral filing to assure the coverage of the following points:

- the notice, document, policy, situation or event which is the reason for the complaint;

- significant dates pertaining to the complaint;

- the names of organizations and individuals involved;

- reference to any provision of the Older Americans Act or other laws, regulations or policies believed to have been violated by site management, subcontract agency, or area agency on aging.

- the action or decision desired by the participant to resolve the issue.

B. Written grievances

A participant may choose to make the complaint/grievance in written form, which will contain all elements of an oral complaint as specified in A.1., preceding.

IV.   REQUIREMENTS

A. General Requirements

Each Area Agency on Aging (AAA), State, and direct recipient of funds under Title V of OAA must establish and maintain a procedure for grievances and complaints (20 CFR 641.910).

Each AAA, State, and direct recipient must:

1) Provide information about the content of the grievance and complaint procedures to participants and other interested parties affected by the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), including One-Stop partners and service providers;

2) Require that every entity to which it awards Title V funds must provide information about the content of the grievance and complaint procedures to participants receiving Title V-funded services from such entities; and

3) Must make reasonable efforts to assure that the information about the content of the grievance and complaint procedures will be understood by affected participants and other individuals, including those who are limited-English speaking individuals (OAA Section 306(a)).

B. Area Agency on Aging Requirements
AAA procedures must provide:

1) A process for dealing with grievances and complaints from participants and other interested parties affected by the Senior Community Service Employment Program, including service providers;

2) An opportunity for an informal resolution and a hearing to be completed within 60 days of the filing of the grievance or complaint;

3) A process which allows an individual alleging a labor standards violation to submit the grievance to a binding arbitration procedure, if a collective bargaining agreement covering the parties to the grievance so provides; and

4) An opportunity for a local level appeal to a State entity when:

- No decision is reached within 60 days; or

- Either party is dissatisfied with the local hearing decision.

C. State Requirements
State procedures must provide:

1) A process for dealing with grievances and complaints from participants and other interested parties affected by the SCSEP;

2) A process for resolving appeals from the local area level;

3) A process for remanding grievances and complaints related to the local SCSEP programs to the Area Agency on Aging grievance process; and

4) An opportunity for an informal resolution and a hearing to be completed within 60 days of the filing of the grievance or complaint.

V.   POLICY AND PROCEDURES

A. Disposition of Grievances
1) If the facts support the grievance, the responsible authority shall, within 30 working days of the receipt of the written grievance, make the changes necessary to resolve the issue.
2) If the site manager's/service provider director's response is not satisfactory to the participant, the participant may, within ten working days, take the matter for further consideration to the next higher authority as specified in II.3., relating to resolving issues at the lowest possible level of authority.
3) 3) The site manager or service provider director, and each level of authority at which the grievance/complaint remains unresolved, shall within ten working days following receipt of a request (oral or written) for continuing grievance action, develop a memorandum detailing the circumstances of the grievance, attach all pertinent documentation regarding the findings and actions taken at that level of authority and forward it to the next level with a request for a meeting of the parties concerned with the issue.
4) 4) A participant may withdraw a grievance at any time.
5) 5) When the grievance is resolved, all parties shall provide joint written notification of having reached agreement to each level of authority involved.

B. Area Agency on Aging Level Grievances and Complaints

The State requires AAAs to establish and maintain a policy and procedures for grievances and complaints. The AAA process must allow participants and other interested parties affected by the local SCSEP system an

opportunity for an informal resolution and hearing to be completed within 60 days of the filing of the grievance or complaint.

C. State Level Grievances and Complaints

All grievances and complaints from participants and other interested parties affected by the SCSEP programs that are not resolved at the AAA level should be forwarded to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) as the next higher authority as specified in II.3.

> Grievances and Complaints should be addressed to:
> Mississippi Department of Employment Security
> Office of Grant Management
> OAA/SCSEP Grievances and Complaints
> P.O. Box 1699
> Jackson, MS 39215-1699

Grievances and complaints should include the following information:

- The name, address, and telephone number of the participant or other affected party filing the grievance or complaint;

- The name and address of the designated State agency to which the grievance or complaint is being submitted;

- A statement documenting the nature of the grievance or complaint and noting all relevant parties; and

- A signature and date signed.

MDES will review the grievance or complaint and notify the involved parties within 15 days. MDES will provide the involved parties an opportunity for an informal resolution.

