

# 2024-2028 Local Workforce Development Area Plan



SOUTH CENTRAL  
MISSISSIPPI WORKS

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## List of Acronyms

AMS	Accelerate MS
AE	Adult Education
CBO	Community-based Organizations
CEO	Chief Elected Official
CJC	Community & Jr. Colleges
CMPDD	Central Mississippi Planning and Development District
DOL	United States Department of Labor
DVOP	Disabled Veteran Outreach Service Program
DUNS	Data Universal Numbering System
EDA	Economic Development Associations
FBO	Faith-based Organizations
HSE	High-School Equivalency
IHL	Institutions of Higher Learning
ITA	Individual Training Account
LWDA	Local Workforce Development Area
LWDB	Local Workforce Development Board
MCCB	Mississippi Community College Board
MDA	Mississippi Development Authority
MDE	Mississippi Department of Education
MDES	Mississippi Department of Employment Security
MDHS	Mississippi Department of Human Services
MDRS	Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCRC	National Career Readiness Credential
OGM	Office of Grant Management
OJT	On-the-Job Training
SAM	System for Award Management
SBDC	Small Business Development Center
SCSEP	Senior Community Service Employment Program
SCMW	South Central MS Works
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SWIB	State Workforce Investment Board
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
UI	Unemployment Insurance
WET	Workforce Enhancement Training Fund
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

## Introduction

Program Year 2015 marked the initiation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which required each local workforce development board (LWDB) to create a comprehensive four-year plan in collaboration with the local chief elected official (CEO). For the South Central MS Works (SCMW) Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA), the initial WIOA four-year plan was effective from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2020. The current plan covers the period from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2028.

Mississippi has opted to submit a Combined Plan to meet WIOA requirements, aligning with Governor Tate Reeves' vision to foster economic growth and create a robust workforce. Governor Reeves' strategies focus on attracting new business investments and developing a workforce that supports economic expansion while offering pathways to sustainable employment for Mississippians.

In 2020, to advance the creation of a skilled and competitive state talent pool, Governor Reeves and the Mississippi Legislature established the Office of Workforce Development, AccelerateMS. This entity coordinates workforce development efforts across the state, creating a unified strategy that integrates workforce services, education, and training. AccelerateMS' strategic vision aims to build an integrated workforce development system that enables all Mississippians to become competitive candidates in the labor market and provides employers with the talent needed for business growth.

This Combined Plan supports the state's vision by aligning all workforce and WIOA stakeholders around a unified strategy. It addresses the challenges workers face in gaining credentials and skills to meet industry needs and secure quality employment. Mississippi's Combined Plan includes the required state programs: the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, and 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).

Since the inception of WIOA, Mississippi's workforce system has been transformed to better serve individuals and businesses. Processes for training and job placement have been streamlined, and Adult Education (AE) providers have embraced career pathway models. Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) and vocational rehabilitation partners are connecting various populations, including senior citizens and those receiving SNAP and TANF, with training and services aligned to high-demand industry sectors.

The state's workforce delivery system now includes **1) Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, 2) Affiliate One-Stop Centers, 3) Virtual Access One-Stop Centers, and 4) Call Center Support.** Enhanced technology integration and a robust referral hub facilitate better coordination and support for participants. The system continues to provide essential wraparound services and support for basic skills improvement, addressing needs such as childcare, transportation, and nutrition.

This local plan reflects the ongoing commitment to aligning with the state's strategic vision and integrating efforts across all WIOA Combined Plan Partners. It includes details on new initiatives and technical updates. By leveraging training focused on industry credentials and practical experience, the plan aims to bridge skill gaps and ensure that Mississippians are prepared to meet the evolving needs of the state's workforce.

The SCMW LWDB will review and, if necessary, modify the local plan annually, submitting any updates to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Office of Grant Management (OGM). This ensures that the plan remains responsive to changes in the labor market, economic conditions, and workforce initiatives, supporting the state's goal of creating quality career and training services, employment opportunities, and a competitive workforce.

### **Local Area Plan Foundation**

The foundation for the South Central MS Works (SCMW) Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) Plan is built upon the economic and workforce analysis mandated by WIOA, tailored to our region's specific workforce and industrial profile. To address local labor market challenges effectively, the SCMW will undertake the following activities to align our workforce development ecosystem with education, training, and economic development initiatives:

1. **Career Pathway Model Alignment:** Align local workforce services around a Career Pathway Model to assist individuals at any stage of work readiness in securing gainful employment. This approach will provide clear pathways from education and training to employment within high-demand sectors in our region.
2. **Information Technology Integration:** Enhance our current information technology infrastructure to coordinate and streamline case management activities across local workforce partners. This integration will improve efficiency in service delivery, minimize duplication of efforts, and ensure that every participant receives coordinated and broad assistance to connect with the labor market.

3. **Ecosystem Approach to Education and Training:** Build upon our existing network of local workforce partners to ensure comprehensive access to education and training resources. This includes fostering participation, retention, and completion of training credentials and facilitating pathways to employment.
4. **Performance Measures and Data-Driven Planning:** Develop and utilize performance measures and socioeconomic mobility indicators to assess the effectiveness of local programs. This data-driven approach will support strategic planning and continuous improvement within our workforce development system.
5. **Ongoing Workforce Research:** Conduct continuous research to understand the workforce needs of employers in our local and regional economic sectors. The insights gained will inform economic development strategies and workforce planning efforts, ensuring alignment with regional demands.
6. **Shared Vision and Coordination:** Foster a unified vision for local workforce development by collaborating with key partners and stakeholders. This includes working with entities such as the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) and other local workforce development boards to coordinate services and support regional goals.

Through these strategies, the SCMW LWDB aims to create a responsive and effective workforce development system that addresses local needs and supports economic growth in our area.

### **Public Comment Requirements**

In accordance with WIOA Section 108(d), the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) will make copies of the proposed local plan accessible to the public through electronic platforms, public hearings, and local news media. A public comment period will be open for at least 30 days from the date the proposed plan is made available. Comments received that reflect disagreement with the plan will be included with the plan submission. The plan will be available for public comment starting **September 19, 2025** and will end **October 21, 2024**.

## **Plan Outline**

### **A. Local Workforce Development Area Overview**

- A.1. South Central Mississippi Works (SCMW) Workforce Development Area
- A.2. Robin Parker, Ed.D.  
Workforce Director  
Central Mississippi Planning and Development District  
1020 Centre Pointe Boulevard  
Pearl, MS 39208  
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117 West Street  
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1020 Centre Pointe Boulevard  
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- A.5. Central Mississippi Planning and Development District  
1020 Centre Pointe Boulevard  
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Phone: 601-981-1511
- A.6. Michael Monk  
Chief Executive Officer  
Central Mississippi Planning and Development District  
1020 Centre Pointe Boulevard  
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- A.7. See **Appendix B** for Administrative Entity/LWDB/Fiscal Agent's Organizational Chart
- A.8. UEI: UNTLGFAJJ315  
SAM status: Current
- A.9. Benny Hubbard  
Hubbard Financial Services, Owner  
702 Prominence Drive  
Flowood, MS 39232  
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Email: [bhubbard44@hotmail.com](mailto:bhubbard44@hotmail.com)
- A.10. See **Appendix C** for LWDB Membership List
- A.11. See **Appendix D** for LWDB Operating Procedures
- A.12. See **Appendix E** for Local Area Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions
- A.13. See **Appendix F** for Local Area Signatory Submission Page



## B. Regional Strategic Planning

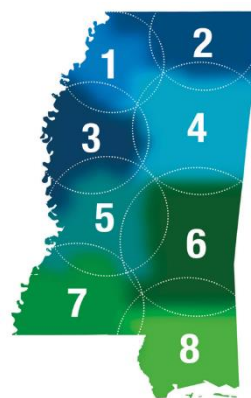
B.1. The state of Mississippi is divided into four Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs): Delta, Mississippi Partnership, South Central Mississippi Works (SCMW), and Twin Districts. These LWDAs were designated by the Governor in accordance with WIOA regulations and are outlined in the WIOA State Plan. Each LWDA plays a crucial role in advancing Mississippi's economic sector goals, which align with the Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA) core and horizon industry targets. The boundaries of these LWDAs are drawn based on significant demographic and economic factors (see Figure 1). The SCMW LWDA encompasses seventeen counties in west central and southwest Mississippi: Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Copiah, Franklin, Hinds, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lincoln, Madison, Pike, Rankin, Simpson, Walthall, Warren, Wilkinson, and Yazoo.

Economic and workforce analysis is conducted within the context of these four LWDAs (see Figure 1), which align with the state's planning and development district structure as established by the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004. These planning and development districts act as fiscal agents, managing funds and supporting local workforce development boards. Although each LWDA has a distinct economic profile, there is some economic and demographic variability within these areas. To address this, AccelerateMS has identified eight workforce ecosystems, allowing for more precise alignment of workforce and economic development efforts while maintaining existing governance structures. Figure 2 illustrates the approximate locations of these workforce ecosystems.

**Figure 1: Local Workforce Development Areas**



**Figure 2: Workforce Ecosystems**



B.2. South Central MS Works LWDA has embraced the vision outlined in the Mississippi WIOA State Plan, which envisions a workforce system functioning as a cohesive ecosystem. This ecosystem integrates all parts and workforce partner services to achieve shared goals, ensuring that individuals have access to the tools needed to become work- or career-ready and secure their ideal job in Mississippi. From the moment individuals enter the education or workforce system, they are provided with the resources to select and pursue career pathways aligned with current and future labor market needs. Similarly, businesses engaging with Mississippi's education and workforce system benefit from aligned resources that foster a high-performance workforce, essential for their long-term economic success. This approach not only supports business sustainability but also creates better and more enduring employment opportunities for Mississippians.

B.3. In the SCMW LWDA, the total annual average employment for 2023 is 326,201 across various industries. The data, sourced from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, provides insights into employment distribution, earnings, and the number of establishments within the region.

**Table 1: Annual Average Employment 2023 by Industry in SCMW LWDA**

Industry	Employment	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
Health Care and Social Assistance	61,986	19.0	\$52,870	2,486
Wholesale/Retail Trade	48,288	14.8	\$42,587	4,032
Accommodation/Leisure	34,998	10.7	\$21,031	2,138
Educational Services	30,039	9.2	\$54,381	387
Manufacturing	28,372	8.7	\$62,826	551
Public Administration	21,240	6.5	\$54,463	427
Transportation and Warehousing	21,072	6.5	\$54,913	797
Administrative and Waste Services	16,884	5.2	\$34,632	1,071
Financial Activities	15,664	4.8	\$76,346	2,399
Construction	14,457	4.4	\$62,573	1,585
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	13,600	4.2	\$77,565	2,107
Other Services (except Public Administration)	6,864	2.1	\$46,790	1,516
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,730	1.1	\$121,612	174
Natural Resources	3,235	1.0	\$60,601	433
Information	2,989	0.9	\$61,927	284
Utilities	2,586	0.8	\$99,631	130
<b>Total</b>	<b>326,004</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>\$52,003</b>	<b>20,517</b>

Source: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, Census of Employment & Wages, 2024.

The South Central Mississippi Works (SCMW) Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA), which includes the City of Jackson—the state capital—is distinguished by its diverse and dynamic economic landscape. The area is a key hub for several major industry sectors, including healthcare, manufacturing, information technology, and transportation/distribution/logistics. Additionally, the region hosts opportunities in construction, agribusiness, forestry, energy, and chemicals.

SCMW LWDA's economic landscape is diverse, with significant employment in Healthcare & Social Assistance (19%); Accommodation/Leisure (10.7%); Manufacturing (8.7%); and Transportation & Warehousing (6.5%). This diversity provides stability and multiple pathways for economic development.

A significant investment in infrastructure also impacts the economic outlook of the area. In the transportation and warehousing industry, the region's infrastructure includes major highways and the state's primary airport, which facilitates efficient transportation and logistics. Additionally, the recent announcement and construction of multiple data centers adds to the area's economic vitality, offering approximately 1,000 new jobs and enhancing SCMW's status as an evolving information hub for the southeastern region of the United States.

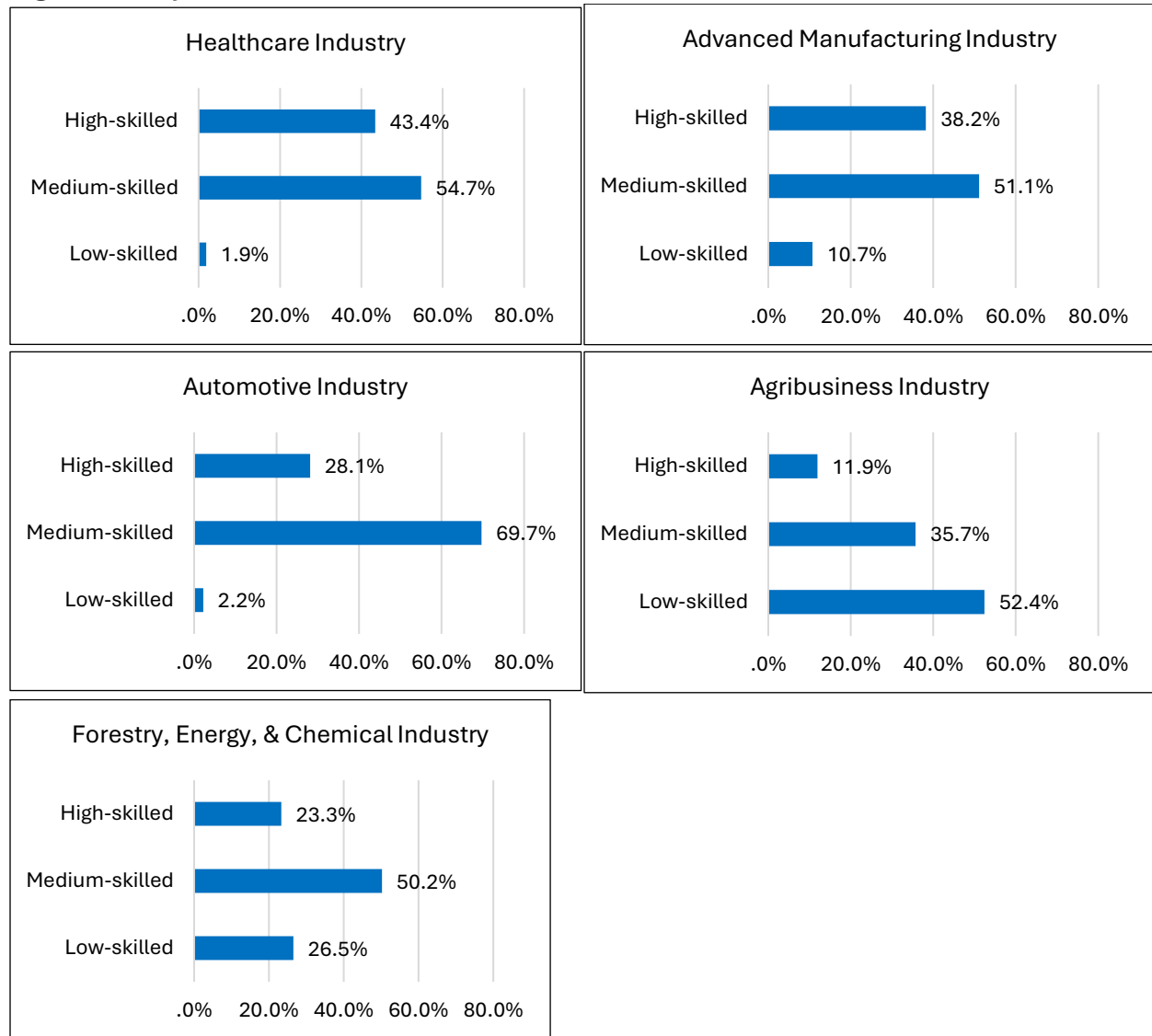
#### *Occupations in Emerging Industries*

- Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest sector in the SCMW LWDA, indicating strong and consistent demand for health-related services. This sector is likely to continue growing due to an aging population and increasing health care needs.
- Advanced Manufacturing remains a key industry group with high earnings, suggesting the presence of well-paying, skilled jobs. Continued investment in manufacturing technology and skills training is critical to maintaining this industry's competitiveness.
- Transportation and Warehousing sector within the SCMW LWDA is a crucial component of the regional economy. For 2023, this sector had 21,072 jobs, representing 6.5% of the total employment within the LWDA. It features average earnings of \$54,913 and operates through 797 establishments.
- The Information sector in the SCMW LWDA had 2,989 jobs, making up 0.9% of the total regional employment. The sector has an average earning of \$61,927 and includes 284 establishments. The recent announcement

of Amazon Web Services (AWS) locating data centers in the region is expected to significantly impact this sector.

SCMW LWDA's economic conditions reflect a strong and growing regional economy supported by key industry sectors. The recent developments, such as the AWS data center and expansions in manufacturing, highlight the area's evolving economic landscape and increasing opportunities for high-quality employment. The diverse sectoral presence, strategic location, and significant infrastructure investments position SCMW LWDA as a crucial player in Mississippi's economic development and workforce growth. The following figure indicates the projected middle-skill demand in the area.