D. Fair Hearings

If a grievance/complaint regarding a denial, reduction, suspension or termination of services cannot be resolved through informal means, including mediation, at the lower levels of authority, MDES, within 30 days of receipt of the grievance or complaint, will schedule a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). MDES will notify the involved parties at least 10 days prior to a scheduled hearing.

The hearing notice will include:

- The date of the notice;
- The name and address of the participant or other affected party filing the grievance or complaint and all other involved parties;

- A statement documenting the nature of the grievance or complaint and noting all relevant parties;

- The date, time, and place of the hearing; and

- The name, address, and telephone number of the contact person issuing the notice.

The hearing shall be conducted in an informal manner with strict rules of evidence not being applicable. The parties involved shall have the right:

- to present written and/or oral testimony under oath and arguments;

- to call and question witnesses;

- to request and examine records and documents relevant to the issues, and

- to be represented by a friend, advocate or attorney at his/her own expense.

The hearing will be recorded electronically. The ALJ shall follow the applicable procedures set forth at Benefit Appeal Regulations, Section 200 of the MDES Regulations.

Following completion of the hearing, the ALJ will present the findings of fact to the State Review Panel. The State Review Panel shall be made of members designated by the Executive Director or his designee. The State Review Panel will listen to the recording of the hearing and review the findings of fact presented by the ALJ. The State Review Panel may accept, reject, or modify the ALJ's recommendation and shall issue a written decision to the involved parties within 60 days of receipt of the grievance or complaint.

VI.   APPEALS

A. Area Agency on Aging Level Appeals to the State

All appeals must be made in writing and filed with MDES within 30 days of the AAA level decision or 30 days from the date on which the decision should have been received (60 days after filing the original grievance or complaint with the local AAA).

Appeals should be addressed to:

Mississippi Department of Employment Security
Office of Grant Management
OAA/SCSEP Grievances and Complaints
P.O. Box 1699
Jackson, MS 39215-1699

Appeals should include the following information:
- The name, address, and telephone number of the participant or other affected party filing the appeal;

- The original grievance or complaint filed at the AAA level, documenting the nature of the alleged incident and noting all relevant parties;

- The original decision reached at the local level;

- The grounds on which the appeal is sought; and

- A signature and date signed.

MDES will review the appeal and notify the involved parties within 15 days of the receipt of the appeal. MDES may affirm, modify, set aside, or remand any decision made at the local level, or at its sole discretion, direct that additional evidence be taken.

If a hearing was held at the local AAA, MDES shall request a record of the hearing. The State Review Panel will review the record of the AAA hearing, and a State level hearing will not be scheduled. The State Review Panel may accept, reject, or modify the local AAA's decision and will issue a written decision to the involved parties within 60 days of receipt of the appeal.

If a hearing was not held at the AAA, MDES shall instruct the AAA to hold a hearing within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. If the AAA fails to hold a hearing within the required timeframe, MDES will schedule a State level hearing before an ALJ. MDES will notify the involved parties at least 10 days prior to a scheduled hearing.

The hearing notice will include:

- The date of the notice;

- The name and address of the participant or other affected party filing the appeal and all other involved parties;

- A statement documenting the nature of the appeal, including: information about the original grievance or complaint filed, the original decision reached at the AAA level, and the grounds on which the appeal is being sought;

- The date, time, and place of the hearing; and

- The name, address, and telephone number of the contact person issuing the notice.

The hearing shall be conducted in an informal manner with strict rules of evidence not being applicable. Parties shall have the right to present written and/or oral testimony under oath and arguments; the right to call and question witnesses; the right to request and examine records and documents relevant to the issues, and the right to be represented. The hearing will be recorded electronically. The ALJ shall follow the applicable procedures set forth at Benefit Appeal Regulations, Section 200 of the MDES Regulations.

Following completion of the hearing, the ALJ will present the findings of fact to the State Review Panel. The State Review Panel will listen to the recording of the hearing and review the findings of fact presented by the ALJ. The State Review Panel may accept, reject, or modify the ALJ's recommendation and shall issue a written decision to the involved parties within 60 days of receipt of the appeal.

Statewide procedures provide for a State level appeal to DOL when:

- No decision is reached within 60 days; or

- Either party is dissatisfied with the State hearing process.