**Figure 3: Projected Middle-Skill Demand in the SCMW LWDA, 2024-2030**



### *Employers' Employment Needs*

Information on employers' employment needs was derived from the following sources:

1. Ecosystem committee member recommendations
2. Representatives from established and emerging industries of manufacturing, healthcare, and transportation, including those who are members of the LWDB.
3. Economic development organizations
4. Community college workforce and career tech representatives

Based on recent data, there is a consensus that businesses anticipate growth but face significant challenges in recruiting and retaining a qualified, trained workforce. Ensuring the sustainability, viability, and growth of businesses hinges on addressing these workforce issues.

Businesses have highlighted a need for employees with both specific labor and trade skills and fundamental work competencies, such as reading, writing, and appropriate workplace behavior. The prevalent concern is that employees, across various skill levels, often lack essential core competencies. These include:

- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:** The ability to exercise sound reasoning and analytical thinking, interpret data effectively, and demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- **Oral and Written Communication:** Skills in clearly articulating thoughts and ideas, public speaking, and effectively communicating through writing and editing.
- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** The capacity to build collaborative relationships, work effectively in team settings, and manage conflicts.
- **Information Technology Application:** Proficiency in selecting and using appropriate technology and applying computing skills to problem-solving.
- **Leadership:** The ability to leverage others' strengths, utilize interpersonal skills, and effectively organize, prioritize, and delegate tasks.

- **Professionalism and Work Ethic:** Demonstrating personal accountability, integrity, ethical behavior, and the ability to learn from mistakes.
- **Career Management:** Skills in identifying and articulating one's own strengths and experiences, pursuing professional growth, and exploring job opportunities.

When evaluating desired competencies for employees at different skill levels:

- **Low-Skill Employees:** Dependability and reliability are considered the most important qualities.
- **Middle-Skill Employees:** Initiative and a willingness to learn are highly valued.
- **High-Skill Employees:** Leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills are deemed crucial.

Additionally, many employers are not fully aware of the resources and career and training services available to them. While a significant portion of employees receive training from community colleges, technical schools, or universities, some also obtain training through federal programs. There is a growing interest among Mississippi employers in expanding their use of community colleges and universities for training in basic trades, skills, and fundamental competencies across skill levels.

To address these needs, SCMW staff are actively working to inform employers about available training resources through WIOA funding, aiming to enhance the alignment between workforce skills and business requirements.

- B.4. The population of the State of Mississippi as a whole and that of the SCMW LWDA as well experienced steady growth from the years 2000 through 2012, then held steady for the next 5 years before beginning a decline (See Figure 4).

**Figure 4: SCMW Population Trends**

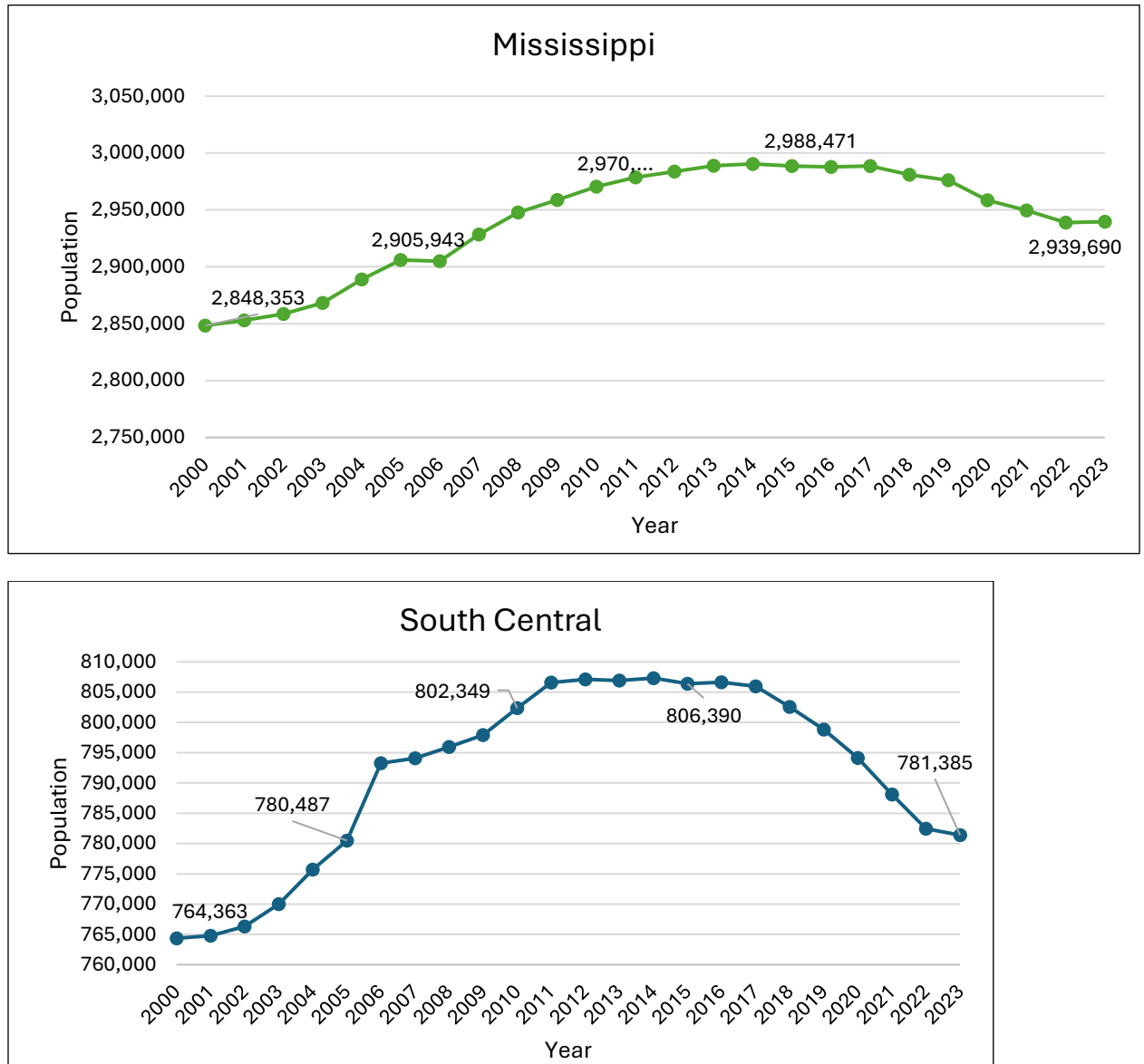


Table 2 indicates that within the SCMW workforce area, Ecosystem 5 has a total population of 599,724, while Ecosystem 7 has a population of 194,520. Ecosystem 5 has a larger and somewhat younger population compared to Ecosystem 7. The gender distribution is similar across both ecosystems, though Ecosystem 5 has a slightly higher proportion of females. The age distribution shows that Ecosystem 5 has higher percentages in several age brackets, particularly in the 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 age ranges.

Ecosystem 5 is larger in both population and economic metrics compared to Ecosystem 7. It has a younger median age, a higher percentage of degree holders, and higher median household and per capita incomes. The housing market in Ecosystem 5 also reflects higher home values and a larger number of housing units.

Ecosystem 7 has a higher median age and lower income levels. It shows more significant social challenges with higher poverty and food stamp usage rates, as well as a higher percentage of disconnected youth and single-parent families.

**Table 2: Ecosystem 5 and 7 Population Demographics**  
Ecosystem 5 and 7 Population Demographics

	Percent		Value	
	Ecosystem 5	Ecosystem 7	Ecosystem 5	Ecosystem 7
<b>Demographics</b>				
Population (ACS)	—	—	599,724	194,520
Male	48.3%	47.9%	289,584	93,240
Female	51.7%	52.1%	310,140	101,280
Median Age <sup>2</sup>	—	—	37.7	40.4
Under 18 Years	23.4%	23.1%	140,115	44,948
18 to 24 Years	9.6%	9.3%	57,563	18,078
25 to 34 Years	13.4%	11.1%	80,300	21,605
35 to 44 Years	13.2%	11.9%	79,156	23,128
45 to 54 Years	12.2%	11.8%	73,459	23,034
55 to 64 Years	12.6%	14.0%	75,766	27,234
65 to 74 Years	9.5%	11.3%	56,802	22,023
75 Years and Over	6.1%	7.4%	36,563	14,470
Race: White	46.5%	49.0%	278,951	95,221
Race: Black or African American	49.2%	46.8%	295,259	91,102
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%	0.2%	1,042	355
Race: Asian	1.2%	0.4%	7,056	813
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	188	0
Race: Some Other Race	0.8%	1.5%	4,917	2,927
Race: Two or More Races	2.1%	2.1%	12,311	4,102
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	2.3%	2.9%	13,836	5,570
<b>Population Growth</b>				
Population (Pop Estimates) <sup>4</sup>	—	—	590,224	191,161
Population Annual Average Growth <sup>4</sup>	-0.3%	-0.5%	-1,596	-976
People per Square Mile <sup>4</sup>	—	—	119.3	34.4
<b>Economic</b>				



### Ecosystem 5 and 7 Population Demographics

	Percent		Value	
	Ecosystem 5	Ecosystem 7	Ecosystem 5	Ecosystem 7
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over)	60.6%	48.5%	288,521	74,957
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54)	79.8%	68.1%	185,198	46,123
Armed Forces Labor Force	0.2%	0.0%	1,045	31
Veterans, Age 18-64	4.0%	3.1%	14,720	3,495
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64	72.7%	60.6%	10,703	2,118
Median Household Income <sup>2</sup>	—	—	\$61,496	\$40,870
Per Capita Income	—	—	\$33,345	\$24,594
Mean Commute Time (minutes)	—	—	24.3	28.9
Commute via Public Transportation	0.4%	0.3%	992	188
<b>Educational Attainment, Age 25-64</b>				
No High School Diploma	10.0%	14.2%	30,998	13,510
High School Graduate	23.3%	34.8%	72,007	33,026
Some College, No Degree	22.1%	20.7%	68,204	19,658
Associate's Degree	11.1%	12.1%	34,408	11,479
Bachelor's Degree	20.5%	11.7%	63,161	11,106
Postgraduate Degree	12.9%	6.5%	39,903	6,222
<b>Housing</b>				
Total Housing Units	—	—	263,392	94,286
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) <sup>2,5</sup>	—	—	\$180,647	\$105,599
Homeowner Vacancy	1.2%	1.7%	1,950	933
Rental Vacancy	8.5%	7.2%	6,931	1,557
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	32.4%	26.9%	73,940	19,774
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	5.4%	6.4%	12,230	4,746
<b>Social</b>				
Poverty Level (of all people)	16.0%	25.5%	91,992	47,773
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	11.1%	17.6%	25,298	12,981
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.2%	1.2%	7,282	2,409
Disconnected Youth <sup>3</sup>	4.1%	6.3%	1,404	696
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	44.1%	51.0%	58,135	20,939
Uninsured	10.8%	12.8%	63,095	24,150
With a Disability, Age 18-64	12.5%	16.7%	44,408	18,179

### Ecosystem 5 and 7 Population Demographics

	Percent		Value	
	Ecosystem 5	Ecosystem 7	Ecosystem 5	Ecosystem 7
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	42.3%	28.2%	18,784	5,122
Foreign Born	2.4%	1.5%	14,537	2,958
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	1.5%	1.5%	8,709	2,788

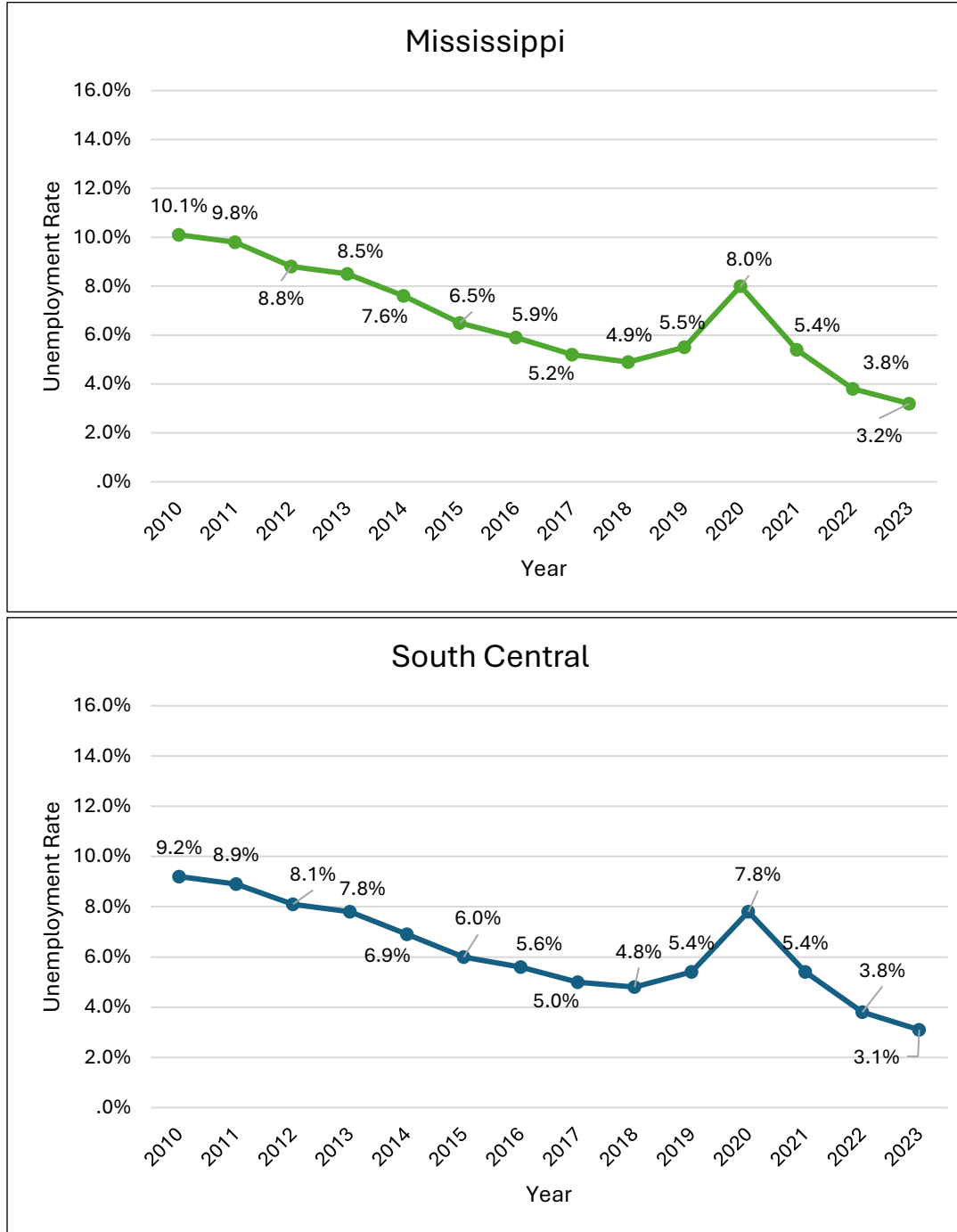
**Unemployment Rate:** The unemployment rate for Ecosystem 5 was 3.4% as of June 2024. The regional unemployment rate was lower than the national rate of 4.3%. One year earlier, in June 2023, the unemployment rate in Ecosystem 5 was 3.7%. The unemployment rate for the Ecosystem 7 was 3.5% as of February 2024. The regional unemployment rate was lower than the national rate of 4.3%. One year earlier, in February 2023, the unemployment rate in the Ecosystem 7 was 4.0%.

**Wage Trends:** The average worker in Ecosystem 5 earned annual wages of \$53,150 as of 2024Q1. Average annual wages per worker increased 2.9% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$73,164 in the nation as of 2024Q1. The average worker in Ecosystem 7 earned annual wages of \$40,331 as of 2023Q4. Average annual wages per worker increased 3.1% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$72,360 in the nation as of 2023Q4.

**Employment Trends:** Figure 5 shows that the unemployment rate in Mississippi and SCMW is at the lowest rate since 2010 with the exception of the spike during the COVID-19 pandemic disaster. Since the pandemic, the unemployment rate has continued to decline.

As of 2024Q1, total employment for Ecosystem 5 was 295,694 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2024Q1, employment increased 0.3% in the region. As of 2023Q4, total employment for the Ecosystem 7 was 62,417 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2023Q4, employment increased 0.0% in the region.

**Figure 5: Unemployment Rate**

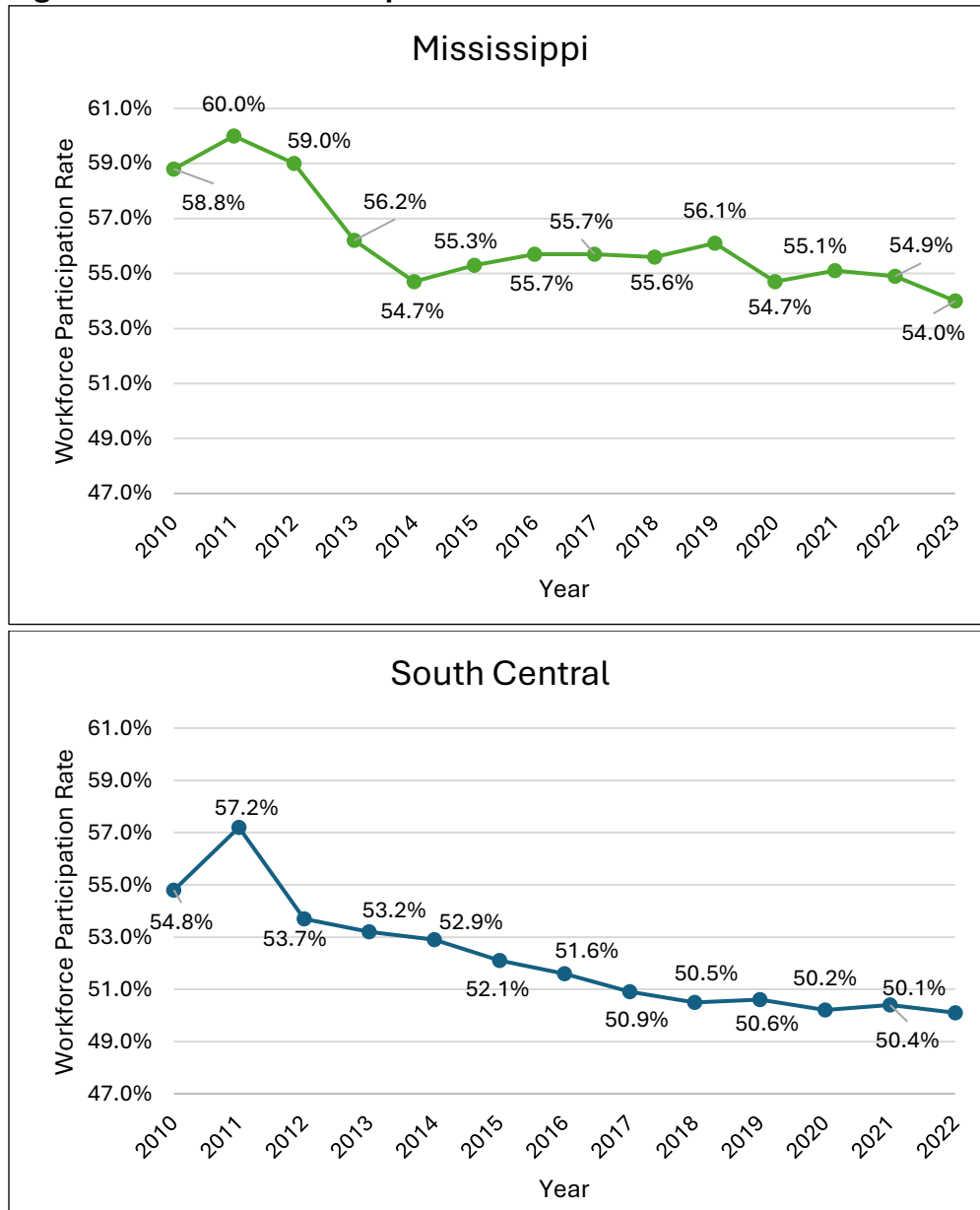


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2024; Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, 2024.

Despite an improved economic outlook following the recession of 2008, Mississippi continues to face some vulnerabilities that provide challenges to 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 the rate of workforce participation in the state (See Figure 6). The state historically has a workforce participation rate that hovers between 50% and 55%. By the end of 2023, the state’s workforce participation rate stood at 54.0%, and the SCMW workforce participation rate was much lower at 50.1%. The rural nature of the workforce area’s southern-most counties attributes to this data.

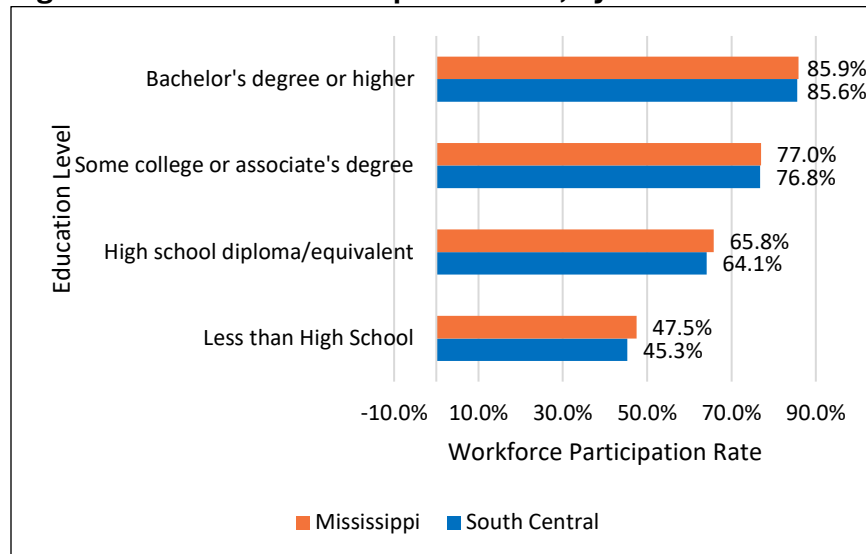
**Figure 6: Workforce Participation Rate**



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2024; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2024 5-Year Estimates.

**Workforce Participation Rate by Education:** Upon further analysis, data shows 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 7).

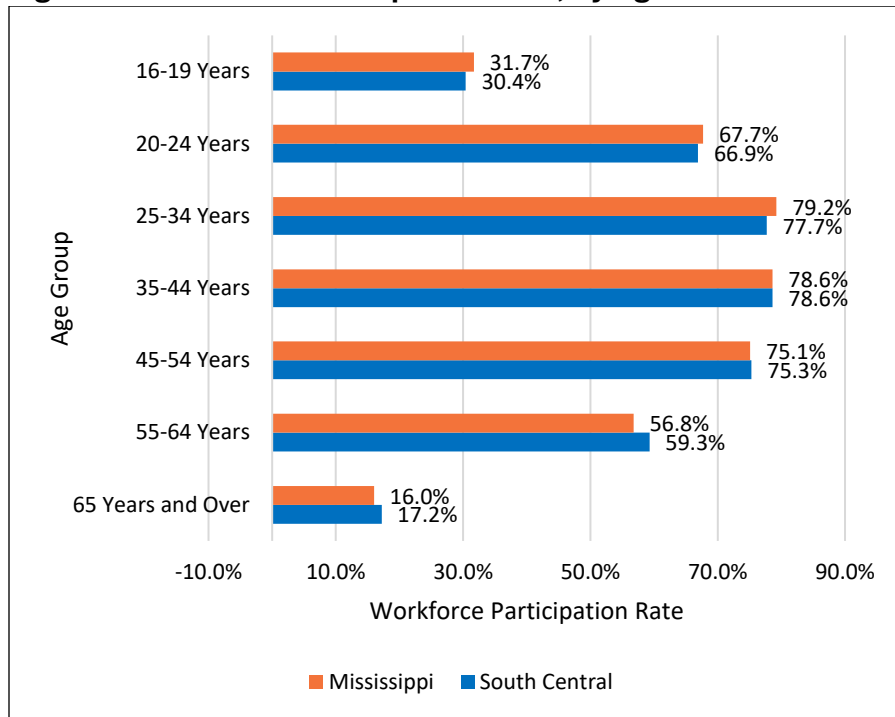
**Figure 7: Workforce Participation Rate, by Education**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates.

**Workforce Participation Rate by Age:** Additionally, the workforce participation rate varies by age group. In Mississippi and SCMW, youth (ages 16 to 19) have one of the lowest workforce participation rates, while young adults (ages 20 to 24) have a higher workforce participation rate. 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 8: Workforce Participation Rate, by Age**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates.

The following Table 3 indicates the education and skill levels of current job seekers in the workforce area. The data highlights the educational attainment and receipt of occupational certificates among individuals. Among the 27,384 individuals surveyed, the largest group (39.7%) holds a High School Diploma or GED, with 22.1% of these individuals also possessing an occupational certificate. Those with some college experience make up 20.1% of the total and have the highest rate of certification at 32.5%. In contrast, only 0.9% of individuals with a high school education or less have an occupational certificate, while those with an Associate Degree or higher hold 16.8% of the certificates. Notably, a substantial proportion (16.7%) of individuals with unknown educational levels still possess certificates. This data indicates that while higher education levels are associated with higher rates of occupational certification, significant certification also exists among those with less formal education.

**Table 3: Education and Skill Levels of Current Job Seekers in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

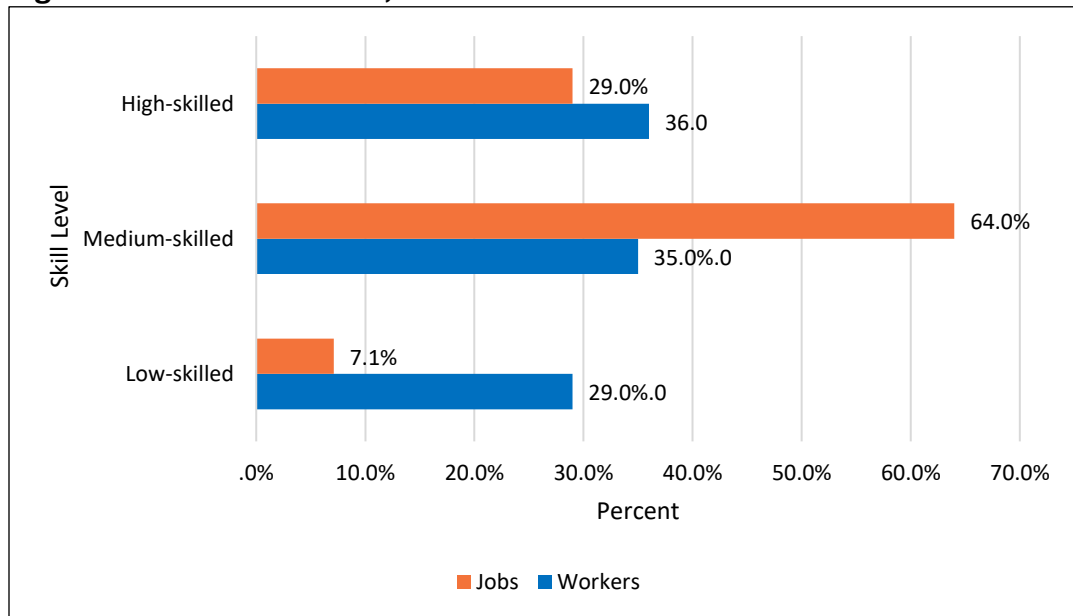
Education Level	Educational Attainment		Occupational Certificate	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
High School or Less	3,118	11.4	18	0.9
High School Diploma/GED	10,863	39.7	453	22.1
Some College	5,509	20.1	665	32.5
Associate Degree	3,224	11.8	343	16.8
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	4,178	15.3	226	11.0
Education Unknown	492	1.8	341	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,384</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,046</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Mississippi Works, 2024.

Note: Job seekers measured as actively searching for employment from August 8, 2023 – August 7, 2024.

Figure 9 indicates a comparison of the available jobs vs available skilled workers for high, middle, and low skilled occupations. The workforce area, as well as the state as a whole, concentrates on training individuals for middle-skills jobs, a category where the data indicates there are almost twice as many available jobs as there are workers.

**Figure 9: Middle-Skill Jobs, 2020 in the South Central MS Works LWDA**



Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2024; ONET, 2024; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates.

B.5. The SCMW Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) actively engages with local businesses, including small enterprises, through partnerships facilitated by CMPDD. CMPDD maintains memberships in key business advocacy organizations such as the Mississippi Economic Council, the Mississippi Economic Development Council, and has great partnerships with local economic developers. This network keeps SCMW staff informed about regional business needs and fosters direct dialogues with individual businesses to address their specific requirements. When training needs are identified, SCMW collaborates with four local community colleges to integrate these needs into their programs. Funding options for training include On-the-Job Training through WIOA, MS Works funds via Accelerate MS, and WET funds through community colleges.

SCMW is prioritizing the alignment of WIOA funds with Mississippians' economic development needs and ensure continuous system improvement as it becomes broader and more far-reaching. AccelerateMS worked with WIOA core partners, public education, non-profits, and economic development to ensure the state's workforce development efforts are leading the state forward by reviewing data to identify gaps and prioritize state and federal funds to create appropriate training programs necessary to close these gaps. These gaps are now identified and labeled "Priority Occupations," which the SWIB formally approves annually

In 2024, guided by the SWIB and Accelerate MS, SCMW aligned training resources and allocations to a Priority Sector list for Ecosystem 5 and 7 based on a comprehensive analysis of local industries and labor market data. The Priority Occupation list is aligned to the region's Sector Strategy Plan and is regularly reviewed on a annually with key partners to ensure the goals are met and adjusted as necessary.



**Table 4: Ecosystem 5 and 7 Priority Occupation List**

<b>Ecosystem</b>	<b>Priority Occupation</b>	<b>Total New Trainees Per Year</b>
E5	Construction Engineers	25
E5	Electrical Engineers	20
E5	EMT	40
E5	Computer Science Engineers	20
E5	Renewable Energy Engineers	10
E5	Waterworks Operators (Certified)	10
E5	Commercial Electricians	200
E5	Engineering Technicians	20
E5	Fiber Fusion Splicing	200
E5	Fiber Fusion Splicing Instructors	10
E5	Plumber/Pipe-fitters	40
E5	HVAC Technicians	40
E5	Lineworker	40
E5	Industrial Maintenance Technicians	40
E5	Data Center Control Technicians	100
E5	Heavy Equipment Operators	40
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>855</b>
E7	Industrial Maintenance Technicians	20
E7	Engineering Technicians	20
E7	Logging Equipment Operators	20
E7	Electrical Engineers	10
E7	EMT	20
E7	Pipefitters	20
E7	Plumbers	10
E7	Waterworks Operators (Certified)	10
E7	Data Center Controls Technicians	20
E7	Commercial Electricians	20
E7	Fiber Fusion Splicing	40
E7	HVAC Technician	10
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>220</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1075</b>

B.6. Collaboration between workforce and economic development partners is essential for economic growth and competition in the global economy. SCMW LWDA works together with both public and community-based economic development organizations and efforts to leverage resources and strengths.

The SCMW LWDA works closely with representatives of the public and private sectors in the area on a continual basis to foster economic and community development throughout the area. Widespread support among local elected officials, business leaders, and other stakeholders works to foster and cultivate innovative workforce approaches. Economic development representatives who hold membership of the LWDB further assist staff with staying informed of local needs.

- B.7. The rural nature of the SCMW Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) presents significant transportation challenges. Public transit systems are limited, existing primarily in the larger cities, while more rural areas lack comprehensive transportation options. Although transportation assistance is provided through various community-based organizations, with referrals made as individual needs are identified, the overall lack of mass transit remains a concern.

Low-income individuals, especially those who are unemployed or underemployed, often cannot afford personal vehicles and must rely on walking, biking, carpooling, or limited public transit. This issue is compounded in rural areas where workers frequently travel to urban centers for employment, and it also impacts access to education and training programs necessary for workforce development.

To mitigate transportation barriers, SCMW and local community colleges collaborate with support organizations to facilitate transportation for individuals attending training. As participants gain skills and secure employment, they often improve their ability to afford reliable transportation, thereby addressing one of the significant obstacles to workforce participation and development.

Additionally, SCMW is implementing a digital delivery of services strategy to serve participations with workforce services and training to participants who do not have transportation resources.

- B.8. The SCMW LWDA works closely with the area's secondary education entities, and with post-secondary education entities such as community colleges and universities to articulate career pathways built around in-demand occupations and business demands. In 2023, in partnership with Accelerate and funded by the Mississippi Legislature, SCMW partnered with local school districts to implement a secondary Career Coaching program. Through this program, the legislature funds SCMW to fund a Career Coach at each high school. The Career

Coach helps students explore, prepare, and connect to in demand, living wage employment opportunities. Currently, SCMW funds 48 Career Coaches in 47 schools.

SCMW coordinates with community college workforce to design programs that meet the needs of both job seekers and employers, with emphasis on creating career pathways, which in turn, create a pipeline for the workforce. A lack of an adequate number of individuals in the pipelines was a major skill gap identified by workforce stakeholders and by those individuals involved in the Sector Strategy Plan development. Currently, 4 WIN Job Centers are located at Community College Campuses and the intent is to grow that partnership over the next four years.