B. State Level Appeals to the U.S. Department of Labor
All appeals must be made in writing and filed with DOL within 60 days of the State level decision or the date on which the decision should have been received (60 days after filing the original grievance, complaint, or appeal with the State). DOL will make a final decision no later than 120

days after receiving a formal appeal. DOL will only investigate grievances, complaints, or appeals arising through the established procedures.

Appeals should be addressed to:

Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
1371 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30367

VII.   EFFECTIVE DATE:

This policy is effective April 1, 2013.

APPENDIX J: LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA GUIDELINES

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT *of* EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
MARK HENRY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WIOA COMMUNICATION NUMBER: 15-014

DATE: January 15, 2016

I. **SUBJECT:** Local Workforce Development Area Four-Year Strategic Plans

II. **BACKGROUND:** On July 22, 2014, President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), comprehensive legislation that reforms and modernizes the public workforce system. In accordance with WIOA Section 103, the State of Mississippi submitted a combined plan to meet the requirements of the Act. The Plan was submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor on October 30, 2015. A kickoff meeting was held December 10, 2015 to begin the planning process for the local area plans that will align with the State Plan. Each Local Workforce Development Board must develop and submit to the Governor a comprehensive four-year local plan in accordance with WIOA Section 108.

III. **REQUIRED ACTION AND DUE DATE:** Local area plans should be developed according to the instructions provided in this communication and any subsequent instruction issued by MDES. The local plans should be submitted **by May 31, 2016,** for review by the Office of Governor Phil Bryant, MDES Office of Grant Management, and by Core and Strategic Partners included in the State Plan.

IV. **CONTACT:** Questions concerning this instruction should be addressed to Laura Ring at 601-321-6017 or lring@mdes.ms.gov or to Bob DeYoung at 601-321-6477 or rdeyoung@mdes.ms.gov.

V. **ATTACHMENTS:** Timeline from December 10th Kickoff Meeting
Local Workforce Development Board Plan Guidelines

Jacqueline A. Turner

Jacqueline A. Turner
Deputy Executive Director, CFO

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Guidelines for Mississippi Local Workforce Development Board Plans

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SUBMITTED FOR FEDERAL REVIEW

2   **Guidelines for Mississippi Local Workforce Development Board Plans**

Introduction

Program Year 2015 marks the first year of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA requires each workforce development board to develop a comprehensive four-year plan, in partnership with the local chief elected official, and submit to the state. The WIOA four-year plan will be effective July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2020. At the end of each year of the four-year local plan, each local board shall review the local plan and prepare and submit modifications to the local plan to the MDES Office of Grant Management. Modifications should reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions or in other factors affecting the implementation of the local plan.

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), as designated by the Office of the Governor, is issuing these instructions for local plans. The local plan shall support the alignment strategy described in the state plan in accordance with WIOA Section 102(b)(1)(E), and otherwise be consistent with the state plan. Local Workforce Development Boards may obtain a copy of the Mississippi WIOA Plan from MDES. Workforce Development Boards shall also comply with WIOA, Section 108 in the preparation and submission of the plan. Additional information about the WIOA, Public Law 113-128, enacted July 22, 2014, may be obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration website: www.doleta.gov.

These guidelines have been written to assist the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) in structuring their workforce plan to meet to federal WIOA regulations and alignment with the overarching workforce goals of the state. Any future advisement will be provided by the Office of Grant Management (OGM) via WIOA communications.

Public Comment Requirements

In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Section 108(d), the Workforce Development Board shall make copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media; allow for public comment not later than the end of the 30 day period beginning on the date the proposed plan is made available; and, include with submission of the local plan any comments that represent disagreement with the plan.

Submission Requirements

Local plans must be submitted to the MDES Office of Grant Management no later than 5:00 PM CDT on May 31, 2016. Local plans should be submitted electronically in PDF format and uploaded via JSCAPE with an email notification to rdeyoung@mdes.ms.gov that the plan has been uploaded. The original plan and attachments should be retained by each local area.

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3   **Guidelines for Mississippi Local Workforce Development Board Plans**

Plan Outline

A. Local Workforce Development Area Overview

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the local area and identify the individuals and entities responsible for general operations within the local area.

A.1. Provide the Local Area's official (legal) name established to administer the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Name document: *"(insert local area name) Re-designation Approval Letter."*

A.2. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Workforce Development Director.