- B.9. The SCMW LWDA provides services targeted for individuals regardless of geographic location. The area includes urban, suburban, metropolitan and rural areas, but primarily rural. Labor market information, as well as geographic and demographic information is utilized in program planning to ensure that citizens of the entire LWDA have access to and can be served by the workforce system.

The SCMW area is governed by a Local Workforce Development Board that works in coordination with the Chief Local Elected Officials Board or Board of Commissioners (BOC). SCMW staff works closely with the BOC members to address their concerns regarding workforce issues in their respective counties. Involvement of these board members provides perspective into local needs and issues.

- B.10. The SCMW LWDA remains committed to supporting the WIOA State Plan with a strong emphasis on prioritizing services for veterans and their families. In alignment with current trends and evolving practices in military and workforce development, the SCMW LWDA continues to integrate modern strategies and resources to enhance the employment prospects for veterans.

To connect military skills with civilian occupational demands, the LWDA utilizes the Mississippi Works profile process, which matches military experience with industry needs. Additionally, the LWDA endorses and leverages the Jobs for Veterans State Grants, ensuring that funding supports targeted employment initiatives for veterans.

In response to the growing need for specialized support, Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) are embedded within the WIN Job Center service delivery system, offering tailored assistance at the local level. To address

current workforce trends, DVOPs are now trained in advanced career counseling techniques, including digital tools and platforms that facilitate remote job search and application processes. They also receive cross-training in the comprehensive WIOA and Combined Plan Partner programs to maximize the range of services available to veterans.

In cases where DVOPs are unavailable or have reached their caseload limits, other WIN Job Center staff are equipped to step in and provide appropriate services to veterans and eligible spouses. This approach ensures that all veterans continue to benefit from the full spectrum of WIOA-funded services and programs.

To further enhance service delivery, the SCMW LWDA is exploring partnerships with veteran-focused organizations and integrating data analytics to better understand and address the unique employment challenges faced by veterans. These efforts are designed to improve job matching, streamline access to services, and ultimately support the successful transition of veterans into meaningful civilian careers.

## C. Local Area Planning

C.1. The SCMW LWDB is committed to supporting the state's strategic vision of developing an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of employers. In alignment with these state-level goals, SCMW LWDB has established the following local objectives:

1. Jointly develop and implement policies that will coordinate service delivery among all WIOA Combined Plan Partners to achieve a no-wrong-door approach for WIOA participants and employers.
2. Strengthen interagency and local workforce stakeholder partnerships.
3. Develop defined, articulated pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for the workforce.
4. Develop cross-program performance metrics. Engage partners to establish a 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.
5. Develop a service delivery approach that enhances access to quality workforce services across the workforce area while optimizing resource allocation to achieve cost efficiency and balance.
6. Invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of WIOA and other workforce initiatives.
7. Develop and communicate a unified vision and message.

**Goals 1, 2, and 5** focus on reducing programmatic fragmentation to ensure that all eligible individuals receive services efficiently and effectively. SCMW is committed to implementing a "no-wrong-door" approach, which guarantees that individuals seeking workforce connections are directed to the appropriate partner, regardless of their initial point of entry. Out-of-school youth, including current or former foster youth, will be referred to youth providers, while those facing employment barriers will be connected to partners offering targeted support to address these challenges.

SCMW is also dedicated to extending this no-wrong-door approach to employer engagement and other programs, including childcare and mental health services. Over the next two years, SCMW will work with partners to integrate technologies and communication for managing employer interactions, streamline processes such as needs assessments, predict future workforce demands, and enhance access to support services. The goal is to improve

coordination, increase efficiency in employer engagement, and better anticipate and address workforce needs.

**Goals 3 and 6** are designed to develop a workforce that meets the needs of both current and potential employers in collaboration with educational institutions. SCMW aims to create clear pathways into the priority occupations throughout Ecosystem 5 and 7. Through the Career Coach initiative, SCMW will partner with local school districts to utilize K-12 career clusters and occupational pathways to guide students' academic and career preparation.

In collaboration with K-12 schools, the four Community Colleges in the SCMW workforce area offer dual enrollment opportunities, allowing high school students to earn credits towards work-ready credentials before graduation. This program facilitates a seamless transition into two-year or four-year programs that further enhance students' work-readiness in their chosen fields. Additionally, SCMW has partnered with K-12 and Community College institutions to implement a non-credit, short-term workforce training dual enrollment program.

Employer participation on the LWDB ensures continuous feedback on the effectiveness of the state's workforce development strategies, helping to refine and improve these tactics in response to real-world needs.

**Goals 4, 5, and 6** ensure that SCMW's efforts to build a skilled workforce are quantifiable and effective. Our use of technology extends beyond real-time case management to include ongoing and retrospective analysis of outcomes, allowing us to measure performance comprehensively. We evaluate outcomes using both federally prescribed performance measures and state-defined metrics. AccelerateMS recommends applying results-oriented measures across Mississippi's workforce development system, which we incorporate into our local strategies.

SCMW benefits from Mississippi's continued investment in the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). This system integrates administrative data from all WIOA partners and educational institutions into a well-governed, secure clearinghouse. It facilitates performance measurement, cohort analysis, and strategic planning, enabling SCMW to track progress, assess effectiveness, and make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.

**Goal 7** focuses on establishing a distinct brand identity for SCMW that aligns with the state's AccelerateMS workforce development strategy. This initiative

aims to ensure that our workforce development activities and resources are used efficiently and effectively. By streamlining services, enhancing communication and collaboration among partners, and improving outcomes for participants, we seek to maximize our impact.

Through tailored messaging, SCMW will clearly communicate this vision to partners, stakeholders, and participants. This will help align all involved parties, ensuring a unified approach and driving progress in workforce development within our local area.

- C.2. The SCMW LWDA ensures that local workforce area service providers effectively implement core programs and align resources to support the strategic vision and goals of the WIOA State Plan.

**Strategy 1:** Define Articulated Pathways across Educational Sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for the workforce aligned to priority occupations within defined LWDA sectors.

In collaboration with local core and strategic partners, SCMW will align occupational pathways, industry credentials, work-based learning opportunities, and training delivery methods. Additionally, SCMW will develop a participant stipend structure to enhance recruitment, engagement, enrollment, persistence, completion, and career navigation in high-demand industry sectors.

Key objectives include:

- Developing occupational pathways that align with workforce needs
- Designing a plan to integrate industry-aligned credentials into these pathways
- Recommending work-based learning activities
- Creating a framework for participant stipends

Tactics to achieve these objectives include:

- **Aligning Sector Strategies with Secondary Career Technical Education Initiatives:** SCMW will work to align sector strategies with secondary career technical education programs to advance career pathways for high school graduates. In response to recommendations

from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) has adopted a framework aimed at enhancing career technical education programs. This framework prepares high school graduates for post-secondary credentials and high-skill, high-demand jobs within the state. Our focus will be on integrating workforce needs with secondary and postsecondary student preparation, creating a seamless system that aligns career education with labor market opportunities in accordance with state sector strategy goals.

- **Career Coaches:** A statewide Career Coach program was established during the 2022 legislative session and further expanded in 2023. With funding increased from \$8 million to \$12 million for fiscal year 2024, the program places career coaches in schools across the state. SCMW currently administers funding for 48 coaches in 47 high schools throughout the workforce area. These coaches assist students in exploring high-quality career opportunities in Mississippi. They support students by facilitating job shadowing, internship opportunities, and other activities that guide them toward successful career pathways.
- **Registered and Non-Registered Apprenticeship Programs:** Registered and Non-Registered Apprenticeship Programs are industry-driven, high-quality career pathways that offer customizable, earn-as-you-learn training models. Since 2016, the state has secured funding for four cycles of RAP grants, including the Accelerator and Expansion Grants, the State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant (SAE), and the Apprenticeship State Expansion Grant (ASE). Through the Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP), MDES is committed to expanding RAPs, positioning them as a key strategy for aligning Mississippi's workforce and educational systems, enhancing economic competitiveness, and increasing access to well-paying jobs.

In addition to Registered Apprenticeship Programs, SCMW will also support non-registered apprenticeship initiatives. These programs provide valuable training and career pathways outside the registered system, broadening opportunities for skill development and job readiness.



All apprenticeship programs, whether registered or non-registered, must adhere to training provider eligibility procedures to ensure quality and effectiveness.

- **Increasing Participation of Underrepresented Populations:** To enhance the involvement of underrepresented groups in priority occupation training programs. By leveraging community college sponsor contacts and College & Career Navigators from the Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) initiative, we aim to conduct effective outreach, recruitment, and support for these populations throughout the SCMW workforce area.

MI-BEST, an evidence-based initiative implemented across all 4 community colleges within the SCMW workforce area, provides a comprehensive approach to career preparation. Students in MI-BEST concurrently enroll in:

- High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation classes if they lack a high school diploma or need to strengthen academic skills (reading, writing, math),
- Workforce preparation through the Smart Start Pathway Course, and/or
- Occupational training in credit-level Career and Technical Education programs or non-credit Workforce Education training.

SCMW funds Full-time College and Career Coaches, similar to the state's Navigator role, are employed by the colleges to recruit and retain students. These Coaches receive specialized training, collaborate closely with faculty, and often engage with employers to facilitate apprenticeships or employment opportunities.

Community College Career Coaches will monitor each participant's progress and provide tailored support to ensure successful completion. By working in tandem with WIN Job Centers, these Career Coaches will act as a central hub for recruitment and support services. They will identify potential participants, utilize existing resources, and improve coordination to maximize benefits for priority occupation workforce training.

Career Coaches will also leverage relationships with college support staff and external workforce partners to address barriers such as lack of a high school credential, childcare, transportation, and other obstacles.

- **Leveraging Funding Opportunities:** To expand capacity and effectively address sector-specific industry needs, as well as support underserved populations, SCMW actively seeks and utilizes federal, state, and regional funding opportunities. Through a state-wide grant application, SCMW has been awarded an EDA Phase I Recompete grant, which will be used to support residents in designated service areas facing significant barriers to accessing education and job training. This initiative aims to overcome these access challenges by strategically locating training facilities in underserved communities and adopting a telehealth model to improve workforce training accessibility.

SCMW actively pursues state funding opportunities through the Mississippi Works Fund. We have successfully secured funding to support programs aimed at transitioning underrepresented and unemployed populations into living-wage careers. These programs offer quality, short-term training opportunities designed to enhance job readiness and career advancement.

- **Identification of Internship Opportunities with Employers:** SCMW is actively involved in identifying and facilitating internship opportunities across the state. The state has enhanced its technology to enable employers to post internship opportunities on the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange. In high-growth and high-demand sectors, employers frequently highlight critical internship areas such as engineering and management. SCMW is committed to leveraging these resources to connect local students and job seekers with valuable internship experiences that align with industry needs.

**Strategy 2:** Engage Partners to Establish a Plan to Remain Abreast of Changing Industry Needs and the Metrics to Measure Outcomes to Realize the Potential of the Local Area's Workforce Programs and Delivery Systems

SCMW is committed to aligning workforce training programs and funding with the skills and occupations that are in highest demand. This approach

ensures that students are well-prepared for competitive, well-paying jobs and that industries have access to the talent necessary for growth and success.

To support this strategy, SCMW will engage effectively with partners through streamlined outreach, communication, and management of employer relationships. Additionally, the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) will be a critical tool for developing research questions and informing policy decisions. The state has established a solid foundation for generating knowledge that drives continuous system improvement. This capacity will grow as SCMW collaborates with state leaders, AccelerateMS, agency partners, educational institutions, employers, and other stakeholders to identify and address key research areas vital to the state's economic development.

**Strategy 3:** Collaborative Development of Strategies to Coordinate Service Delivery with SCMW WIOA Combined Plan Partners

In our local area, the strategy emphasizes maximizing the effectiveness of WIOA One-Stop Centers. SCMW is tasked with the certification, operation, and oversight of these centers. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) outline the roles, resources, and expectations for each partner involved.

Mississippi's WIOA implementation includes five service delivery models: 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. To enhance service coordination, increase accessibility, and reduce costs, we plan to expand the Virtual Access One-Stop Centers. This expansion will aim to improve service delivery and support for our community.

1. **Comprehensive One-Stop Centers** - Comprehensive One-Stop Centers physically house the consortium of Combined Plan Partners designated by the SWIB and LWDBs. One staff member from each of the Combined Plan Partners is co-located in each of the comprehensive centers. Each of the four LWDBs will house at least one Comprehensive One-Stop Center that provides access to the services of the Combined Plan programs and other partners. Each Comprehensive One-Stop Center is 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 are expected to have a working knowledge of all programs and services offered through the One-Stop Center and to be able to provide participants with the information necessary to make informed decisions.

2. **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 meet the needs of local areas while maintaining a direct line to the larger comprehensive centers.

SCMW plans to have the Affiliate One-Stop Centers in the workforce area.

3. **Virtual Access One-Stop Center** – A key mode of service delivery is virtual access. In line with the concept of a universally accessible workforce system, virtual access provides participants access to a MDES staff person. As long as an individual has internet access, he or she can directly connect to the services provided through One-Stop Centers.
4. **Digital One-Stop Centers** - In the WIOA planning process, Core Program partners reached a consensus to establish state-of-the-art Digital One Stop Centers. These centers are equipped with cutting-edge communication technologies and offer participants convenient access to workforce services with efficiency in mind. The implementation of digital offices is expected to yield several benefits, including reduced infrastructure cost, optimized staffing requirements, increased accessibility, and improved coordination of services.

To enhance the user experience, appointments will be offered to minimize wait times. Digital workforce specialists will be present in these offices to assist participants in various ways, such as:

- Engaging in real time conversations with workforce partners through phone or video chat.
- Sending and receiving messages securely through methods like secure messaging email and secure file exchange

- Utilizing resources kiosk for efficient job searches
- Harnessing AI for optimizing job searches and skill matching

This innovative approach ensures that participants can seamlessly navigate and leverage digital tools to access workforce services, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness and increasing program reach.

SCMW plans to have Digital One-Stop Center throughout the workforce area.

5. **Call Center Support** - For participants who lack computer access, MDES operates a call center staffed to assist with most One-Stop services.
6. **Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Centers** – 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, with placement informed by industry sector labor sheds and LWDAs.

One-Stop Center employees and staff are required to know the essential characteristics of the services offered by all Combined Plan Partner and Strategic Partner programs. Cross-program professional development provides 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 developed 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 was developed and implemented by curriculum experts. Training resources are made available through the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange system to facilitate training at local offices.

SCMW plans to have a minimum of one Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Center in the workforce area.

- C.3. The SCMW LWDA works to support the State Plan's two major components: 1) Combined Plan Programs and 2) Strategic Programs to increase the impact of the Combined Plan (Tables 4 and 5). Meetings are held with the Combined Plan partners to develop processes and procedures for providing services to individuals and to employers using a combined approach. Partners are committed to engaging with each other to create a cohesive system of unduplicated services.

**Table 5: Combined Plan Programs**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Program</b>
LWDA	Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs (WIOA Title I)
MDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, amended by WIOA Title III)</li><li>• Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program (authorized under Title II-Chapter 2 of the Trade Act of 1974)</li><li>• Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code)</li><li>• Unemployment Insurance Programs (authorized under state unemployment compensation laws)</li><li>• Senior Community Service Employment Programs (authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965)</li></ul>
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 6: Strategic Programs**

Agency	Program
MDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment and training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008)</li> <li>• Work programs authorized under section 6(o) Food and Nutrition Act of 2008</li> <li>• Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act</li> </ul>
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

C.4. The SCMW LWDA establishes Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with core program provider partners, outlining each party's responsibilities and goals. These MOUs are crafted in collaboration with each provider to enhance individuals' access to training, education, supportive, and career services. The aim is to increase opportunities for employment, particularly for those with barriers to employment.

The MOUs are designed to facilitate connections between individuals and employment opportunities, with a focus on training for priority occupations within defined sectors. Table 7 below provides data on the number of individuals with barriers to employment. The substantial number of low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities, and single-parent households underscores the need for targeted support. The high count of individuals aged 65 and older, including many who are low-income, suggests a need for programs that accommodate older workers and retirees. To address these needs, SCMW will leverage the MOUs to facilitate co-enrollment in partner programs where appropriate. Each individual's assessment will guide the creation of a tailored success plan, focusing on attaining industry-recognized, portable, and stackable credentials that support career progression. This approach ensures that training and support are aligned with the needs of these underrepresented groups and the priority occupations within defined sectors. The goal is to improve employment outcomes and ensure a self-sustaining wage for individuals, addressing the barriers identified in the data.