A.3. Provide the name, elected title, local government affiliation, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Local Area's Chief Elected Official.

A.4. Provide the name, title, business name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the individual authorized to receive official mail for the Chief Elected Official, if different than A.3.

A.5. Provide the name, address, and telephone number of the Administrative/Fiscal Agent responsible for disbursing Local Area WIOA grant funds. This is the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds. [WIOA Sections 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) and 108(b)(15)].

A.6. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Administrative/Fiscal Agent's signatory official.

A.7. Attach a copy of the Administrative Entity/Local Workforce Development Area/Fiscal Agent's organizational chart with an effective-as-of date. Include position titles of Local Area staff. Name document: *"(insert name of administrative entity name/local workforce development area/fiscal agent name) Organizational Chart."*

A.8. Provide the Administrative Entity's Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and assurance that the 'System for Award Management' (SAM) status is current. Administrative Entities must register at least annually on the SAM website (https://www.sam.gov/ccr/) to receive federal funding [required by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Section 4.11 and Section 52.204-7].

A.9. Provide the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Chairperson's name, business title, business name and address, telephone number and e-mail address.

A.10. Attach the LWDB's Membership List. The first block is reserved to identify the Board Chairperson. Indicate all required representation and indicate if vacant. [WIOA Section 107(b)(2)]. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Local Workforce Development Board Membership List."*

A.11. Attach the LWDB By-laws including date adopted/amended. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Local Workforce Development Board By-laws."*

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A.12. Attach a copy of the signed 'Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters-Primary Covered Transactions.'[1] [Required by the Regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 29 CFR Part 98, Section 98.510, participants' responsibilities.] Document must bear the original signature of the Administrative Entity signatory official. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Debarment Form."*

A.13. The local plan must include the LWDB and Chief Elected Official (CEO) Signatory Submission Page, bearing the original signatures of the Chief Elected Official(s) and the LWDB Chairman. Include a signed copy with the submission of the Local Plan. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Signatory Submission Page."*

B. Regional Strategic Planning

If the local area is part of a planning region that includes other local areas, the local boards and chief elected officials of the local areas represented shall collaborate to prepare and submit a regional plan as described in Section 106(c)(2).

As outlined in the State Plan, the State Board and the local boards will work together to define regions that occupy space in one or more workforce areas. These regions will be defined according to industry and sector needs and these regional concerns will be taken into account in training and other local administration of WIOA priorities.

For the purpose of this section, regions are currently identified as the Local Workforce Development Areas.

The purpose of this section is to identify businesses and industries that operate within major enterprises that might cross jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., county boundaries, state borders) and might involve multiple LWDAs. Through analysis of the regional needs and market trends, this section is designed to levy the strengths of the local areas in order to create strategies for meeting the needs of employers for in-demand industries across the region.

B.1. Include the following statement: For the purpose of this section, regions are currently identified as the Local Workforce Development Areas.

B.2. Describe how the regional vision aligns with the "Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model" as outlined in the Mississippi WIOA Plan.

B.3. Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions to include: a) existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and, b) knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include sources used and business involvement in determining needs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(A)(i)(ii) and (B)].

B.4. Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill

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[1] https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/articles/SBA_Form_1623_Debarment_and_Suspension.pdf

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levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(l)(C)].

B.5. Describe strategies to facilitate engagement of businesses and other employers, including small employers and in-demand industry sector occupations. Describe methods and services to support the workforce system in meeting employer needs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(i)(ii)].

B.6. Describe strategies and services used to coordinate workforce development programs and economic development. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)].

B.7. Outline regional transportation issues related to workforce development and ways the region is/will address needs identified. Include a description and/or map of the regional commuting patterns. [WIOA Section 108(b)(11)].

B.8. Describe how the region coordinates with area secondary education, community colleges and universities to align strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(l0)].

B.9. Provide details on how the region addresses workforce issues specifically related to its: a) cities and/or towns; b) suburban areas; and, c) rural areas.

B.10. Provide details on how the region connects military skills to occupational demands to serve military veterans and families.

C. Local Area Planning

Mississippi's State Plan includes the Combined Plan Programs and Strategic Programs. The purpose of this section is to explain how the LWDA will prepare and support an educated and skilled workforce for all eligible job seekers. This section includes descriptions of the local workforce development system and the role the local board plays in coordinating with workforce development partners and stakeholders.