**Table 7: Populations with Barriers to Employment in SCMW LWDA**

Group	Number
Low-Income Individuals, Age 18-64 <sup>1</sup>	73,904
American Indians/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians <sup>1</sup>	1,585
Individuals with Disabilities, Age 18-64 <sup>1</sup>	62,587
Individuals Age 65 and Older <sup>1</sup>	126,042
Individuals Age 65 and Older, Low-Income <sup>1</sup>	18,205
Ex-Offenders, Age 18-64 <sup>2</sup>	1,192
Homeless Children and Youth <sup>3</sup>	1,448
English Language Learners with Low Level of Literacy <sup>4</sup>	1,192
Individuals within 2 Years of Exhausting TANF Eligibility <sup>5</sup>	129
Single Parent Households <sup>1</sup>	160,181
Single Mother Households <sup>1</sup>	105,351
Single Father Households <sup>1</sup>	54,830

Sources: 1) U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates. 2) Mississippi Department of Corrections, 2024. 3) Mississippi Department of Education, 2023. 4) Adult Basic Education, 2023. 5) Mississippi Department of Human Services, 2024.

Note: Low income is defined as below federal poverty level, based on family/household size.

C.5. The SCMW LWDA offers a range of services and programs designed to support businesses in meeting their workforce needs. These include:

- a. **Connecting to Job Seekers:** Employers can connect with potential job candidates through the Mississippi Works system, a technology-based platform. This system allows employers to post job openings, search for candidates, request resumes, and invite candidates for interviews. This tool is available at no cost to employers. or individuals who may lack access to this technology or the means to utilize it, in-person support is available from a WIOA career coach at WIN Job Centers within the SCMW LWDA. These centers offer WIOA-funded On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Work Experience/Internship opportunities, which provide financial assistance to employers for hiring and training workers.
- b. **Expanding Employment Opportunities:** SCMW LWDA offers WIOA OJT and Work Experience/Internship programs to help businesses build a technically



skilled workforce. The LWDA works closely with industry associations, economic development agencies, human resource associations, and other business groups to ensure that program designs meet the specific needs of employers. Priority is given to programs that align training with employment opportunities in high-demand industries and sectors. The primary focus is on creating effective career pathways for job seekers.

Additionally, SCMW LWDA facilitates access to other training resources:

- **Short-Term Training Programs:** Employers can utilize the Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) and MS Works Funds to customize pre-employment and post-hire training or to assess applicant skills through coordination with local community colleges.
- **Job Creation Incentives:** Employers who create new jobs and invest in Mississippi may be eligible for various tax incentives or MS Works funding to support their expansion efforts.

By leveraging these services and programs, SCMW LWDA aims to address the evolving needs of businesses and ensure a well-prepared and skilled workforce.

- C.6. The SCMW LWDA collaborates with community college Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and other small business-focused service providers to support and enhance entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise development. This coordination ensures that local entrepreneurs and small business owners have access to comprehensive resources and support services, fostering the growth of new ventures and strengthening the local business community.
- C.7. The SCMW LWDA is committed to leveraging apprenticeships to strengthen the regional economy and enhance career advancement opportunities for individuals. This commitment involves strategic referrals and collaborations with key entities such as the DOL Office of Apprenticeship, the Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP), and other registered apprenticeship programs. SCMW also offers pre-apprenticeship training through WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to prepare individuals for successful entry into apprenticeship programs. By combining WIOA funds with other financial resources, SCMW provides employers with essential financial support to develop and expand apprenticeship opportunities, thus creating valuable pathways for job seekers.

To address one of the most pressing workforce challenges in the healthcare sector—retaining qualified nurses—SCMW has implemented the Nurse Externship Program. This initiative has proven effective in increasing recruitment and retention rates among hospitals and other healthcare providers, helping to alleviate staffing shortages and support the sector’s growth.

- C.8. The SCMW LWDA is dedicated to supporting rapid response activities in line with the Mississippi WIOA Combined Plan, providing comprehensive reemployment services to individuals impacted by layoffs or business closures. Upon receiving information about a layoff or closure, WIOA partners promptly share this with both state and local rapid response team members. SCMW coordinates these Rapid Response activities with the state to address the immediate needs of those affected.

The Rapid Response Team includes representatives and resource information from local WIN Job Centers, Community Colleges, MDHS, the Home Saver Program, Small Business/Entrepreneurial Program, MDES, MDRS, and SCMW LWDA. This collaborative effort ensures that individuals facing job loss receive thorough support and information.

Affected individuals receive a range of resources and assistance, including:

- “Surviving a Layoff” toolkit
- Resume development tips
- MSWorks profile creation assistance
- Interview preparation tips
- Guidance on obtaining National Career Readiness Certificates
- Unemployment Benefits application support
- Registration for employment services
- Training opportunities for dislocated workers
- Job leads and information on upcoming job fairs
- Housing, mortgage, and utility bill assistance

Insurance options, prescription assistance, and childcare resources  
This comprehensive support is designed to help individuals navigate their transition and access the necessary resources for successful reemployment.

- C.9. The SCMW LWDA ensures seamless coordination between services provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) and WIOA services delivered through the WIN Job Center system. SCMW LWDA leverages the WIN Job Centers to offer comprehensive WIOA services, integrating them with the Wagner-Peyser program services. A list of SCMW WIN Job Center locations is included in Appendix G.

At the WIN Job Centers, WIOA-funded career and training services are offered alongside Wagner-Peyser program services. Staff members at these centers are cross-trained to deliver both Wagner-Peyser and WIOA services effectively, which helps to avoid service duplication and ensures a unified approach to customer assistance. This integration streamlines service delivery, reducing redundancy and improving efficiency for both job seekers and staff.

Furthermore, the state's technology system plays a crucial role in tracking and managing services, ensuring that individuals receive the appropriate support without service overlap. This coordinated approach enhances the effectiveness of the workforce system, providing comprehensive and streamlined assistance to those seeking employment and career advancement.

- C.10. The SCMW LWDA collaborates closely with the Adult Education Program managed by local Community Colleges through the Mississippi Community College Board. This partnership integrates with the Career Pathway Model, which assesses individuals for both basic and work-ready skills and connects those needing a high-school equivalency degree with appropriate resources.

To address the needs of individuals pursuing career pathways in priority occupations, the intake process involves not only assessing basic educational needs but also aligning with integrated skills training pathways. When individuals seeking WIOA training services lack a high-school diploma or equivalency, they are referred to Adult Education programs available at WIN Job Centers or nearby locations.

These Adult Education programs are strategically integrated with WIOA services to ensure a seamless transition for individuals into skills training relevant to high-demand occupations. By aligning educational support with training opportunities, SCMW LWDA enhances the effectiveness of career pathways, helping individuals gain necessary credentials and skills to advance in priority occupations within identified sectors. This collaborative approach supports a

cohesive system that prepares individuals for both immediate employment and long-term career success.

- C.11. The SCMW LWDA collaborates with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) to deliver flexible, customized support for individuals with disabilities, aiming to address their specific needs effectively. The State Plan outlines strategies for this collaboration, including cross-training of staff, technical assistance, and cooperative efforts with employers, to ensure comprehensive service delivery.

MDRS has been a pivotal partner in the SCMW LWDA, contributing to the integration of WIN Job Center and WIOA services. SCMW LWDA and MDRS work together to provide tailored support, often combining MDRS services with WIOA offerings to meet each client's unique requirements. This partnership is detailed in the MOU, which outlines how services are coordinated to ensure seamless provision.

#### Analysis of Data for People in SCMW with Disabilities

The total disabled population in the SCMW LWDA area is 121,281, with 62,587 individuals aged 18-64. The distribution of disabilities within this population highlights several key aspects:

- **Demographic Breakdown:** Among the disabled population, 49.7% are White, 47.7% are Black, and 2.6% belong to other racial categories. This indicates a predominantly diverse population with a slight majority of White individuals.
- **Gender Distribution:** For individuals aged 18-64, the gender distribution is nearly equal, with females representing 50.4% and males 49.6%. This balance underscores the need for services that cater to both genders equally.
- **Age Distribution:** Within the 18-64 age group, 79.5% are between 35-64 years old, while 20.5% are between 18-34 years old. This suggests a significant proportion of the disabled population is in the older working-age bracket, which may influence the types of support and training needed.
- **Economic Characteristics:** The employment rate for this population is notably high at 90.1%, with a median earning of \$26,831. These figures reflect a relatively strong employment presence among individuals with disabilities, though income levels and job types may still vary widely.

Overall, the data underscores the diverse needs of the disabled population within the SCMW LWDA. The partnership with MDRS allows SCMW LWDA to provide targeted services that address these needs effectively. By leveraging this data, SCMW LWDA and MDRS can enhance service delivery, focusing on areas with the highest demand and ensuring that support is both comprehensive and tailored to individual circumstances.

**Table 8: Demographics of People with Disabilities in the SCMW LWDA**

	Number	Percent
Total Disabled Population	121,281	-
Total Age 18-64	62,587	-
<b>RACE (All Ages)</b>		
Black	57,881	47.7
White	60,288	49.7
Other	3,112	2.6
<b>GENDER (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Female	31,535	50.4
Male	31,052	49.6
<b>AGE (Ages 18-64)</b>		
18-34	12,849	20.5
35-64	49,738	79.5
<b>ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS</b>		
Employment Rate	-	90.1
Median Earnings	-	\$26,831
<b>TYPE OF DISABILITY* (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Hearing Difficulty	11,627	18.6
Vision Difficulty	12,789	20.4
Cognitive Difficulty	26,913	43.0
Ambulatory Difficulty	30,759	49.1
Self-care Difficulty	10,886	17.4
Independent Living Difficulty	22,924	36.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates.

\* 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.

Note: May not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

C.12. The SCMW LWDA adheres to a competitive procurement process for awarding sub-awards and contracts related to activities under WIOA Title I. This process is conducted in compliance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Federal Grants, as outlined in 2 CFR 200, which governs procurement requirements for entities receiving and managing federal funds. All services funded through WIOA are procured in strict accordance with these federal regulations to ensure transparency, fairness, and effective use of resources.

C.13. The SCMW LWDA has integrated a diagnostic checklist within the WIN Job Center system to streamline the intake process for individuals. This tool aids staff in conducting a thorough work readiness assessment, developing personalized success plans, determining WIOA eligibility, and making appropriate referrals to additional workforce partner programs and services.

Leveraging the state's Combined Plan Partner system, the checklist automatically generates recommended referrals based on the individual's responses to diagnostic questions. This automated referral process enhances accuracy and efficiency, ensuring participants are matched with the most relevant programs and services.

The MS Works system plays a crucial role in tracking the services provided to enrolled individuals and supports the Office of Grant Management (OGM) in generating quarterly performance reports. These reports compare actual performance against the workforce area's negotiated performance measures, providing valuable insights. This data-driven approach enables the SCMW LWDA to effectively manage programs, make informed adjustments, and continuously improve performance outcomes.

C.14. The SCMW LWDB is a dynamic and engaged board, distinguished by its proactive involvement and commitment beyond mere oversight. Board meetings are consistently well-attended, with members actively participating in the evaluation of programs, activities, and performance metrics of the LWDA, exemplifying the traits of a high-performing board.

The SCMW LWDB ensures that its policies and operating procedures are regularly updated in compliance with the State Plan. These policies and procedures are integral to the board's functioning and are listed in the appendices of this plan.

- C.15. The SCMW LWDA has actively engaged in partnership with AccelerateMS, the Mississippi Development Authority, and local economic developers to advance the ecosystem approach to workforce development and training, emphasizing alignment with both local and state economic goals. A prime example of this collaborative effort is the recent project involving the recruitment and preparation of a workforce for the Amazon Web Services (AWS) announcement in Madison County.

In this initiative, the SCMW LWDA worked closely with the Madison County Economic Development Authority, Accelerate MS, and local training providers to tailor workforce development strategies to meet the specific needs of the AWS project. This included identifying and developing targeted training programs and ensuring that local job seekers were equipped with the skills required for the new opportunities created by this major investment.

The SCMW LWDA's focus on priority occupations in targeted sector strategies and industry-specific goals is integral to supporting economic development efforts. Board members, who are deeply rooted in their communities and maintain strong relationships with local economic developers, play a crucial role in this process. By leveraging these connections, the SCMW LWDB enhances its ability to attract and prepare the workforce for new and expanding industries, thereby contributing to the region's economic growth and stability.

- C.16. The SCMW LWDA conducts an annual review of the local plan in collaboration with workforce partners to ensure it aligns with evolving local and state priorities, target industries, and emerging initiatives. This review process allows for timely updates and modifications to the plan as needed, reflecting changes in workforce demands, economic conditions, and local area objectives. Adjustments are made to keep the plan relevant and responsive to current needs and opportunities, ensuring continued effectiveness and alignment with overarching workforce development goals.

## **D. WIN Job Centers (One-Stop Delivery System) and Programs**

- D.1. The SCMW LWDA operates seven WIN Job Centers, including one Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One Stop Center.

To ensure high-quality service delivery, the SCMW LWDA rigorously monitors, evaluates, and audits WIN Job Center operators based on performance metrics and subaward criteria. This oversight helps maintain alignment with strategic goals and ensures that the centers meet or exceed expectations.

Regular partner meetings, as well as sessions with WIN Job Center managers and staff, are conducted to explore opportunities for service enhancement, share successful practices, and provide technical assistance. These collaborative efforts aim to continuously improve service delivery and address emerging needs in the workforce area.

- D.2. The SCMW LWDB has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with its workforce system partners and service providers. This MOU serves as a foundational document, outlining the design framework and partnerships essential to the SCMW LWDA's operations. While the MOU is a WIOA requirement and aligns with the State Plan directives, its primary purpose is to foster a collaborative and cooperative environment among all partners.

The MOU details the roles, responsibilities, and contributions of each partner to ensure a unified approach to workforce development. Current Consortium Agreements and Infrastructure Funding Agreements are accessible for review at the Central MS Planning & Development District office. For further details, refer to Appendix H, which includes the SCMW Local Area Memorandum of Understanding.

- D.3. The SCMW LWDA WIN Job Center staff utilize Mississippi Works, the state's integrated participant and service tracking system. Mississippi Works is a comprehensive, technology-enabled platform designed for managing intake, case management, and program administration under WIOA, as well as services provided by WIN Job Center partners.

To ensure effective use of the system, ongoing training is provided to workforce partner staff, covering both the Mississippi Works tracking system and the associated technology. This training is tailored to meet the evolving needs of staff and to enhance their proficiency in utilizing the system for optimal service delivery and case management.



- D.4. The SCMW LWDA WIN Job Center staff, along with other workforce partner staff, receive training in integrated case management processes and workforce service delivery. This training is conducted by SCMW LWDA staff or the Office of Grant Management, a division of MDES.

Training is provided for newly hired staff and is also available to current staff as needed, ensuring they stay updated with the latest practices and procedures for effective service delivery.

- D.5. The SCMW LWDA is responsible for monitoring and overseeing the WIN Job Center system. Each sub-awardee undergoes at least one comprehensive monitoring review during the program year, which may be conducted either in person or through a desk review. These audits typically cover eight key focus areas:

- General Compliance
- Cash Receipts
- Non-Payroll Cash Disbursements
- Payroll Disbursements
- Property and Equipment
- General Administrative
- Programmatic Performance and Compliance
- Equal Opportunity Compliance

Starting in the fall of 2024, SCMW will implement a customer satisfaction survey across all WIN Job Centers. The survey results will be closely monitored and integrated into the annual review and monitoring process for each local WIN Job Center.

Additionally, OGM conducts reviews of customer service quality. The WIOA Customer Satisfaction Survey, managed by nSPARC, is used to assess customer satisfaction through a structured survey process. The results show that both businesses and job seekers were generally satisfied with the services provided by the local WIN Job Centers. Job seekers reported a relatively high level of satisfaction, while business owners' satisfaction improved compared to previous survey results.

#### **Job Seeker Satisfaction**

To assess job seeker satisfaction with WIN Job Center services, three questions were used:

- Overall satisfaction with the services received.
- How well the services met the job seeker's expectations.
- How well the services were suited to an individual in similar circumstances.

In PY22, the state-weighted average index was 86.19, with SCMW scoring slightly higher at 88.59.

### **Employer Satisfaction**

For assessing employer satisfaction, three questions were posed:

- Overall satisfaction with the services received.
- How well the services met the employer's expectations.
- How ideal the services were for businesses in similar circumstances.

In PY22, the state-weighted average index was 67.19, with SCMW slightly below at 65.79.

WIN Job Centers are routinely monitored for compliance with WIOA program requirements, documentation accuracy, and service timeliness. Corrective actions are implemented as necessary, and technical assistance is provided as needed.

- D.5. The SCMW LWDA is responsible for monitoring and overseeing the WIN Job Center system. Each sub-awardee undergoes at least one annual comprehensive monitoring.

WIN Job Center locations include Sector Training Plus Comprehensive, Affiliate, and Digital-Access sites. As outlined in section C.9 above, the specific locations of the area's WIN Job Centers are detailed in Appendix G. All WIOA one-stop operators and service providers are procured in compliance with 2 CFR 200. The table below provides an overview of the services available at each center.

To streamline administrative costs and enhance programmatic investments, the administration of OJT, ITA, and internships has been centralized by Ecosystem. Each WIN Job Center will have a WIOA Career Coach to assist participants in accessing these services. The Business Development Coordinator will oversee OJT and ITA administration, while the Customer Engagement Manager will handle Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).