C.1. Provide a description of the LWDB's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce including youth and individuals with barriers to employment. Include goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(E)].

C.2. Taking into account the analyses described in the Regional Strategic Planning section, describe strategies to work with the entities that carry out the core programs that align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in C.l. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(F)].

C.3. Describe local area's workforce development system, including identifying the programs included in the system, and how the local board will work with the entities administering core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment and provision of

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services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.). [WIOA Section 108 (b)(2)].

C.4. Provide a description of how the LWDB, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the LWDB will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(3)].

C.5. Describe the LWDB's use of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies, designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the regional strategy to meet the needs of businesses. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(B)].

C.6. Describe how the LWDB coordinates and promotes entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(5)].

C.7. Describe how the local board enhances the use of apprenticeships to support the regional economy and individuals' career advancement.

C.8. Provide a description of how the LWDB coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities as described in WIOA Section 134(a)(2)(A). [WIOA Section 108 (b)(8)].

C.9. Provide a description of plans, strategies and assurances concerning maximizing coordination of services provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the local area through the WIN Job Center system. Include how improved service delivery and avoidance of duplication of services will be achieved. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(12)].

C.10. Provide a description of how the LWDB coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with the provision of Adult Education and Literacy activities. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(13)].

C.11 Provide a description of cooperative agreements, as defined in WIOA Section 107(d)(11), between the LWDB or other local entities described in Section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(14)].

C.12. Provide a description of the competitive process used to award sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under WIOA Title I. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(16)].

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C.13. Describe methods used to track Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth performance measures throughout Program Year 2015 and plans for continuous improvement of performance.

C.14. Provide a brief description of the actions the LWDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(18)].

C.15. Describe the role of the local board in coordinating with local economic developers to attract target industries as defined by the Mississippi Development Authority.

C. 16. Describe the process for preparing and submitting modifications of the plan that reflect changes in local and/or state priorities or target industries on an annual basis.

D. WIN Job Centers (One-Stop Delivery System) and Programs

Note: Section 121 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act focuses on the establishment of one-stop centers.

The purpose of this section is to describe how the job centers in the LWDA will operate and deliver program services.

D.1. Provide a brief description of the WIN Job Center system in the local area. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(6)].

D. 2. Attach the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the local LWDB and partners concerning operation of the WIN Job Center system. [WIOA Section 121(b)(A (iii)]. Name document: *"(insert local area name) WIN Job Center MOU."*

D. 3. Describe how WIN Job Centers will use the Mississippi Works integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and programs carried out by WIN Job Center partners. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(21)].

D. 4. Describe how WIN Job Center staff will be trained in integrated services delivery and have appropriate access to Mississippi Works (wings.mdes.ms.gov) technology. Include methods and timeline for accomplishing training for both.

D. 5. Describe the LWDB's method for planning oversight of the WIN Job Center system in the local area, including processes for ensuring quality customer service. Include the review/oversight process and frequency of review. [WIOA Section 121(a)(3)].

D. 6. Identify WIN Job Center location(s) including Sector Training Plus Comprehensive, Comprehensive, Affiliate, and Virtual-Access sites; program services offered in each; how WIN Job Center operator(s) are designated; provider(s) of WIOA career services and youth services and method of selection. [WIOA Section 121 (b)(1)(A) and (b)(l)(B)]. Name document: *"(insert local area name) WIN Job Centers."*

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D.7. Describe the steps that will be taken to prepare for the development and eventual creation of a Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Center. [MS WIOA Plan]

D.8. Describe how career services are provided through the WIN Job Centers. [WIOA Section 134(c)(2)].

D.9. Describe the integrated customer service process for participants. Attach a flow chart for services to include initial one-on-one interviews with customers, including Mississippi Works registration, skills assessments, and determination of further services. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Service Flow Chart 2015."*

D.10. Describe how the LWDB facilitates access to services provided through the WIN Job Center delivery system, including remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(6)(B)].

D.11. Describe how the LWDB uses a portion of funds available to the local area to maintain the WIN Job Center system, including payment of the infrastructure costs of job centers. [WIOA Section 121 (b)(1)(A)(ii) and (h)].

D.12. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the WIN Job Center partners. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(6)(D)].

D.13. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(7)].

Youth Services
D.14. Will the LWDB have a standing committee to provide information and to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth? [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)].

If yes, please provide the committee's purpose/vision, planning meeting schedule, and list of members to include members' agency/organization, one of which must be a community based organization with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)].

If no, will the LWDB have a formal Youth Council or Youth Advisory group?

Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. Include identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities being used and/or planned. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(9)].

Provide the LWDB's approach to meeting the required: a) 75% minimum youth expenditures on out of school youth and include planned program design; and b) required 20% minimum for work experience. [WIOA Section 129 (a)(4)(A) and (c)(4)].

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D.15. Describe local area strategies and services that will be used to strengthen linkages between the WIN Job Center system and unemployment insurance programs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iv)].

D.16. Provide a description of how the LWDB coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the Local Area with the provision of TANF activities.

D.17. Describe strategies and services to strengthen K-12 career pathways and expand high school programs to reflect the employment needs of the local area and how these strategies and services will address the findings from the analysis that is required for each local board referenced in Section 108(b)(1)(A-D). Describe how these services and strategies align and support the core strategies of the Mississippi WIOA plan.

D.18. Describe how the local area will integrate services for:

a) persons with disabilities;
b) veterans;
c) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients
d) Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) participants;
e) individuals with other barriers to employment; and
f) additional specific populations, if applicable

D.19. Describe how entities within the WIN Job Center system, including center operators and partners, will comply with Section 188, if applicable, and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(6)(C)].

E. Sector Strategy Plan

Sector strategies are regional, industry-focused approaches to building skilled workforces that result in job opportunities for all workers across a range of industries. The purpose of this section is to describe the processes that the LWDA will follow to create a local sector strategy(s) plan that will help existing business and industry prosper and aid in the recruitment of new businesses to the state. This section should include how the local area plans to: 1) engage new and emerging industries along with those already established in the area; and 2) promote the programs and services that better meet the demand of the workforce needs of the industries in the area.

E.1. Identify the sectors and their respective supporting industries that best define the current and future economic identity of the local workforce area. Describe how the identified sectors make up the economic identity of the area, why they are relevant for the growth of the area and the region, and how they support the implementation of statewide strategies and support the core strategies State Plan. Clearly identify sectors that are of particular importance to the region versus those that have a more statewide relevance. In this regard, describe how the target industries defined by the Mississippi Development Authority fit within the economic identity of the local area.

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E. 2. Describe the local area plan for engaging local businesses reflective of the main sector(s) along with those supporting the main sector(s) to identify priorities for workforce development. Also include the role state and local economic developers will play in establishing sustainable partnerships with local businesses.

E.3. Describe how the local area plans to map local assets including identify critical stakeholders and the roles they will play in the realization of workforce strategies in support of the local economic identity. Stakeholders should include entities and organizations such as the Mississippi Development Authority, local economic developers, foundations, local school districts, community colleges, and community based organizations.

E.4. Taking into account the strategies to work with the entities that carry out the core programs, describe the steps the local area will take to increase the awareness of services offered at the WIN Job Center and increase the utilization of the WIN Job Center by the target-industries.

E.5. Describe how the local area will meet the training and employment needs of businesses within the target-industries, especially those not currently offered through the WIN Job Center, that emphasizes industry-focused short-term, credential based training programs and two-year degree programs that provide a qualified and quantifiable labor pool.

E.6. Describe the steps the local area will take to align basic education credentials with the skills necessary to meet the middle-skill needs of employers in the target-industries. Explain the steps the Local Area will take to objectively assess training and ensure that the skills and credentials earned through training are both portable and stackable.

F. Business Plan

The purpose of this section is to describe how the LWDA will align resources to accomplish the strategies and goals outlined in the overall plan as well as define a timeline for the completion of each component below. The information reported in the business plan will be used as part of each LWDA's annual plan review.

F.1. List the workforce goals and intended outcomes for the Local Area, and how they contribute to the primary goals of the State Plan.

F.2. Describe how the goals and intended outcomes will be achieved and the proposed activities support the core strategies of the State Plan.

F.3. Identify the procedures the local area will take to achieve activities listed in G.2, including specific steps and achievements for planning, implementation, and evaluation.

F.4. Provide a timetable of milestones for the duration of the plan that the local area will maintain to ensure timely achievement of the workforce goals and outcomes.