All WIN Job Centers will be staffed by a WIOA Career Coach who provides essential career services and assists individuals in developing an Individualized

Employment Plan (IEP). If the IEP includes WIOA career or training services, such as Individual Training Accounts (ITA), On-the-Job Training (OJT), or internships, the WIOA Career Coach will facilitate a synchronous digital meeting with the Business Development or Customer Engagement Manager to address the customer's needs. Furthermore, if the IEP includes services from WIOA core or strategic partners not located at the WIN Job Center, the WIOA Career Coach will coordinate on-site or digital synchronous appointments for the customer.

- D.6. All WIN Job Centers provide services to Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth. Additionally, the Yazoo County Youth Court will administer youth programs. Table 9 describes the current WJC Responsibilities and Services; however, this may change through scheduled procurement cycles.

**Table 9: Overview of WJC Responsibilities and Service**

<b>WIN Job Center Location</b>	<b>Career Services</b>	<b>OJT Training</b>	<b>ITA</b>	<b>Internship</b>	<b>WIN Job Center Operator</b>	<b>Provider of Youth Services</b>
Madison County	MDES	MDES	MDES	MDES &	MDES	MDES
Jackson	Hinds CC & MDES	Hinds CC	Hinds CC	Hinds CC	Hinds CC	Hinds CC
Pearl	Hinds CC & MDES	Hinds CC	Hinds CC	Hinds CC	Hinds CC	Hinds CC
Vicksburg	Hinds CC & MDES	Hinds CC	Hinds CC	Hinds CC	Hinds CC	Hinds CC
Brookhaven	CoLin CC & MDES	CoLin CC	CoLin CC	CoLin CC	CoLin CC	CoLin CC
McComb	MDES	MDES	MDES	MDES	MDES	MDES
Natchez	CoLin CC & MDES	CoLin CC	CoLin CC	CoLin CC	CoLin CC	CoLin CC

- D.7. The SCMW LWDA will maintain at least one Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Center in the area. This center will offer access to all Combined Plan Partner services and provide in-house career education. The SCMW LWDA is committed to expanding and establishing additional Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Centers throughout the area.
- D.8. The SCMW LWDA MOU contains a description of the processes for providing career services to individuals through the WIOA Career Coaching strategy. The WIOA Career Coach plays a crucial role in guiding unemployed and underemployed individuals, as well as students in secondary, postsecondary, and adult education programs, towards achieving their career goals. Based at a sector training plus job center, digital access job center, or a partnering Community College Campus, the Career Coach provides personalized career guidance through one-on-one coaching sessions, helping clients assess their skills and interests, develop Individual Employment plan, and navigate the job market. They also facilitate connections to relevant resources, training programs, and employment opportunities, while offering support with resume development, interview preparation, and job search strategies.
- Additionally, the WIOA Career Coach engages in career exploration activities, such as job shadowing and informational interviews, to help individuals make informed career decisions. They stay updated on labor market trends to advise on viable career paths and collaborate with local employers, educational institutions, and community organizations to promote workforce development. Through outreach events and networking, the Career Coach raises awareness of available services and connects clients to valuable career and training opportunities.
- D.9. The SMW LWDA MOU outlines the processes for delivering services to individuals, including comprehensive assessments conducted during face-to-face interviews. These assessments lead to the creation of personalized success plans for each individual. Participants are introduced to the MS Works system, assisted with registration, and guided in developing their profiles.
- D.10. All job seekers, including those in remote areas, can connect with employers through Mississippi Works, an interactive website and mobile application available at [www.mississippiworks.org](http://www.mississippiworks.org). This platform enables users to build a profile, create a resume, search for and apply to job openings online, and receive notifications via email or text when new job matches arise. It also offers real-time feedback on job fit and provides accessible labor market information. For

those who may have limited computer skills, WIN Job Center staff can assist with job applications through "staff-assisted referrals" or other Wagner-Peyser services by logging into the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange.

Additionally, SCMW will offer a virtual WIOA Career Coach program, allowing individuals in remote areas to schedule synchronous, digital appointments with a trained WIOA Career Coach. These coaches will provide the same services outlined in section D.8. The virtual program will be available from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Central Standard Time, accommodating the underemployed population's needs while ensuring they do not miss work.

- D.11. The SCMW LWDB authorizes WIOA funds to cover the WIOA fair share of the cost of operation and infrastructure of the WIN Job Center system in the sub-award with the one-stop operator. These costs are an evaluation factor in selecting the operator and the location of the WIN Job Centers.
- D.12. The SCMW LWDA MOU identifies the role and activities of each partner agency including an inventory of all services directly delivered or accessible through each as well as referral mechanisms. Non-WIOA resources, whether cash or in-kind, are identified in the MOU.
- D.13. Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities encompass a range of services, including Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), Work Experience/Internships, and On-the-Job Training (OJT).

**Individual Training Account (ITA):** An ITA is a scholarship provided by a WIN Job Center to a WIOA-eligible individual. Available to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and out-of-school youth under Title I of WIOA, ITAs cover training services at approved community colleges and some private training facilities listed on the state's Eligible Training Provider List. ITAs fund tuition and select other costs, with the requirement that other financial aid must be applied first. The goal of ITAs is to equip individuals with the skills necessary to secure unsubsidized, permanent employment upon completing their training.

**Work Experience/Internship:** This activity offers eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth the opportunity to gain practical work experience and develop leadership skills while receiving compensation. The aim is to prepare participants for unsubsidized, permanent employment following the Work Experience/Internship period.

**On-the-Job Training (OJT):** OJT involves training provided by an employer, with the training period's length determined by the complexity of the skills to be

learned. The program reimburses the employer a portion of the wages paid to the employee during this period. The goal of OJT is to achieve unsubsidized, permanent employment after the training concludes. OJT is available for eligible adults and dislocated workers.

The SCMW LWDB regularly evaluates the types of services offered to ensure they meet legal requirements, align with the area's in-demand occupational sectors, and effectively address the needs of both job seekers and employers.

## D. Youth Services

- D.14. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has removed the mandate for Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to create a youth committee. Nevertheless, the Department recommends that Local WDBs form a standing committee to offer guidance and support with planning, operations, oversight, and other matters related to youth services. If a Local WDB chooses not to establish such a committee, it remains fully responsible for all aspects of youth formula programs.

The SCMW LWDB is accountable for all aspects of youth formula programs, as outlined in Appendix J. This includes overseeing the planning of youth programs within the workforce area and ensuring adherence to WIOA requirements, such as dedicating 75% of total youth funds to Out-of-School Youth and allocating at least 20% to work experience activities. Available WIOA-funded youth workforce activities, including those for youth with disabilities, are as follows:

- **Paid Internships:** These combine academic and occupational education with on-the-job training opportunities.
- **Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):** These funds support occupational skills training, prioritizing programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials aligned with local in-demand industries.
- **Concurrent Education:** Education provided alongside workforce preparation activities and training for specific occupations or occupational clusters.
- **Supportive Services:** Currently, the SCMW LWDA does not provide these services directly but refers youth to community agencies as needed.
- **Follow-Up Services:** These are provided for at least 12 months post-program exit to ensure service continuity and progress toward performance outcomes.
- **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling:** Offers tailored support to youth.
- **Labor Market Information:** Provides details about in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.
- **Postsecondary Preparation:** Activities that help youth transition to higher education and training.

A successful example of youth services implemented by the SCMW LWDA includes programs operated by the Yazoo County Youth Courts for adjudicated youth and the Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (MI-BEST).

- D.15. The SCMW LWDA leverages the state's intake and assessment system to enhance connections between the WIN Job Center system and unemployment insurance program requirements. This system necessitates close collaboration among workforce partner agencies and staff to assist Mississippians in navigating the workforce system effectively.

A committee of workforce partner representatives developed a diagnostic assessment questionnaire to guide partner referrals. Each question targets specific core programs to determine whether an individual should be directed to that program based on their responses. For example, a question about recent employment within the last 18 months helps identify if the individual may need information on applying for unemployment insurance (UI).

Individuals receiving unemployment benefits must register for and actively seek employment, a requirement supported by an online job search training tool (OJST) provided by MDES. The OJST helps customers enhance their job marketability early in their job search without the need for frequent visits to WIN Job Center locations. This approach aims to boost customer engagement, improve preparedness, and reduce the average duration of unemployment. Rapid response services, coordinated with the state Dislocated Worker unit and SCMW staff, address mass layoffs and plant closures to mitigate long-term unemployment.

Additionally, individuals who visit WIN Job Centers for employment or training services are assessed, and if necessary, guided on how to apply for unemployment benefits. The Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program, offered by MDES through the WIN Job Center system, specifically assists those who might exhaust their 26 weeks of unemployment benefits before securing new employment. RESEA focuses on expediting their return to the workforce.

- D.16. In support of the Mississippi Combined Plan, TANF activities are coordinated through the WIN Job Centers. The TANF program requires all participants to register with MS Works and conduct job search at WIN Job Centers as a requirement for receiving TANF services.
- D.17. The SCMW LWDA actively supports the State Plan's dropout prevention and recovery initiatives. The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) leads efforts to prevent dropouts through various strategies, including career academies, dual-enrollment programs, and work-based learning experiences.



SCMW LWDA staff collaborate with numerous community and educational organizations to ensure K-12 students, especially those in career tech classes, are aware of available opportunities. This includes the High School Career Coach program, which provides dedicated career coaching to high school students, helping them explore, prepare, and connect to career options and plan their educational paths.

Regular meetings with key K-12 school district administrators help strengthen the connection between the workforce area and schools, encouraging students to utilize all available workforce resources. Additionally, community college leaders play a crucial role in these partnerships, ensuring that K-12 training programs offer dual enrollment options and college credit, facilitating a smoother transition from high school to higher education.

- D.18. SCMW LWDA is fully committed to the integration and provision of services to the target groups indicated below. The service integration has been developed through the diagnostic questionnaire and referral process discussed above in D.15, and is detailed in the MOUs with each workforce partner. Referrals to assistance offered by workforce partners to help overcome barriers such as childcare and transportation are made for individuals who need such assistance. Continued training and networking between the workforce partners to build relationships and keep up with resources also ensure the integration and provision of services to the target groups. The target groups are:
- a) persons with disabilities (See Table 8 below);
  - b) veterans (See Table 8 below);
  - c) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients (See Table 9 below);
  - d) Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) participants;
  - e) individuals with other barriers to employment; and,
  - f) additional specific populations, if applicable (See Table 10 below – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) Program and Table 11 below – Ex-Offenders).

The following Table 10 indicates the Unemployment and Workforce Participation Rates of Vulnerable Populations in the area. The data reveals significant

disparities in unemployment and workforce participation rates among different groups. Veterans have a relatively low unemployment rate of 4.0% and a high workforce participation rate of 70.4%. In contrast, individuals with disabilities face a higher unemployment rate of 9.4% and a lower workforce participation rate of 38.4%. Low-income individuals experience the highest unemployment rate at 21.3% and a workforce participation rate of 44.1%. Native American/Hawaiian individuals have a notably low unemployment rate of 1.3%, but their workforce participation rate is 41.6%. Youth aged 16-19 have a high unemployment rate of 21.2% and a workforce participation rate of 30.4%, with those not enrolled in school facing even greater challenges, exhibiting an unemployment rate of 32.8% and a workforce participation rate of 50.8%.

**Table 10: Unemployed & Workforce Participation Rates of Vulnerable Populations**

Group	Percent
<b>Veterans</b>	
Unemployment Rate	4.0
Workforce Participation Rate	70.4
<b>Disabled</b>	
Unemployment Rate	9.4
Workforce Participation Rate	38.4
<b>Low Income</b>	
Unemployment Rate	21.3
Workforce Participation Rate	44.1
<b>Native American/Hawaiian</b>	
Unemployment Rate	1.3
Workforce Participation Rate	41.6
<b>Individuals Age 16-19</b>	
Unemployment Rate	21.2
Workforce Participation Rate	30.4
<b>Individuals Age 16-19, Not enrolled in School</b>	
Unemployment Rate	32.8
Workforce Participation Rate	50.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates.

Note: Low income is defined as below federal poverty level, based on family/household size.

The following Table 11 indicates the Characteristics of Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) Program Work-Eligible Recipients. Among the 1,966 total TANF recipients, 269 are aged 18-64. Within this age group, 93.3% are Black, while 6.7% are from other racial backgrounds. The age distribution shows that 26.8% are between 18-25 years old, 55.0% are between 26-35 years old, and 18.2% are between 36-64 years old. In terms of education, 25.3% have less than a high school diploma, 10.0% have a high school diploma or GED, 56.1% have some college experience, and 8.6% have unavailable education data. The employment rate for this cohort in 2023 is 82.5%, with median earnings of \$12,989. For those who exited the program in 2022, the employment rate one year after exit was 80.4%, and the average earnings were \$17,179.

**Table 11: Characteristics of Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) Program Work-Eligible Recipients**

	Number	Percent
Total TANF Recipients	1,966	-
Total Ages 18-64	269	-
<b>RACE (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Blacks	251	93.3
Other Races	18	6.7
<b>AGE (Ages 18-64)</b>		
18 - 25	72	26.8
26 - 35	148	55.0
36 - 64	49	18.2
<b>EDUCATION (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Less than High School Graduate	68	25.3
High School Diploma/GED	27	10.0
Some College	151	56.1
Not Available	23	8.6
<b>ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Employment Rate for the Cohort 2023	-	82.5
Median Earnings for the Cohort 2023	-	\$12,989
Employment Rate One Year After Exit for the Cohort 2022	-	80.4
Average Earnings One Year After Exit for the Cohort 2022	-	\$17,179

Sources: Mississippi Department of Human Services, 2024; Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2024.

Notes: May not total to 100 percent due to rounding. Data counts for FY 2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023).

The following Table 12 indicates the Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Recipients. Among the 142,804 total SNAP recipients, 51,846 are aged 18-64. Within this age group, 74.2% are Black, 24.4% are White, 0.1% are American Indian, and 1.3% are from other racial backgrounds. Gender distribution shows that 64.8% are female and 35.2% are male. Age-wise, 15.3% are between 18-25 years old, 20.9% are between 26-35 years old, 23.0% are between 36-45 years old, and 40.8% are between 46-64 years old. Regarding education, 15.6% have less than a high school diploma, 7.5% have a high school diploma or GED, 28.8% have some college experience, and 48.2% have unavailable education data.

**Table 12: Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Recipients in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

	Number	Percent
Total SNAP Recipients	142,804	-
Total Ages 18-64	51,846	-
<b>RACE (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Black	38,486	74.2
White	12,646	24.4
American Indian	33	0.1
Other	681	1.3
<b>GENDER (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Female	33,593	64.8
Male	18,253	35.2
<b>AGE (Ages 18-64)</b>		
18 - 25	7,955	15.3
26 - 35	10,829	20.9
36 - 45	11,918	23.0
46 - 64	21,144	40.8

<b>EDUCATION (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Less than High School Graduate	8,093	15.6
High School Diploma/GED	3,869	7.5
Some College	14,912	28.8
Not Available	24,972	48.2
<b>ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Employment Rate for the Cohort 2023	-	47.1
Median Earnings for the Cohort 2023	-	\$19,359
Employment Rate One Year After Exit for the Cohort 2022	-	61.5
Average Earnings One Year After Exit for the Cohort 2022	-	\$23,195

Sources: Mississippi Department of Human Services, 2024; Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2024.

Notes: May not total to 100 percent due to rounding. Data counts for FY 2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023).

Table 13 below indicates Characteristics of Ex-Offenders. Among the 1,224 total ex-offenders, 1,192 are aged 18-64. Within this group, 61.2% are Black and 38.8% belong to other racial categories. The gender breakdown shows that 11.8% are female and 88.2% are male. Age distribution reveals that 11.9% are between 18-25 years old, 33.6% are between 26-35 years old, 31.9% are between 36-45 years old, and 22.6% are between 46-64 years old. In terms of education, 40.0% have less than a high school diploma, 7.9% have a high school diploma or GED, 15.7% have some college experience, and 36.4% have unavailable education data. The employment rate for this cohort in 2023 is 34.5%, with a median earnings of \$20,232.

**Table 13: Characteristics of Ex-Offenders in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

	Number	Percent
Total Ex-Offenders	1,224	-
Total Ages 18-64	1,192	-
<b>RACE (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Black	730	61.2
Other Races	462	38.8
<b>GENDER (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Female	141	11.8
Male	1,051	88.2
<b>AGE (Ages 18-64)</b>		
18 - 25	142	11.9
26 - 35	401	33.6
36 - 45	380	31.9
46 - 64	269	22.6
<b>EDUCATION (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Less than High School Graduate	477	40.0
High School Diploma/GED	94	7.9
Some College	187	15.7
Not Available	434	36.4
<b>ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (Ages 18-64)</b>		
Employment Rate for the Cohort 2023	-	34.5
Median Earnings for the Cohort 2023	-	\$20,232

Sources: Mississippi Department of Corrections, 2024; Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2024.

Notes: May not total to 100 percent due to rounding. Data counts for FY 2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023).

- D.19. The SCMW LWDB supports the State Plan by ensuring services for individuals who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). This includes maintaining physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. ADA compliance is assessed during the WIN Job Center certification process.

## **E. Sector Strategy Plan**

- E.1. The SCMW Sector Strategy Plan, originally developed in 2017, is included as Appendix K. This plan outlines the needs, objectives, and goals for the major employment sectors in Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Transportation/Distribution/Logistics. The SCMW workforce area, which includes the capital city metropolitan area, hosts most of the state's healthcare providers, including the only teaching hospital in the state. These healthcare facilities employ a significant number of workers and play a crucial role in the region's economy.

Since 2017, the three original sectors have continued to provide high demand, skill, and wage career opportunities. Recent data includes the addition of one additional sector: 1) Agribusiness and Forestry, Energy, and Chemical.

Additionally, with the addition of the Amazon Web service locating multiple data centers into the SCMW area, the Information Infrastructure Sector has been included.

In summary, SCMW has the following sectors:

1. Advanced Manufacturing
2. Agribusiness to include Forestry, Energy, and Chemical
3. Automotive (Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics)
4. Health Care
5. Information Infrastructure (this includes, but is not limited to Fiber, Construction Building and Maintenance, and Data Center Operations)

The table below, compiled by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, illustrates the current supply, demand, and gaps for middle-skill occupations within the SCMW LWDA Target Sectors.



**Table 14: Current Supply, Demand, and Gap for Middle-Skill Occupations in South Central MS Works LWDA Target Sectors**

Sector	Supply	Demand	Gap
Advanced Manufacturing	92	163	71
Agribusiness	37	321	284
Automotive	488	610	122
Forestry, Energy, & Chemical	47	112	65
Healthcare	279	1,579	1,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>2,785</b>	<b>1,842</b>

*Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2024; Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System, 2024; Mississippi Community College Board, 2023.*

*Notes: State WIOA Plan defined Advanced Manufacturing to certain Agriculture manufacturing occupations; this Regional Plan highlights these occupations in a separate category.*

The sectors of particular importance in the SCMW area are Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Transportation/Logistics; while the other sectors indicated above are more prevalent in other areas of the state. The sector strategy plan identifies current and emerging skill gaps and other workforce issues through the partnership of industry, government, education, training, economic development, and community organizations. The plan was developed through a collaborative effort with the objective of aligning state resources to better address industry demands.

**Advanced Manufacturing:** The State WIOA Plan defined Advanced Manufacturing to contain Agriculture, Automotive, Chemical, and Energy manufacturing occupations; this Regional Plan highlights these industries and occupations in separate categories as shown below.

To align workforce training with industry needs, programs should emphasize both general manufacturing skills and specialized knowledge relevant to each segment. Collaborating with industry leaders to develop and update training programs will ensure that the workforce remains skilled and competitive, addressing current and future demands in the manufacturing sector.

**Table 15: Target Advanced Manufacturing Industry Structure in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Industry	Annual Average Employment 2023	Percent	Earnings	Establishment
Machinery Manufacturing	2,670	53.1	\$66,564	29
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	912	18.1	\$74,158	13
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	589	11.7	\$52,016	45
Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	444	8.8	\$109,916	10
Primary Metal Manufacturing	372	7.4	\$127,814	4
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	39	0.8	\$80,155	7
Railroad Rolling Stock Manufacturing				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,043</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>\$74,590</b>	<b>109</b>

Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, Census of Employment & Wages, 2024.

Notes: State WIOA Plan defined Advanced Manufacturing to certain Agriculture manufacturing occupations; this Regional Plan highlights these occupations in a separate category.

**Agribusiness:** The LWDA Plan definition of the Agribusiness industry contains the occupations shown below. To effectively meet the needs of the agricultural and food production sectors, training programs should focus on both general and specialized skills. Emphasizing food safety, advanced processing techniques, and modern agricultural practices will improve workforce capabilities and sector productivity. Collaboration with industry experts to develop these training programs will ensure that the workforce remains skilled and responsive to evolving industry demands.

**Table 16: Target Agribusiness Industry Structure in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Industry	Annual Average Employment 2023	Percent	Earnings	Establishment
Food Manufacturing	6,147	81.6	\$39,263	55
Animal Production and Aquaculture	613	8.1	\$56,173	41
Crop Production	387	5.1	\$39,187	71
Support Activities for Crop Production	213	2.8	\$44,569	26
Support Activities for Animal Production	172	2.3	\$39,551	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,532</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>\$40,792</b>	<b>204</b>

Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, Census of Employment & Wages, 2024.

**Automotive Industry:** This contains the following occupations shown below. To address the needs of the transportation and motor vehicle sectors, targeted training programs should focus on both broad industry skills and specialized knowledge. By enhancing capabilities in logistics management, manufacturing technologies, customer service, and specialized repair techniques, the workforce will be better equipped to meet current and future industry demands. Collaboration with industry stakeholders to develop these training programs will ensure they align with real-world requirements and enhance overall sector performance.

**Table 17: Target Automotive Industry Structure in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Industry	Annual Average Employment 2023	Percent	Earnings	Establishment
Truck Transportation	7,938	29.7	\$60,958	414
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	5,838	21.8	\$77,993	556
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	5,514	20.6	\$59,287	372
Repair and Maintenance	3,075	11.5	\$49,908	570
Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing	1,830	6.8	\$51,055	14
Rental and Leasing Services	1,205	4.5	\$50,210	146
Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	865	3.2	\$29,388	50
Motor Vehicle Body and Trailer Manufacturing	463	1.7	\$54,907	3
Motor Vehicle Manufacturing				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,728</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>\$64,315</b>	<b>2,126</b>

Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, Census of Employment & Wages, 2024.

**Healthcare Industry** contains the following occupations shown in the table below. Central Mississippi's position as the state's healthcare hub necessitates robust training programs tailored to the diverse needs within the healthcare sector. By focusing on advanced clinical skills, healthcare technology, hospital administration, and specialized care for residential facilities, training programs can enhance workforce capabilities and support the region's vital healthcare infrastructure. Collaborating with healthcare institutions to develop and refine these programs will ensure alignment with industry needs and support continued excellence in patient care and facility management.

**Table 18: Target Healthcare Industry Structure in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Industry	Annual Average Employment 2023	Percent	Earnings	Establishment
Hospitals	19,807	41.5	\$66,074	40
Ambulatory Health Care Services	18,102	37.9	\$69,883	1654
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	9,793	20.5	\$35,409	134
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,702</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>\$61,224</b>	<b>1,828</b>

Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, Census of Employment & Wages, 2024.

The following Tables indicate the top 10 occupations within each of the targeted industry sectors in the SCMW Workforce area, including the employment and minimum, median, and maximum wage for each.

**Table 19: Top 10 Occupations in the Advanced Manufacturing Industry in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Occupation	Employment	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Entry	Mean	Experienced
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	647	13.0	13.98	21.45	25.19
Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	257	5.2	13.42	20.14	23.50
Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	217	4.4	14.84	18.27	19.96
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	184	3.7	18.60	33.53	41.00
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	184	3.7	16.45	22.91	26.14
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	156	3.1	11.58	18.80	22.40
Machinists	146	2.9	17.15	24.71	28.49
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	139	2.8	12.31	16.10	18.00
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	128	2.6	16.46	33.69	42.31
Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators	126	2.5	16.09	19.54	21.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,184</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>22.42</b>	<b>26.22</b>

Source: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2024.

\*Percent of all Advanced Manufacturing jobs.

Note: Data points are for 2023.

**Table 20: Top 10 Occupations in the Agribusiness Industry in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Occupation	Employment	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Entry	Mean	Experienced
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	1,856	23.3	11.90	15.77	17.70
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	948	11.9	12.31	16.10	18.00
Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	450	5.6	11.01	16.15	18.72
Helpers--Production Workers	353	4.4	12.33	16.16	18.08
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	349	4.4	15.61	25.53	30.42
Packers and Packagers, Hand	279	3.5	8.44	12.97	15.23
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	275	3.4	9.96	12.99	14.50
Slaughterers and Meat Packers	257	3.2	14.25	16.66	17.87
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	251	3.1	14.38	18.53	20.61
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	216	2.7	18.60	33.53	41.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,234</b>	<b>65.5</b>	<b>12.40</b>	<b>17.15</b>	<b>19.53</b>

Source: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2024.

\*Percent of all Agribusiness jobs.

Note: Data points are for 2023.

**Table 21: Top 10 Occupations in the Automotive Industry in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Occupation	Employment	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Entry	Mean	Experienced
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5,099	17.1	16.83	27.7	33.14
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1,547	5.2	13.62	21.34	25.20
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,381	4.6	12.31	16.10	18.00
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	1,205	4.0	13.98	21.45	25.19
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,159	3.9	16.46	33.69	42.31
Retail Salespersons	1,149	3.8	10.31	15.39	17.94
Light Truck Drivers	814	2.7	12.31	21.31	25.81
General and Operations Managers	799	2.7	21.01	51.87	67.31
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	726	2.4	16.45	22.91	26.14
Parts Salespersons	663	2.2	11.11	15.81	18.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,542</b>	<b>48.6</b>	<b>14.98</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>30.16</b>

Source: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2024.

\*Percent of all Automotive jobs.

Note: Data points are for 2023.



**Table 22: Top 10 Occupations in Advanced Manufacturing with the Highest Job Openings in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Occupation	Projected Average Annual Job Openings	Job Openings in 2023
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	38	80
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	29	14
Industrial Engineers	15	13
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	17	11
Machinists	23	10
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	22	<10
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	18	<10
Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	43	<10
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	172	<10
Electricians	23	<10
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>144</b>

Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, Mississippi Work, 2024; Mississippi State University, nSPARC, 2024.

**Table 23: Top 10 Occupations in Agribusiness with the Highest Job Openings in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Occupation	Projected Average Annual Job Openings	Job Openings in 2023
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	215	370
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	50	86
Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	43	62
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	28	16
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	59	<10
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	80	<10
Slaughterers and Meat Packers	24	<10
Animal Trainers	21	<10
Helpers--Production Workers	21	<10
Packers and Packagers, Hand	27	<10
<b>Total</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>536</b>

Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, Mississippi Work, 2024; Mississippi State University, nSPARC, 2024.

**Table 24: Top 10 Occupations in Automotive with the Highest Job Openings in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Occupation	Projected Average Annual Job Openings	Job Openings in 2023
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	319	293
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	79	105
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	77	91
Light Truck Drivers	41	59
Retail Salespersons	91	56
General and Operations Managers	45	51
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	73	30
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	306	<10
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	76	<10
Electricians	58	<10
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,165</b>	<b>685</b>

Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, Mississippi Work, 2024; Mississippi State University, nSPARC, 2024.

**Table 25: Top 10 Occupations in Forestry, Energy, & Chemical with the Highest Job Openings in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Occupation	Projected Average Annual Job Openings	Job Openings in 2023
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	24	46
General and Operations Managers	11	33
Customer Service Representatives	10	16
Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	19	12
Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	17	<10
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	10	<10
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	15	<10
Animal Trainers	10	<10
Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	13	<10
Logging Equipment Operators	30	<10
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>112</b>

Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, Mississippi Work, 2024; Mississippi State University, nSPARC, 2024.

**Table 26: Top 10 Occupations in Healthcare with the Highest Job Openings in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Occupation	Projected Average Annual Job Openings	Job Openings in 2021
Registered Nurses	300	687
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	113	212
Medical and Health Services Managers	48	95
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	53	77
Medical Assistants	69	38
Receptionists and Information Clerks	82	22
Nurse Practitioners	45	16
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	47	<10
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	232	<10
Nursing Assistants	248	<10
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,237</b>	<b>1,156</b>

Sources: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Labor Market Information, Mississippi Work, 2024; Mississippi State University, nSPARC, 2024.

**Table 27: Top 10 Occupations in the Forestry, Energy, & Chemical Industry in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Occupation	Employment	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Entry	Mean	Experienced
Logging Equipment Operators	392	6.9	12.98	21.17	25.27
Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	320	5.6	25.50	35.41	40.36
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	243	4.3	16.83	27.70	33.14
Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	211	3.7	15.01	23.85	28.28
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	160	2.8	18.60	33.53	41.00
Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	159	2.8	18.38	23.56	26.15
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	153	2.7	20.85	30.58	35.44
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	132	2.3	11.97	17.13	19.71
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	125	2.2	12.48	19.81	23.48
General and Operations Managers	123	2.2	21.01	51.87	67.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,018</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>17.50</b>	<b>27.90</b>	<b>33.10</b>

Source: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2024.

\*Percent of all Forestry, Energy, & Chemical jobs.

Note: Data points are for 2023.

**Table 28: Top 10 Occupations in the Healthcare Industry in the South Central MS Works LWDA**

Occupation	Employment	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Entry	Mean	Experienced
Registered Nurses	8,690	18.2	28.21	38.09	43.03
Nursing Assistants	3,722	7.8	10.95	14.08	15.65
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	2,980	6.2	19.59	23.92	26.09
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	1,912	4.0	10.25	11.93	12.77
Receptionists and Information Clerks	1,545	3.2	11.46	15.18	17.03
Medical Assistants	1,428	3.0	13.91	17.20	18.85
Nurse Practitioners	1,296	2.7	43.65	58.08	65.29
Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	1,143	2.4	14.97	24.83	29.76
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1,092	2.3	13.66	17.59	19.55
Office Clerks, General	1,018	2.1	9.94	16.14	19.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,826</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>20.15</b>	<b>26.78</b>	<b>30.10</b>

Source: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2024.

\*Percent of all Healthcare jobs.

Note: Data points are for 2023.

- E2. The SCMW LWDB adheres to the legal requirement of having at least 51% private sector membership. These business representatives play a crucial role in encouraging employer participation in the public workforce system. More importantly, they provide valuable input on how local workforce programs, activities, and processes can better address their needs. Local economic developers on the LWDB actively engage with employers and contributed to the development of the SCMW Sector Strategy Plan. The LWDB also includes representatives from the workforce area's targeted sector industries. SCMW staff collaborate closely with regional economic development entities to keep local businesses informed about available resources and to gather feedback on their needs and challenges.

E3. As the SCMW LWDA MOU was developed and the workforce partners became fully engaged in the workforce system and the provision of services, the partners' corporate knowledge and expertise has allowed the area to develop a map of local assets and resources and identify the critical stakeholders and their roles. In addition, the SCMW staff works closely with stakeholders, including local economic development entities, foundations, school districts, community colleges, the MS Development Authority and community-based organizations to ensure that the local area's workforce is afforded all available avenues for improvement and advancement.

E4. Increasing public awareness of the services offered at the WIN Job Center, particularly among employers in targeted industry sectors, requires consistent and proactive efforts at both state and local levels. Locally, all workforce system partners actively engage in initiatives to enhance employer and job seeker awareness of available services and how to access them.

SCMW staff regularly promotes WIOA services through participation in workforce and economic development events, local job fairs, focus groups, community awareness events organized by various partners across different counties, and presentations to business groups. The LWDB chairperson frequently joins these activities, either alongside SCMW staff or independently.

Marketing the WIN Job Center services is a key responsibility of the one-stop operator, who is tasked with ensuring staff participate in local business events and community organizations. Additionally, other SCMW WIOA service providers are responsible for educating businesses and the public about the available programs and opportunities.

E.5. The SCMW LWDA has established partnerships with public and private educational institutions and other eligible training providers to offer short-term, credential-based training programs as well as two-year degree programs. These initiatives are designed to cultivate a skilled and measurable labor pool.

In response to the Sector Strategy Plan, SCMW has updated its local policies for Individual Training Accounts (ITA), Work Experience/Internships, and On-the-Job Training (OJT) to prioritize training in the area's targeted sectors. Additionally, SCMW has introduced specific funding criteria to support training within these targeted sectors.



- E.6. The workforce system provides comprehensive information to individuals about various occupations, including the required training, job requirements, salaries, opportunities for advancement, and working conditions. This ensures that individuals have a clear understanding of potential career paths and can make informed decisions.

Attaining a credential or certificate is a fundamental component of the WIOA program. The SCMW LWDA will allocate WIOA funds only for training programs that lead to industry-recognized, stackable, and portable credentials or certificates. Proposed training programs are evaluated not only for credential attainment but also for their potential to result in permanent employment.

Completion of specific trainings throughout the local area recommend or require the National Career Readiness Certificate at least at the bronze level; therefore, SCMW encourages this credential for individuals seeking ITA or OJT training.

## **F. Business Plan**

F.1. The SCMW LWDA has adopted and continues to implement the goals identified in the State Plan. The SCMW local, aligned goals are as follows:

1. Jointly develop and implement policies that will coordinate service delivery among all WIOA Combined Plan Partners to achieve a no-wrong-door approach for WIOA participants and employers.
2. Strengthen interagency and local workforce stakeholder partnerships.
3. Develop defined, articulated pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for the workforce.
4. Develop cross-program performance metrics. Engage partners to establish a 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.
5. Develop a service delivery approach that enhances access to quality workforce services across the workforce area while optimizing resource allocation to achieve cost efficiency and balance.
6. Invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of WIOA and other workforce initiatives.
7. Develop and communicate a unified vision and message.

**Goals 1, 2, and 5** focus on reducing programmatic fragmentation to ensure that all eligible individuals receive services efficiently and effectively. SCMW is committed to implementing a "no-wrong-door" approach, which guarantees that individuals seeking workforce connections are directed to the appropriate partner, regardless of their initial point of entry. Out-of-school youth, including current or former foster youth, will be referred to youth providers, while those facing employment barriers will be connected to partners offering targeted support to address these challenges.

SCMW is also dedicated to extending this no-wrong-door approach to employer engagement and other programs, including childcare and mental health services. Over the next two years, SCMW will work with partners to integrate technologies and communication for managing employer interactions, streamline processes such as needs assessments, predict future workforce demands, and enhance access to support services. The goal is to improve coordination, increase efficiency in employer engagement, and better anticipate and address workforce needs.

**Goals 3 and 6** are designed to develop a workforce that meets the needs of both current and potential employers in collaboration with educational institutions. SCMW aims to create clear pathways into the priority occupations throughout Ecosystem 5 and 7. Through the Career Coach initiative, SCMW will partner with local school districts to utilize K-12 career clusters and occupational pathways to guide students' academic and career preparation.

In collaboration with K-12 schools, the four Community Colleges in the SCMW workforce area offer dual enrollment opportunities, allowing high school students to earn credits towards work-ready credentials before graduation. This program facilitates a seamless transition into two-year or four-year programs that further enhance students' work-readiness in their chosen fields. Additionally, SCMW has partnered with K-12 and Community College institutions to implement a non-credit, short-term workforce training dual enrollment program.

Employer participation on the LWDB ensures continuous feedback on the effectiveness of the state's workforce development strategies, helping to refine and improve these tactics in response to real-world needs.

**Goals 4, 5, and 6** ensure that SCMW's efforts to build a skilled workforce are quantifiable and effective. Our use of technology extends beyond real-time case management to include ongoing and retrospective analysis of outcomes, allowing us to measure performance comprehensively. We evaluate outcomes using both federally prescribed performance measures and state-defined metrics. AccelerateMS recommends applying results-oriented measures across Mississippi's workforce development system, which we incorporate into our local strategies.

SCMW benefits from Mississippi's continued investment in the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). This system integrates administrative data from all WIOA partners and educational institutions into a well-governed, secure clearinghouse. It facilitates performance measurement, cohort analysis, and strategic planning, enabling SCMW to track progress, assess effectiveness, and make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.

**Goal 7** focuses on establishing a distinct brand identity for SCMW that aligns with the state's AccelerateMS workforce development strategy. This initiative aims to ensure that our workforce development activities and resources are used efficiently and effectively. By streamlining services, enhancing

communication and collaboration among partners, and improving outcomes for participants, we seek to maximize our impact.

Through tailored messaging, SCMW will clearly communicate this vision to partners, stakeholders, and participants. This will help align all involved parties, ensuring a unified approach and driving progress in workforce development within our local area.

The SCMW LWDA intended outcomes are 1) to increase training enrollment in priority occupations; 2) to promote economic growth by engaging employers and providing training and education to meet their needs; 3) to reduce the dependence on public assistance, and 4) to increase the wealth of and provide a self-sufficient wage to SCMW LWDA citizens. These goals serve to support and align with the goals of the State Plan and the Accelerate MS ecosystems in the local area.

- F.2. The SCMW LWDA has established and continues to implement goals that align closely with the State Plan's primary objectives. These goals are designed to enhance service delivery, strengthen partnerships, and develop a robust workforce pipeline, all while supporting economic growth and individual self-sufficiency. Here's how these local goals and their intended outcomes contribute to the overarching goals of the State Plan:

**1. No-Wrong-Door Service Delivery**

**Goal:** Develop and implement policies to coordinate service delivery among all WIOA Combined Plan Partners, ensuring a "no-wrong-door" approach for participants and employers.

**Contribution:** This goal addresses programmatic fragmentation, ensuring efficient and effective service delivery. By streamlining and expanding through access through the digital delivery of services, SCMW ensures that all eligible individuals and employers receive the support they need, which aligns with the State Plan's emphasis on integrated and accessible services.

**2. Strengthen Partnerships**

**Goal:** Strengthen interagency and local workforce stakeholder partnerships.

**Contribution:** Building robust partnerships enhances collaboration and resource sharing, crucial for effective workforce development. This aligns with the State Plan's goal of fostering strong relationships between various workforce stakeholders to improve service delivery and outcomes.

### **3. Develop Workforce Pathways**

**Goal:** Create defined pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to develop a skilled workforce pipeline.

**Contribution:** By developing clear educational and career pathways, SCMW supports the State Plan's objective to align education with workforce needs, ensuring that individuals are prepared for priority occupations and have access to the necessary training and credentials.

### **4. Cross-Program Performance Metrics**

**Goal:** Establish cross-program performance metrics and engage partners to stay current with industry needs.

**Contribution:** This goal ensures that SCMW can measure the effectiveness of its programs and adjust strategies based on real-time data and industry trends. This aligns with the State Plan's focus on data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement.

### **5. Optimize Service Delivery and Resource Allocation**

**Goal:** Develop a service delivery approach that enhances access to quality services while optimizing resource allocation.

**Contribution:** Improving service delivery and resource efficiency supports the State Plan's goal of maximizing the impact of workforce development resources and ensuring that services are accessible and effective.

### **6. Invest in Technology**

**Goal:** Invest in integrated technology to meet WIOA requirements and other workforce initiatives.

**Contribution:** By investing in technology, SCMW enhances its ability to manage services and track performance effectively. This supports the State Plan's emphasis on leveraging technology to improve workforce program delivery and coordination.

### **7. Unified Vision and Messaging**

**Goal:** Develop and communicate a unified vision and message.

**Contribution:** A consistent and clear vision aligns all stakeholders and participants, ensuring that efforts are coordinated and focused. This goal supports the State Plan's objective of creating a cohesive strategy across the state's workforce development system.

### **Intended Outcomes**

1. **Increase Training Enrollment in Priority Occupations:** By implementing these goals, SCMW aims to boost labor force participation rates, aligning with the State Plan's focus on expanding the workforce. This
2. **Promote Economic Growth:** Engaging employers and providing relevant training supports economic growth by meeting business needs and improving workforce readiness.
3. **Reduce Dependence on Public Assistance:** Training and employment opportunities help individuals become self-sufficient, reducing reliance on public assistance.
4. **Increase Self-Sufficiency and Wage Growth:** By enhancing job opportunities and providing pathways to higher wages, SCMW supports the State Plan's goal of increasing individual wealth and economic stability.

Overall, SCMW's goals and intended outcomes align with and support the primary objectives of the State Plan, contributing to a more effective and integrated workforce development system in the local area.

- F.3. To achieve the activities outlined in the previous recommendations, SCMW LWDA will follow a structured approach involving planning, implementation, and evaluation. Below are the specific procedures and steps to be taken for each activity:

#### **Goal 1: Develop and Implement Policies for No-Wrong-Door Service Delivery Planning:**

Assess Existing Policies: Review current policies across WIOA Combined Plan Partners to identify gaps and opportunities for integration.

Engage Stakeholders: Convene meetings with all WIOA partners and local stakeholders to discuss and align on the no-wrong-door approach.

Design Policy Framework: Develop a comprehensive policy framework that outlines the coordination mechanisms and procedures for seamless service delivery.

#### **Implementation:**

Training and Rollout: Provide training for all staff and partners on the new policies and procedures. Ensure everyone understands their roles in the no-wrong-door approach.

Integration of Services: Implement the coordinated service delivery model, ensuring that all service points are aligned and information is shared effectively.

#### **Evaluation:**

Monitor Service Access: Track how effectively participants are accessing services and whether they are being directed to the appropriate resources.

Gather Feedback: Collect feedback from participants and partners on the effectiveness of the no-wrong-door approach and make adjustments as needed.

## **Goal 2: Strengthen Interagency and Local Workforce Stakeholder Partnerships**

### **Planning:**

Identify Key Partners: Map out key interagency and stakeholder groups that are critical to workforce development.

Develop Partnership Strategy: Create a strategy for engaging and strengthening relationships with these partners.

### **Implementation:**

Regular Meetings: Establish regular meetings and communication channels with partners to foster collaboration and share information.

Joint Initiatives: Launch joint initiatives or projects that address common goals and challenges.

### **Evaluation:**

Assess Partnership Impact: Evaluate the impact of partnerships on service delivery and outcomes.

Review Collaboration Effectiveness: Regularly review the effectiveness of collaborative efforts and make improvements based on stakeholder feedback.

## **Goal 3: Develop Workforce Pathways Across Educational Sectors (K-16+)**

### **Planning:**

Engage Educational Institutions: Collaborate with K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities to identify and define educational pathways.

Align Pathways with Industry Needs: Work with employers to ensure pathways are aligned with current and future workforce demands.

### **Implementation:**

Career Coach Initiative: Continue to implement and if funding is available, expand the Career Coach initiative in local school districts to guide students in academic and career planning.

Dual Enrollment Programs in credit and non-credit workforce related programs: Develop and expand dual enrollment opportunities, allowing high school students to complete CTE and Workforce Non-Credit workforce trainings.

**Evaluation:**

Track Pathway Success: Monitor the success of educational pathways by tracking student progression and outcomes.

Adjust Pathways: Use feedback from educational partners and employers to refine and improve pathways.

**Goal 4: Establish Cross-Program Performance Metrics****Planning:**

Define Metrics: Work with partners to define performance metrics that align with both state and local goals.

Develop Data Collection Methods: Work with MDES and nSPARC to determine how to collect data additional metrics defined through MS Works

**Implementation:**

Implement Data Systems: Utilize technology to track performance and outcomes in real time.

Engage Partners: Ensure all partners are engaged in the process and understand their role in meeting performance metrics.

**Evaluation:**

Review Metrics: Regularly review performance data to assess the effectiveness of programs.

Adjust Strategies: Modify strategies based on performance results and industry feedback.

**Goal 5: Optimize Service Delivery and Resource Allocation****Planning:**

Assess Current Resources: Evaluate current resource allocation and service delivery processes.

Identify Improvement Areas: Identify areas where resources can be optimized and services can be enhanced.

**Implementation:**

Streamline Processes: Implement processes to streamline service delivery and improve resource allocation.

Enhance Access: Develop strategies to increase access to quality services, particularly in underserved areas.

**Evaluation:**

Measure Efficiency: Track the efficiency of service delivery and resource use.

Collect Feedback: Gather feedback from participants and staff to ensure that service delivery meets their needs effectively.



## **Goal 6: Invest in Integrated Technology**

### **Planning:**

Identify Technology Needs: Determine the technology requirements needed to meet WIOA and other workforce initiatives.

Develop Technology Plan: Create a plan for acquiring and integrating technology solutions.

### **Implementation:**

Deploy Technology: Implement technology solutions, including case management systems and performance tracking tools.

Train Staff: Provide training for staff on using new technologies and integrating them into their daily operations.

### **Evaluation:**

Monitor Technology Use: Assess how effectively technology is being used and its impact on service delivery.

Review and Update: Regularly review technology performance and make updates as necessary.

## **Goal 7: Develop and Communicate a Unified Vision and Message**

### **Planning:**

Create a Unified Vision: Develop a clear and cohesive vision and messaging strategy that aligns with state and local workforce goals.

Engage Stakeholders: Involve key stakeholders in shaping the vision and message to ensure buy-in and alignment.

### **Implementation:**

Launch Communication Campaign: Roll out a communication campaign to disseminate the unified vision and message to all stakeholders.

Promote Consistency: Ensure that all workforce development activities and materials reflect the unified vision.

### **Evaluation:**

Assess Communication Effectiveness: Evaluate the effectiveness of the communication campaign and the consistency of the message across various platforms.

Gather Feedback: Collect feedback from stakeholders to ensure that the vision and message resonate and align with their needs and expectations.

By following these procedures, SCMW LWDA aims to effectively achieve its goals, align with the State Plan, and enhance the overall effectiveness of the local workforce development system.

- F.4. The following timetable ensures timely review of outcomes and achievements of the workforce goals and outcomes for the SCMW LWDA.

Milestone	Schedule
LWDB meetings	No less than 3 times per program year, and additionally if needed
Partner Staff Training	On-going
Development of MOUs	As required
On-going partner meetings and coordination	Continual
Analysis and refinement of Sector Strategies	Continual
Review of emerging sectors	Annually
Employer engagement directed at industry sectors	Continual
Development of additional Sector Training Plus Comprehensive Centers	On-going
Local Area Plan Review	Annually

- F.5. The SCMW LWDA conducts quarterly assessments to monitor progress toward meeting the established milestones. The status of these milestones is reported to the LWDB during their regularly scheduled meetings. Any areas where progress is lagging are prioritized and promptly addressed by SCMW LWDA staff in collaboration with the relevant partner agencies.
- F.6. Although both the overall population of the workforce area and the state are decreasing, the data from Section B indicates that job opportunities remain abundant. WIOA-funded programs are designed to align with the WIOA Smart Start Pathway model, aiming to engage a larger portion of the population in the labor force. These programs offer training that equips individuals with the skills needed for in-demand occupations in the local area, thus enhancing employment opportunities.
- F.7. This matrix identifies the types of resources and services offered by each stakeholder to ensure appropriate alignment of services.

	Stakeholder Agency					
	MDES	MCCB & CJCS	MDRS	MDHS	MDE	SCMW LWDA
<b>Services</b>						
Enroll new participants (intake)	X	X	X	X	X	
Career assessment	X	X	X	X	X	
Create success plan	X	X	X	X	X	
Job referral	X	X	X	X		
Provide Individual Training Account (ITA)						X
Provide employability training		X	X	X	X	X
Provide employer (customized) training		X				
Provide internships			X			X
Provide on-the-job-training (OJT) contracts			X			X
Assess changing workforce needs	X	X				X
Provide youth development services		X	X	X	X	X
Provide transportation services			X	X		
Provide childcare services				X		
Provide supplemental nutrition services				X		
Provide workforce certifications (1 and 2-year degrees)		X				X

**G. Policies: Oversight and Monitoring**

- G.1. The SCMW LWDA performs fiscal audits of subawardees and contractors on a yearly basis. Programmatic monitoring is conducted on an ongoing basis. A copy of the monitoring policy and documents are attached in Appendix L.
- G.2. The SCMW LWDA service providers are continuously monitored to ensure they meet or exceed the goals outlined in their subawards or contracts. If a service provider is found to be falling short in addressing the employment needs of local employers and job seekers, immediate corrective actions will be implemented. The service provider will receive written notification detailing the required corrective actions and will be required to submit a timetable for completing these actions.

**G. Policies: Equal Opportunity**

- G.3. All subawards and contracts include provisions prohibiting discrimination based on age, disability, sex, race, color, or national origin. Audit and monitoring visits, including Equal Opportunity (EO) reviews, assess service providers to ensure compliance with these non-discrimination requirements. Service providers must submit a quarterly report detailing any EO complaints received. The Equal Opportunity Policy can be found in Appendix M.
- G.4. The SCMW LWDA's current Equal Opportunity Complaint Grievance Procedure is attached in Appendix N. The EO Grievance Form is given to participants at the time they are enrolled into the WIOA program. A signed copy of the form is maintained in the participant folder. The Form is attached as Appendix N.
- G.5. The CMPDD Equal Opportunity procedures are reviewed regularly by the CMPDD EO Officer, Mr. Scott Stinson, and updated as necessary.

**G. Policies: Other Policies**

- G.6. The SCMW LWDA Supportive Services policy is attached as Appendix O.
- G.7. The SCMW LWDA does not provide Needs-Related Payments and therefore, has no Needs-Related Policy.
- G.8. The SCMW LWDA Incumbent Worker Training Policy is attached in Appendix P.
- G.9. The SCMW LWDA Internship Policy (Transitional Jobs) is attached as Appendix Q.
- G.10. The SCMW LWDA uses OJT as a source of training assistance for the area's employers. The SCMW LWDA OJT Policy is attached as Appendix R.

- G.11. The SCMW LWDA Priority of Service Policy is attached as Appendix S.
- G.12. The SCMW LWDA uses ITAs as a source of training assistance for individuals in the area who need skills training in order to obtain and retain employment. The SCMW LWDA ITA Policy is attached as Appendix T.
- G.13. The SCMW LWDA Conflict of Interest Policy is attached as Appendix U.
- G.14. The SCMW LWDA Sunshine Provision Policy is attached as Appendix V.
- G.15. The SCMW LWDA Youth Incentive Policy is attached as Appendix W.

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