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F.5. Describe the procedures for reporting progress and performance on reaching the goals and achievements set by the local area including steps to be taken for lack of progress and underperformance in relation to achieving milestones.

F.6. Gauge the LWDA capacity to meet the workforce needs of the area and the region. This should take into consideration everything the local area plans to do to support a workforce necessary to maintain and grow economic opportunities in the area. This should include an estimate of the magnitude of the need and the size of the target population to be served. Also describe how the LWDA will achieve the necessary capacity to fully meet local needs.

F.7. Map out and provide a matrix of the resources of each stakeholder and describe how these resources can be aligned to achieve the main goals of the local and state WIOA plans.

G. Policies

Oversight and Monitoring
G.1. Provide a description of the local area's oversight and monitoring procedures including processes for program and fiscal monitoring. [WIOA Section 107(d)(8)]. Attach a copy of monitoring document(s). Name document: *"(insert local area name) LWDB Oversight and Monitoring PY 2015."*

G.2. Provide a brief description of how the local area will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(6)(A)].

Equal Opportunity
G.3. Describe processes to ensure individuals are not discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, color or national origin. [WIOA Section 188].

G.4. Attach the local area's current Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Grievance Procedure to address EO requirements [29CFR Part 37.71]. Name document: *"(insert local area name) EO Complaint Grievance Procedure 2015."*

G.5. Describe methods to ensure local Equal Opportunity procedures are updated.

Other Policies
G.6. Provide the local area policy(ies) on supportive services for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth (i.e., amount, duration, qualifying criteria). [WIOA Section 134(d)(2)]. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Supportive Services Policy."*

G.7. Provide the local area policy(ies) on Needs-Related Payments for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth. (i.e., amount, duration, qualifying criteria). [WIOA Section 134(d)(3)]. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Needs-Related Payments Policy.*

G.8. Provide the local area policy for local Incumbent Worker Training.

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The policy should include eligibility and the non-Federal share for employers. The local area may use not more than 20 percent of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to pay for the federal share of the cost of training through a training program for incumbent workers. [WIOA Section 134 (d)(4)]. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Incumbent Worker Training Policy."*

G.9. Provide the local area policy for local Transitional Jobs. The local area may use not more than 10 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to provide transitional jobs. [WIOA Section 134(d)(5)]. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Transitional Jobs Plan."*

G.10. Describe the local area's planned use of On-the-Job Training (OJT). Provide the local area's On-the-Job Training policy(ies). [WIOA Section 134 (c)(3)(H). Name document: *"(insert local area name) OJT Policy."*

G.11. Provide the local area's process to meet priority of service requirements and include policy. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Priority of Service Policy."*

G.12. Provide the local area's Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy and include the following elements in summary. [WIOA Section 108(b)(19)]. Name document: *"(insert local area name) ITA Policy."*

G.13. Provide the local area's process to avoid conflict of interest. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Conflict of Interest Policy."*

G.14. Provide the local area's Sunshine Provision Policy. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Sunshine Provision Policy."*

G.15. Specify if the Local Area plans to offer incentives for youth. If yes, attach the Youth Incentive Policy to include: a) criteria to be used to award incentives; b) type(s) of incentive awards to be made available; c) whether WIOA funds will be used and d) the Local Area has internal controls to safeguard cash/gift cards. Name document: *"(insert local area name) Youth Incentive Policy."*

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Local Area Plan Attachment Checklist

1. Local Area Re-designation Approval Letter
2. Administrative Entity/Local Workforce Development Area/Fiscal Agent Organizational Chart
3. Local Workforce Development Board Membership List
4. Local Workforce Development Board By-laws
5. Local Area Certification Regarding Debarment
6. Local Area Signatory Submission Page
7. Local Area WIN Job Center Memorandum of Understanding
8. Local Area WIN Job Centers
9. Local Area Services Flow Chart
10. Local Area Oversight Monitoring Policies and Tools
11. Local Area Equal Opportunity Procedures
12. Local Area Supportive Services Policy
13. Local Area Needs-Related Payments Policy
14. Local Area Incumbent Worker Training Policy
15. Local Area Transitional Jobs Policy (optional)
16. Local Area OJT Policy
17. Local Area Priority of Service Policy
18. Local Area ITA Policy
19. Local Area Conflict of Interest Policy
20. Local Area Sunshine Provision Policy
21. Local Area Youth Incentive Policy (optional)

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STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR