



LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

2020–2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

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List of Acronyms

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
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
SMW	Southcentral 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

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Introduction

Program Year 2015 marked the first year of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA required each local workforce development board (LWDB) to develop a comprehensive four-year plan, in partnership with the workforce area's local chief elected official (CEO). The Southcentral MS Works (SMW) Local Workforce Development Area's (LWDA) initial WIOA four-year plan was effective for the period July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2020. This plan is effective for the period July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2024. As required, at the end of each year of the four-year local plan, the SMW LWDB shall review the local plan and prepare and submit any necessary modifications to the local plan to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Office of Grant Management (OGM).

The local plan supports the Career Pathway and Sector Strategy alignment described in the state plan in accordance with WIOA Section 102(b)(1)(E) and is otherwise consistent with the state plan. The SMW LWDB complies with WIOA, Section 108 regarding the preparation and submission of the plan.

Public Comment Requirements

In accordance with the WIOA, Section 108(d), the LWDB shall make copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media; allow for public comment not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date the proposed plan is made available; and, include with submission of the local plan any comments that represent disagreement with the plan. The plan is made available for public comment beginning December 15, 2020.

Plan Outline

A. Local Workforce Development Area Overview

A.1. Local Workforce Development Area's official (legal) name established to administer the WIOA:

Southcentral MS Works Southcentral Mississippi Works Local Workforce
Development Area

See Appendix A, for *Local Workforce Development Area Re-designation Approval Letter*.

A.2. Local Area Workforce Development Director:

Southcentral MS Works Mary Powers, Workforce Director
Central Mississippi Planning and Development District
1020 Centre Pointe Blvd.
Pearl, MS 39208
601-981-1511
mpowers@cmpdd.org

A.3. Local Workforce Development Area's Chief Elected Official:

Southcentral MS Works Willie Wright, Yazoo County Supervisor
P.O. Box 1551
Yazoo City, MS 39194
662-571-8067
fdew@bellsouth.net

A.4. Individuals authorized to receive official mail for the Chief Elected Official:

Southcentral MS Works Michael Monk
Chief Executive Officer
or Mary Powers
Workforce Director
Central MS Planning & Development District
1020 Centre Pointe Blvd.
Pearl, MS 39208
601-981-1511
mmonk@cmpdd.org / mpowers@cmpdd.org

A.5. Administrative/Fiscal Agent responsible for disbursing Local Area WIOA grant funds:

Southcentral MS Works Central Mississippi Planning and Development District
1020 Centre Pointe Blvd.
Pearl, MS 39208
601-981-1511

A.6. Administrative/Fiscal Agent's signatory official:

Southcentral MS Works Michael Monk, Chief Executive Officer
Central Mississippi Planning and Development District
1020 Centre Pointe Blvd.
Pearl, MS 39208
601-981-1511
mmonk@cmpdd.org

A.7. See Appendix B for Administrative Entity/LWDA/Fiscal Agent's Organizational Chart.

A.8. Administrative Entity's Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and Assurance of 'System for Award Management' (SAM) status is current.

Southcentral MS
Works

DUNS 157224353

SAM status is current

A.9. LWDB Chairperson's Information:

Southcentral MS
Works

Benny Hubbard
Hubbard Financial Services, Owner
702 Prominence Drive
Flowood, MS 39232
601-260-5449

A.10. See Appendix C for the LWDB Membership List.

A.11. See Appendix D for the LWDB Operating Procedures (By-laws) including date adopted/amended.

A.12. See Appendix E for the Local Area Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions.

A.13. See Appendix F Local Area Signatory Submission Page.

B. Regional Strategic Planning

B.1. For the purpose of this section, planning regions are currently identified as the LWDAs. The Delta, Mississippi Partnership, Southcentral Mississippi Works, and Twin Districts comprise the four LWDAs. The four LWDAs in Mississippi were designated as LWDAs by the Governor in accordance with the WIOA law and are identified in the WIOA State Plan. The boundaries follow significant demographic and economic boundaries (See Figure 1). SMW LWDA includes the following seventeen (17) 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.

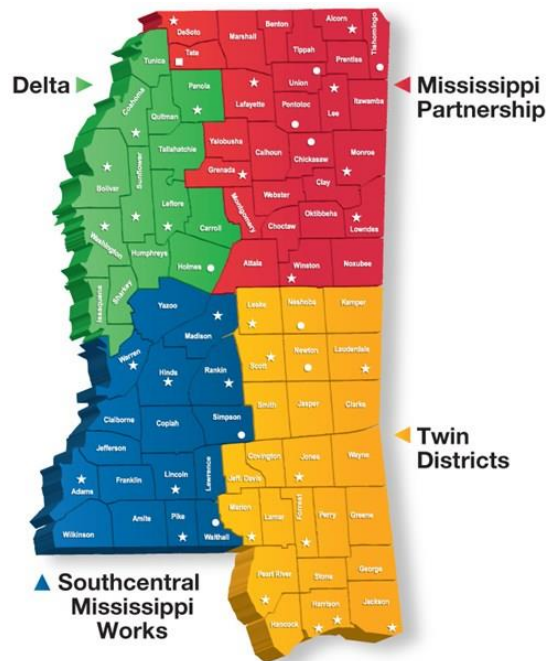


Figure 1. Local Mississippi Workforce Development Areas

B.2. Southcentral MS Works LWDA has adopted the Smart Start Pathway vision defined in the Mississippi WIOA State Plan. The state’s strategic vision is a workforce system that acts and functions as an ecosystem where all parts, and workforce partner services, are connected and line up to achieve common goals and wherein every opportunity is made available to be work- or career-ready and to enable individuals to secure their dream job in Mississippi. From the moment one enters the education and/or workforce system, he or she is presented with the necessary tools to choose and pursue a career pathway that is relevant to current and future labor markets. Similarly, from the moment current and prospective businesses access Mississippi’s education and workforce system, resources have been aligned to cultivate the sustainable, high-performance workforce critical for maintaining and expanding businesses’ long-term economic viability, in turn creating better and more sustainable employment opportunities for Mississippians.

Key aspects of the strategic vision are to:

- Provide every Mississippian the opportunity to be work- or career-ready and to secure his or her dream job within the state.
- Create a workforce ecosystem where all parts, and workforce partner services, are connected and line up to achieve common goals.

- Develop a career pathway model that integrates programs and improves efficiency in service delivery across partners, with particular focus on individuals with barriers to employment.
- Strategically align programs with current and emerging high demand industry sectors.

B.3. An analysis of SMW LWDA's regional economic conditions includes the following: a) existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and, b) knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. The SMW LWDA contributes to Mississippi's economic sector goals, identified by the Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA) target industries (See Table 1).

*Table 1. SMW and MDA Target Industries
Current Supply, Demand, and Gap for Middle-Skill Occupations in Southcentral MS Works LWDA Target Industry Sectors*

Sector	Supply	Demand	Gap
Advanced Manufacturing Industry	70	89	19
Agribusiness Industry	38	231	193
Automotive Industry	750	1,138	388
Forestry, Energy, & Chemical Industry	42	135	93
Healthcare Industry	329	2,115	1,786
Total	1,229	3,708	2,479

Notes: State WIOA Plan defined Advanced Manufacturing to certain Agriculture, Automotive, Chemical, and Energy manufacturing occupations; this Regional Plan highlights these industries and occupations in separate categories.

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020; Mississippi Works, 2020; Mississippi Community Colleges, 2020.

A Description of the SMW Workforce Development Area

The SMW LWDA includes the City of Jackson, which is the state capital and the area is known for the major targeted industry sectors healthcare, manufacturing and transportation/distribution/logistics. Other sectors within the area, including agribusiness, forestry, energy, and chemical also offer opportunity for employment. Because of a strong hospital system and medical education focus, the SMW LWDA serves as a healthcare hub for the entire state, particularly in and around the Jackson metropolitan statistical area. The SMW LWDA is rapidly growing as a key hub for the

automotive industry with large manufacturers such as Nissan and Continental Tire, and their suppliers.

SMW has a strong overall economic identity. With vital information on available sites, buildings, and workforce demographics, EDAs encourage the development of new industries and assist companies considering Mississippi as a potential location. The presence of EDAs can be useful in identifying differences of economic or industry focus within the LWDA.

Emerging Sectors

SMW maintains a fairly diverse economy. In 2020 the sectors with the most employment opportunities are: Healthcare and Social Assistance 18%; Transportation and Warehousing 5%; Leisure & Hospitality 10%; and Manufacturing 9%. SMW is a major transportation hub. The Mississippi river borders the western part of the area. SMW also includes the intersection of I-55 and I-20 and the state's major airport. The SMW area has a high concentration of hospitals and health care facilities which continues to show growth. Leisure & Hospitality is a growing sector due to the river, casinos, historical sites, and other recreational opportunities within the area.

Manufacturing makes up a large percentage of the total employed workforce, and growth in this area continues to increase. SMW is home to the first automotive plant to locate in the state which continues to expand. A major tire manufacturing plant is also located in the area, which offers a large number of employment opportunities. These, along with other manufacturing employers and second tier suppliers, are contributors to the overall economy.

Amazon has announced their plan to build and establish a major distribution center in the workforce area, which is expected to become operational within the next 12 months. The center will provide employment opportunities for approximately 1,000 workers,

Occupations in Emerging Industries

Occupations consistent with the sectors identified are expected to show continuing growth. Ten-year job growth projections for healthcare occupations, such as nurse practitioners, nursing assistants, personal care aides, registered nurses, and home health aides; for manufacturing

occupations, such as industrial machinery mechanics, team assemblers, operations managers; and transportation occupations, such as heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, laborers and freight, stock and material movers are all expected to grow in large numbers, especially in light of the needs presented in these targeted industries by the COVID-19 disaster.

The following Figure 2 indicates the Projected Middle-Skill Demand in the area.

Figure 2: Projected Middle-Skill Demand in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA, 2020-2026



Notes: Figures illustrate the occupation skill-level breakdown for projected job growth, by industry. Results show that of the majority of projected job openings will occur in the middle-skill category. Industry totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding. State WIOA Plan defined Advanced Manufacturing to certain Agriculture, Automotive, Chemical, and Energy manufacturing occupations; this Regional Plan highlights these industries and occupations in separate categories.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

Employers' Employment Needs

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

1. Representatives from established and emerging industries of manufacturing, healthcare, and transportation.
2. Economic development organizations
3. Community college workforce and career tech representatives

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

- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving—Exercise sound reasoning and analytical thinking; obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data; demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
- Oral/Written Communication—Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively; demonstrate public speaking skills; communicate new ideas to others through writing and editing.
- Teamwork/Collaboration—Build collaborative relationships; work in team structure; negotiate and manage conflicts.
- Information Technology Application—Select and use appropriate technology; apply computing skills to problem solving.
- Leadership—Leverage the strengths of others; use interpersonal skills and emotions effectively; organize, prioritize, and delegate work.
- Professionalism/Work Ethic—Demonstrate personal accountability, effective work habits, integrity, and ethical behavior; act responsibly; learn from mistakes.
- Career Management—Identify and articulate skills, strengths, and experiences; identify areas for professional growth and self-advocacy; explore job options and pursue opportunities.

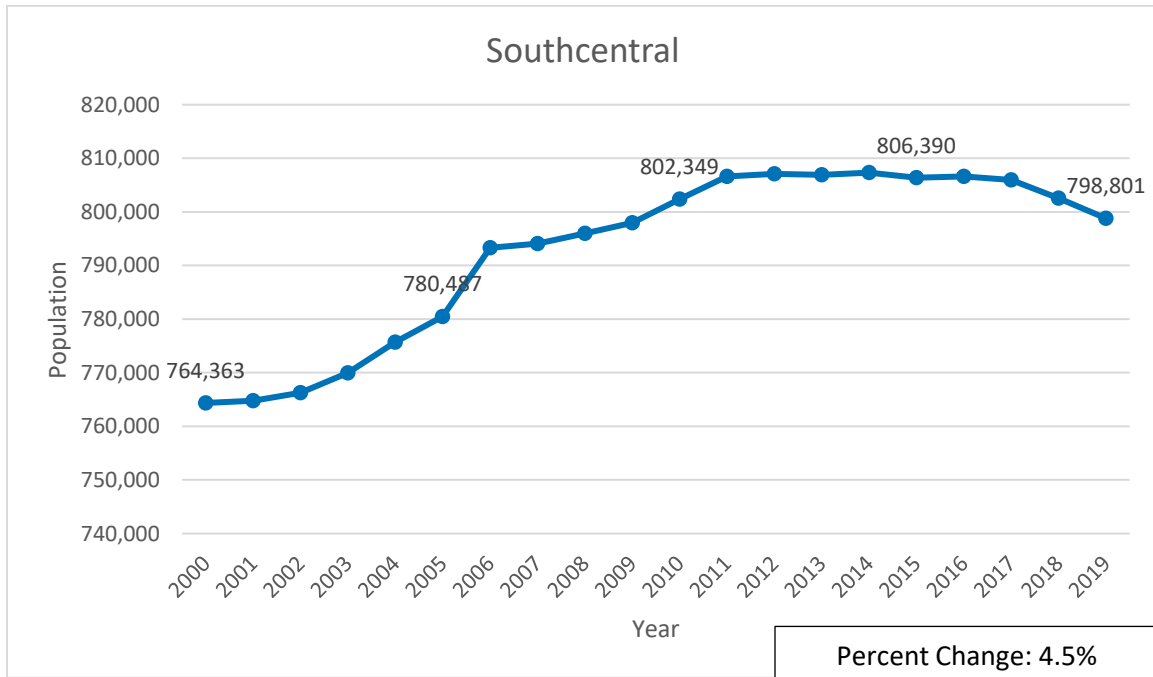
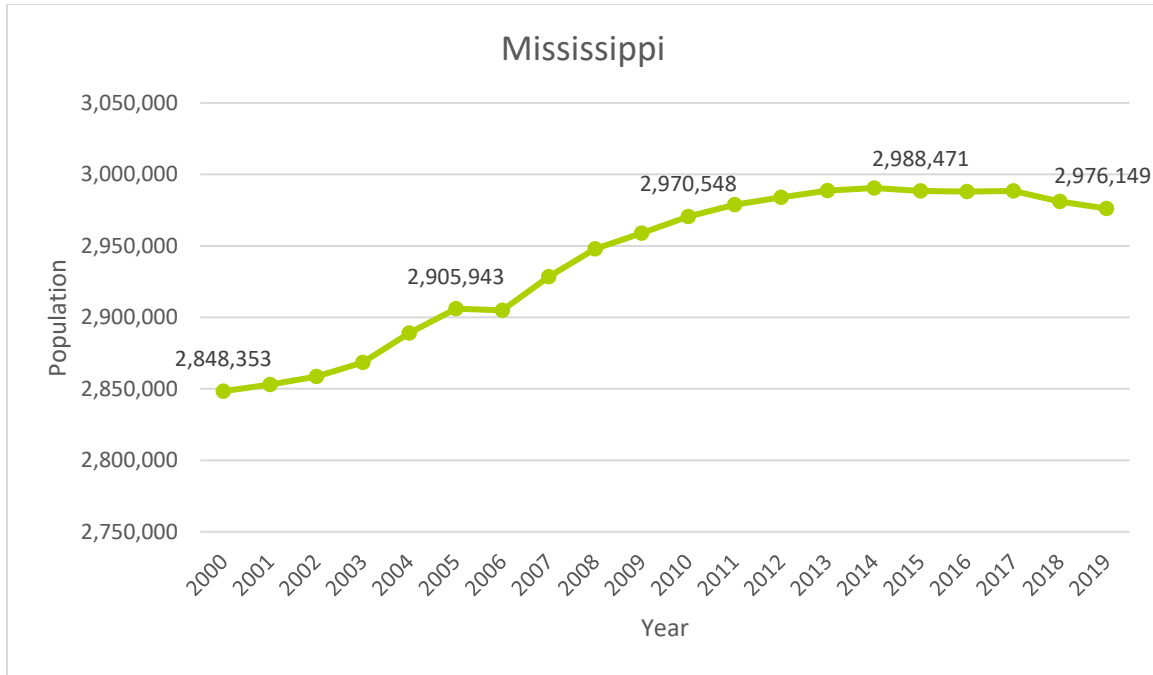
Specifically, when asked about the competencies desired in a potential employee at low-, middle-, and high-skill levels, dependability and reliability were rated as the most important qualities for low-skill employees, initiative and a willingness to learn were rated as the most important qualities for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

Employers also indicated that they are not fully aware of the resources and services available to them. A large number of employers stated that their employees receive training from community colleges, technical schools, or vocational schools; many reported that their employees receive training from universities; and the remainder indicated that their employees receive external training from other federal programs. Mississippi employers would like to expand their use of community colleges and universities in the delivery of training for basic trades and skills along with fundamental competency skills for low-, middle-, and high-skill workers. SMW staff continually work to educate employers on the training resources available through WIOA funding.

B.4. Southcentral MS Works Labor Market Analysis

The population of the State of Mississippi as a whole and that of the SMW Workforce Area as well experienced steady growth from the years 2000 through 2012, then held steady for the next 5 years before beginning a very meager decline (See Figure 3). The workforce area constitutes 20.7% of the state's counties while its population has remained at approximately 27% of the state's population during almost two decades. The fact that the workforce area encompasses the state's capitol, which is the most populous metropolitan area of the state explains this data.

Figure 3: Population Trends

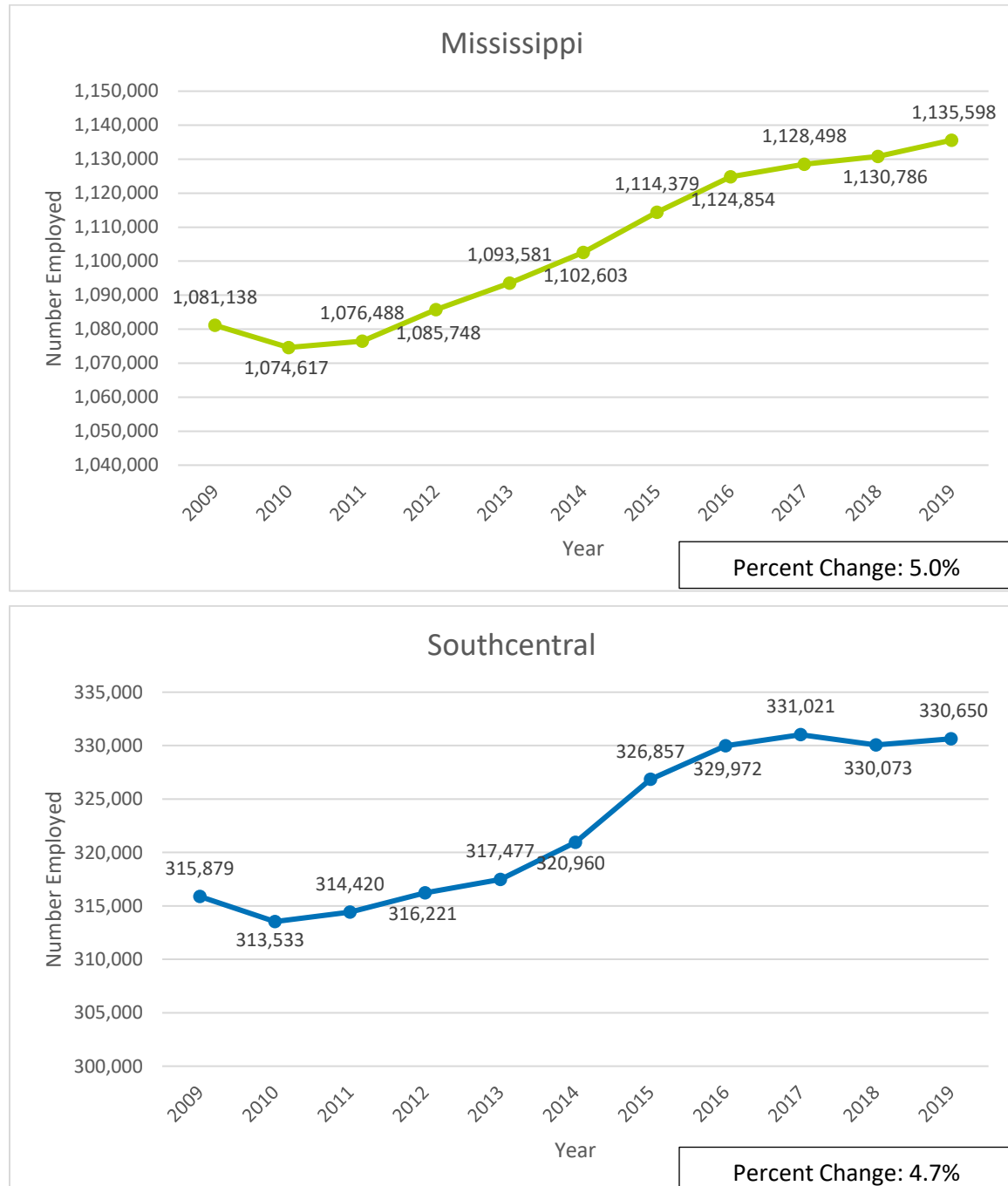


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2020.

The number of employed individuals in the state has risen at a rate only slightly higher than the rate of growth of the population while the number of employed individuals in the SMW workforce

area has risen commensurate with the rate of growth of the workforce area's population (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. Number Employed



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

The following Table 2 indicates Employment by Industry.

Table 2: Employment by Industry in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

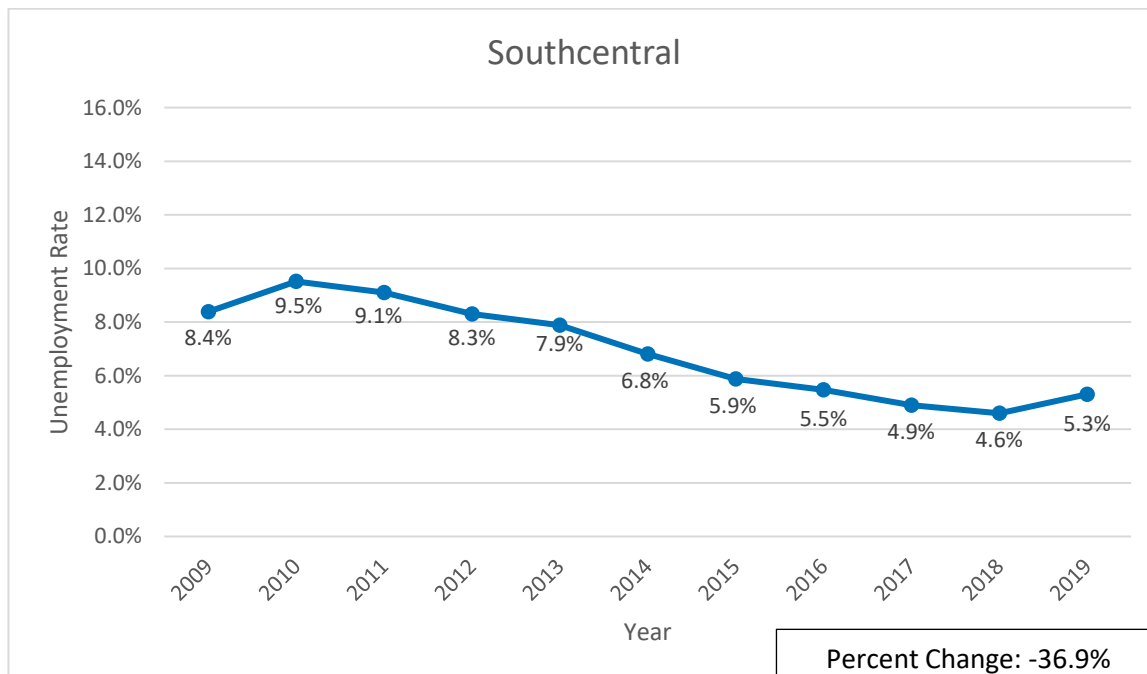
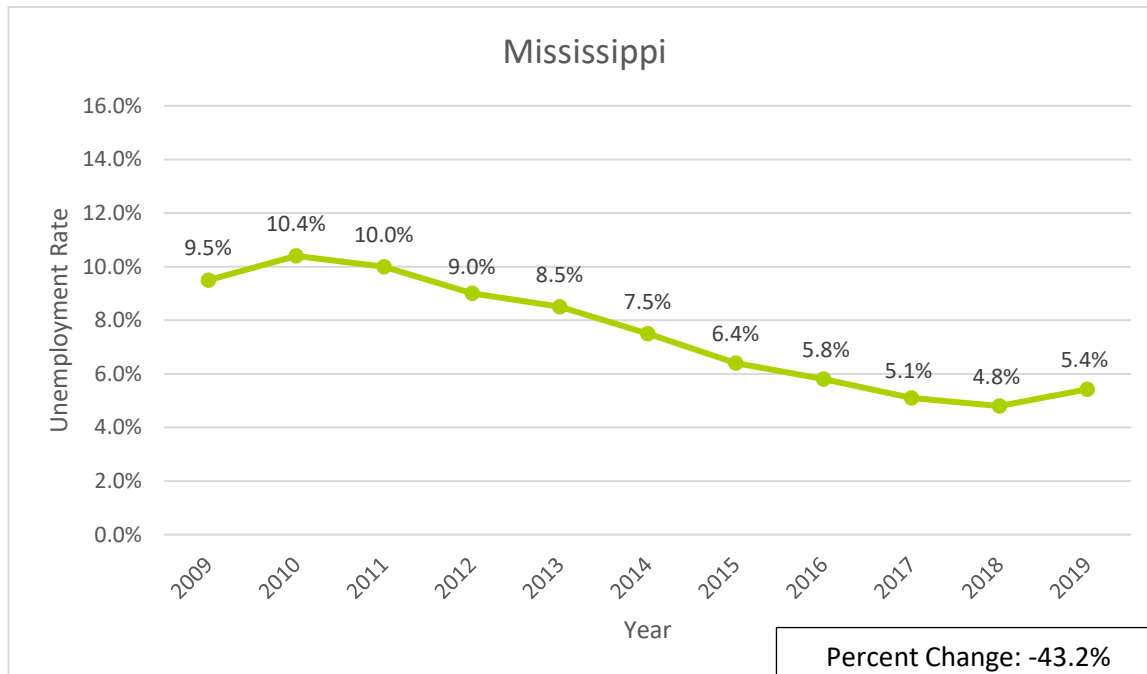
Industry	Employment	Percent	Earnings	Establishments
Health Care and Social Assistance	64,176	19.4	\$44,868	2,297
Wholesale/Retail Trade	50,131	15.2	\$33,875	3,953
Accommodation/Leisure	35,749	10.8	\$16,824	1,905
Manufacturing	29,936	9.1	\$52,369	566
Educational Services	26,737	8.1	\$35,811	356
Public Administration	21,523	6.5	\$46,278	430
Transportation and Warehousing	20,953	6.3	\$48,962	702
Administrative and Waste Services	18,142	5.5	\$27,700	928
Financial Activities	16,885	5.1	\$63,034	2,418
Construction	13,519	4.1	\$51,319	1,426
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	11,039	3.3	\$67,169	2,012
Other Services (except Public Administration)	7,066	2.1	\$38,079	1,485
Information	4,603	1.4	\$50,719	285
Management of Companies and Enterprises	4,355	1.3	\$95,943	160
Natural Resources	3,523	1.1	\$60,589	444
Utilities	2,235	0.7	\$81,229	109
Total	330,572	100	\$42,483	19,476

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

During the latter part of the first decade of the century, SMW's unemployment rate was approximately 9.5%, as the state was still recovering from Great Recession. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for the 2010-2019 period, the number of employed Mississippians hit a low in 2010 but started a consistent upward trend (See Figure 5). The unemployment rate has shown a steady decline from 2010 to 5.4% in 2019 and currently stands at 6.8% for the state as a whole and at 6.6% for the workforce area.

The unemployment rate has been severely impacted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster and it is unknown at this time how long it will take before the unemployment rate recovers to pre-COVID rates.

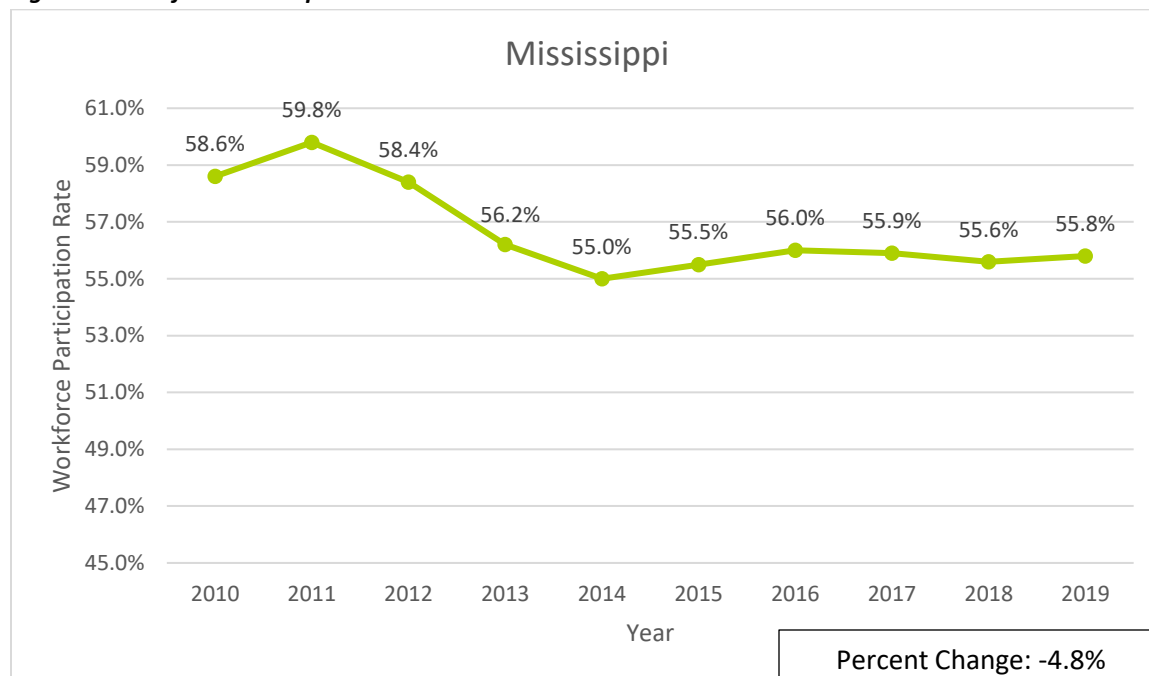
Figure 5. Unemployment Rate

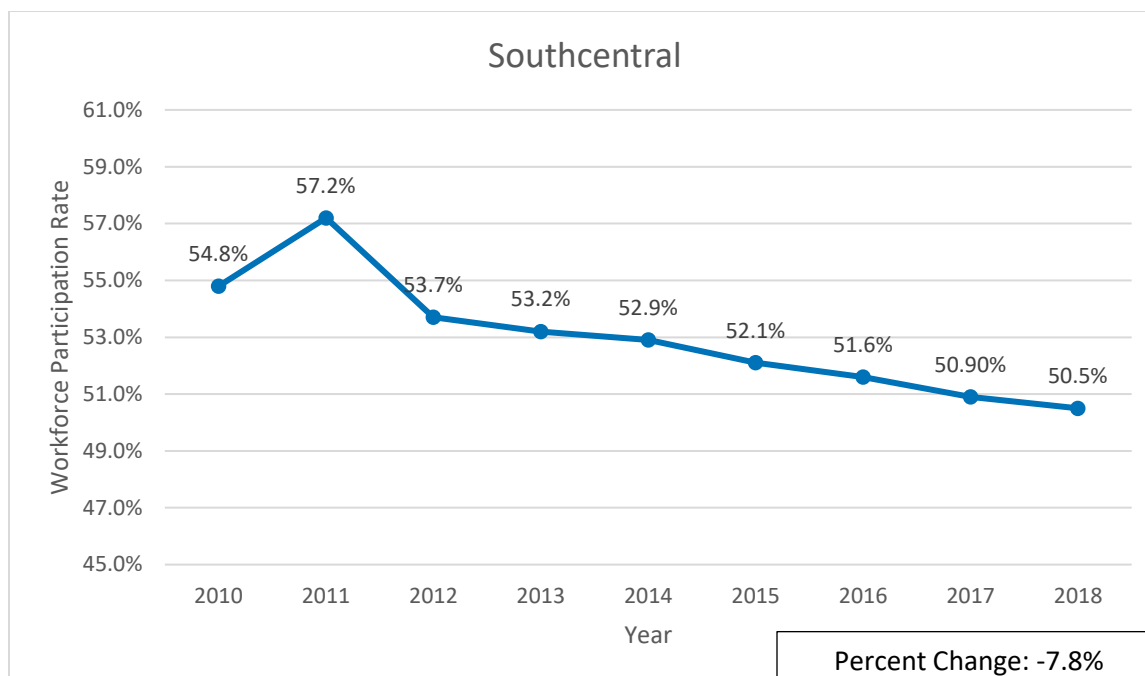


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

Despite an improved economic outlook following the recession of 2008, Mississippi continues to face some vulnerabilities that provide challenges for its progress. As is the case in other states, the long-term unemployed in Mississippi become discouraged and drop out of the workforce, contributing to the decline of 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 2019, the state's workforce participation rate stood at 55.8%, which the SMW workforce participation rate was much lower at 50.5%, which came at the end of a steady decline that had been occurring since the beginning of the decade. The rural nature of the workforce area's southern-most counties attributes to this data.

Figure 6: Workforce Participation Rate



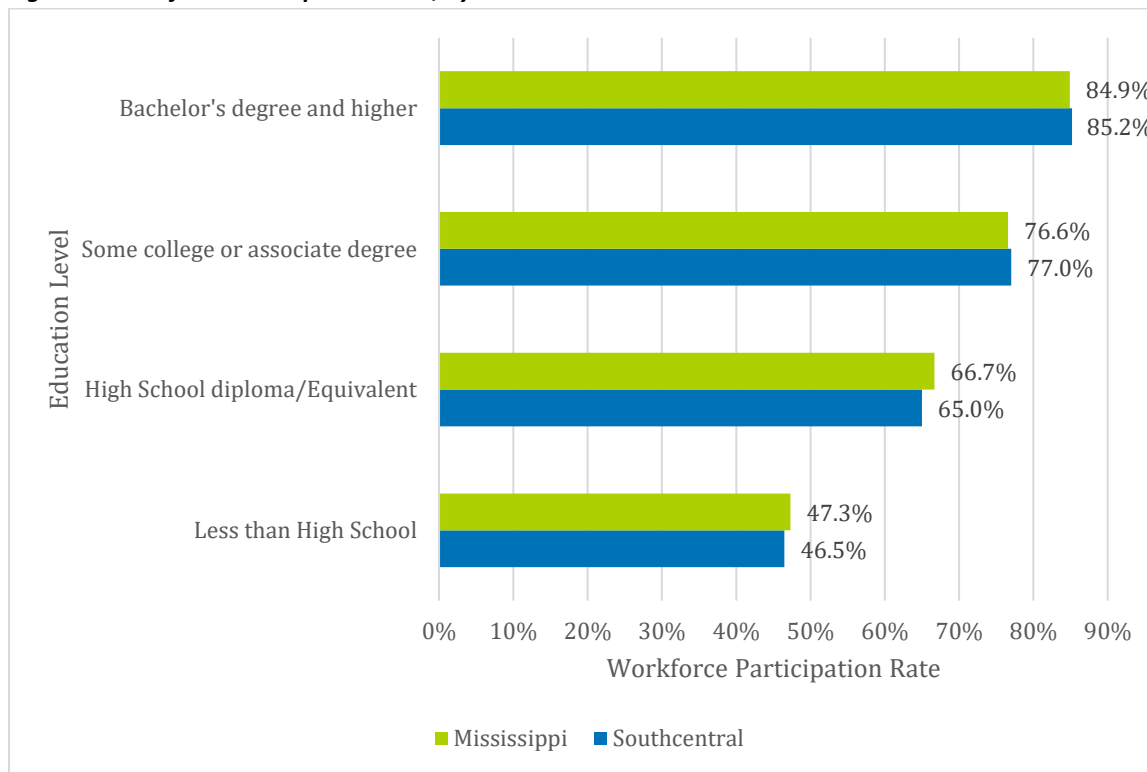


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2020; American Community Survey, 2014-2018 5-Year Estimates.

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: American Community Survey, 2014-2018 5-Year Estimates

The following Table 3 indicates the education and skill levels of current job seekers in the workforce area.

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

Education Level	Number	Percent
High school or less	3,808	11.8
High school diploma/GED	13,198	40.8
Some college	8,418	26.0
Associate degree	2,619	8.1
Bachelor degree or higher	3,166	9.8
Occupation skills certificate	1,141	3.5
Total	32,350	100

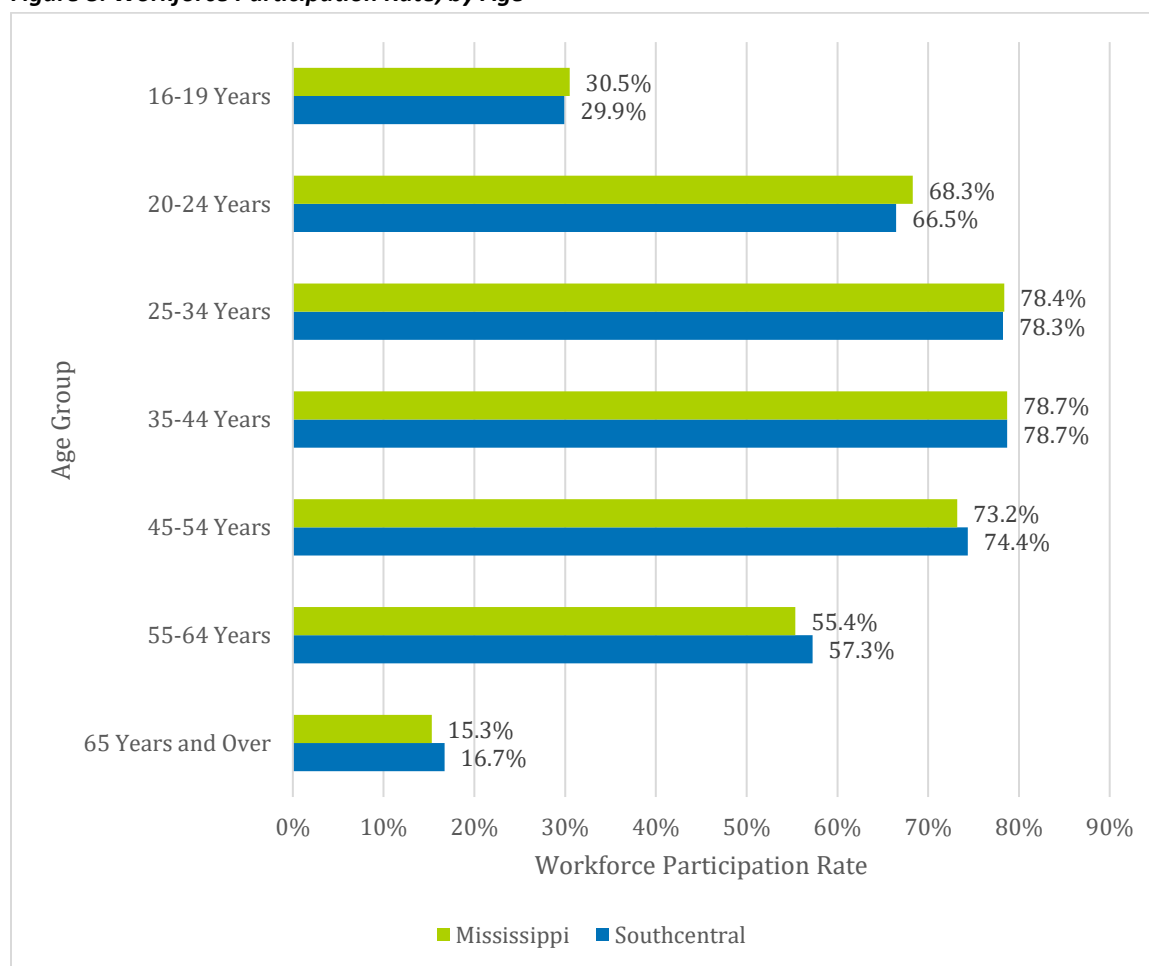
Notes: Job seekers measured as actively searching for employment from August 19, 2019 – August 18, 2020

Source: Mississippi Works, 2020.

Workforce Participation Rate by Age

Additionally, the workforce participation rate varies by age group. In Mississippi, youth (ages 16 to 19) have one of the lowest workforce participation rates at 29.9%, while young adults (ages 20 to 24) have a 66.5% 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 (see Figure 8). The highest workforce participation rate is found in the 35 – 44 year old category with 78.7% participation.

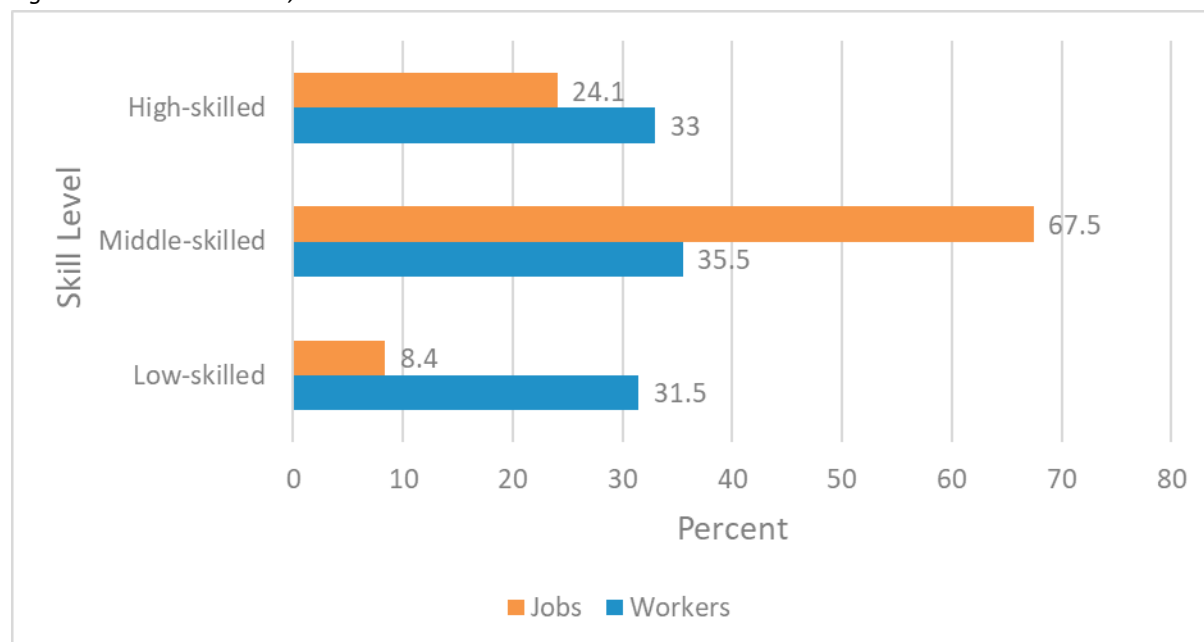
Figure 8: Workforce Participation Rate, by Age



Source: American Community Survey, 2014-2018 5-Year Estimates

The following 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 Southcentral MS Works LWDA



Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020; ONET, 2020; American Community Survey, 2014-2018 5-Year Estimates.

B.5. The SMW LWDA continually engages with representatives of business in the local area, including small business. CMPDD provides a conduit for SMW staff to participate in this engagement by maintaining memberships in multiple business advocacy organizations such as the Mississippi Economic Council, the Mississippi Economic Development Council, and the Greater Jackson Alliance. Networking at various sponsored business functions keeps the SMW staff attuned to the needs of area businesses as a whole, but also allows opportunities to open up dialogue with a business individually to discuss the specific needs of that business. When training is an identified need, SMW partners with the area's four local community colleges to best determine how to incorporate this training need into the community colleges' programs. Several funding resources are available to meet the training needs of employers. Employers are offered On-the-Job Training through WIOA; assistance is provided by SMW in making application for MS Works funds through the MS Development Authority; and employers can apply through one of the area's community colleges for WET funds assistance. SMW also works to assist community college representatives who have identified a business need other than training and comes to SMW with that need indicating a true partnership at all levels.

Utilizing funding made available by the SWIB, SMW has engaged counties within the workforce area and assisted with their efforts to achieve the ACT Work Ready Community designation. A Work

Ready Community designation enhances the appeal of these locales to business and industry who are attempting to identify sites for expansion and development. All 17 counties of the SMW workforce area have earned the Work Ready Community designation.

In 2017, under the direction of the SWIB, the workforce area developed a local area Sector Strategy Plan. A thorough analysis of local industries and labor market data was performed. As a result of the analysis, three sectors were identified as those that provided the greatest employment opportunities and also the greatest need on the part of the employers. Those three targeted industry sectors are Healthcare, Manufacturing and Transportation/Distribution/Logistics. Leadership Teams for each of the sectors were formed, consisting of secondary and post-secondary education, economic development, and industry leaders. As a result of this process, skill gaps, objectives and goals were identified and were included in the final Sector Strategy Plan.

The SMW Sector Strategy Plan is continually reviewed and discussed with key partners to ensure adjustment, refinement, and implementation of the goals of the sector strategy plan occur as needed. The SMW Workforce Director serves as the point of contact for targeted industry sectors, coordinating workforce systems to better align state resources, crafting tailored workforce solutions and training, and following up with businesses.

When appropriate, the SMW Workforce Director meets with employers, trade associations related to the SMW targeted sectors, human resources associations, community groups, and economic developers to provide information on available workforce services and training resources. These services include WIOA funded on-the-job training, internships, and apprenticeships, as well as information and assistance on applying for MS Works and WET funds.

WIOA programs and activities within the SMW LWDA are planned and overseen by the LWDB that meets several times per year to review the LWDA WIOA programs, activities and performance. Programs and services to support the workforce system are aligned with regional economic development needs and with industry sectors. The MDA's staff coordinate with LWDA staff to assist in connecting them with businesses and industries with whom they come in contact and with those who are considering locating within the area.

As the SMW LWDA continually works to identify the needs of in-demand occupational sectors, the area will engage appropriate representation of those sectors in the design of its programs and activities to ensure that the needs of those sector employers are met.

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

The SMW 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 on the LWDB further assist staff with staying informed of local needs.

B.7. Due to the rural nature of SMW LWDA, transportation issues exist in some areas of some counties. A system of mass public transit does not exist except within the larger cities in the area. However, transportation assistance is available through various community-based organizations and referral is made to those resources as needs of individuals are identified. CMPDD also serves as a Metropolitan Planning Organization and is therefore aware of transportation needs and challenges within the area.

Low-income populations, especially those individuals who are unemployed or underemployed, are usually not financially able to own a vehicle to drive to work. They rely on walking, biking, carpooling, or using public transit as affordable alternatives to owning a vehicle. Workers in more rural counties commute to more urbanized areas for work because, generally, that is where the jobs are. Transportation also presents a challenge in education and training activities that must take place to develop a workforce.

Some degree of public or specialized transportation services is available in the SMW area. However, the lack of adequate transportation continues to be cited as an obstacle to education, training, and employment, especially for older adults, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals. To assist in addressing this issue, the Mississippi Department of Transportation instituted six regional coordinated transportation planning groups in the state to improve mobility

options. These groups network together to find transportation solutions. The 17-county SMW area encompasses three of the six regional transportation groups, including one county in Delta Rides, six counties in Trans-Con, and 10 counties in SMART. SMW staff provides WIOA Smart Start partners with contacts for these resources and at least three of these partners have joined the groups, including MDHS, MDRS, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program administered by MDES.

In order to meet transportation barriers, the SMW and the area's community colleges work with local support organizations to assist with transporting individuals to training. In some instances, WIOA funds may be used to offer transportation assistance in the form of gas cards or public transit passes. As individuals are able to access training to acquire skills and gain employment, the issue of transportation can resolve itself as those individuals are then able to afford some reliable means of transportation.

B.8. The SMW 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. SMW coordinates with community college workforce representatives in an effort 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 the Leadership Teams involved in the Sector Strategy Plan development. The community colleges' District Workforce Councils provide additional input into the pipeline and career pathway creation. The Mississippi Works MSGradJobs.com and MSTechJobs.com are available to help connect four-year post-secondary and technical students with work opportunities.

B.9. The SMW 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 SMW 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). SMW staff works

closely with the BOC 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 SMW LWDA supports the WIOA State Plan and provides priority of services for veterans and their families seeking employment opportunities and connects military skills with occupational demands using the Mississippi Works profile process. In addition, the SMW LWDA supports the Jobs for Veterans State Grants.

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) are integrated into the WIN Job Center service delivery system at the local job center level. Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, as described in TEGL 10-09, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority, priority must be provided in accordance with the WIOA State Plan. Efforts within the SMW LWDA connect veterans' possessing military skills with employers through crosswalks of professional skills and job opportunities. DVOPs are cross trained to understand the full component of WIOA and Combined Plan Partner programs that may be available to assist veterans. In instances when a DVOP is not available or has reached the predetermined caseload, another WIN Job Center staff will provide services to veterans and eligible spouses as appropriate. The full array of WIOA funded services and programs is available for veterans and their spouses.

C. Local Area Planning

C.1. The SMW LWDA supports the State's strategic vision for achieving the following sustainable, high-performance employment goals:

1. Work together to develop policies that coordinate service delivery among all WIOA Combined Plan Partners.
2. Strengthen interagency partnerships.
3. Develop defined, articulated career pathways across educational sectors (K-16+) to create a pipeline for the workforce.
4. Develop cross-program performance metrics.
5. Continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of the WIOA and other federal initiatives.

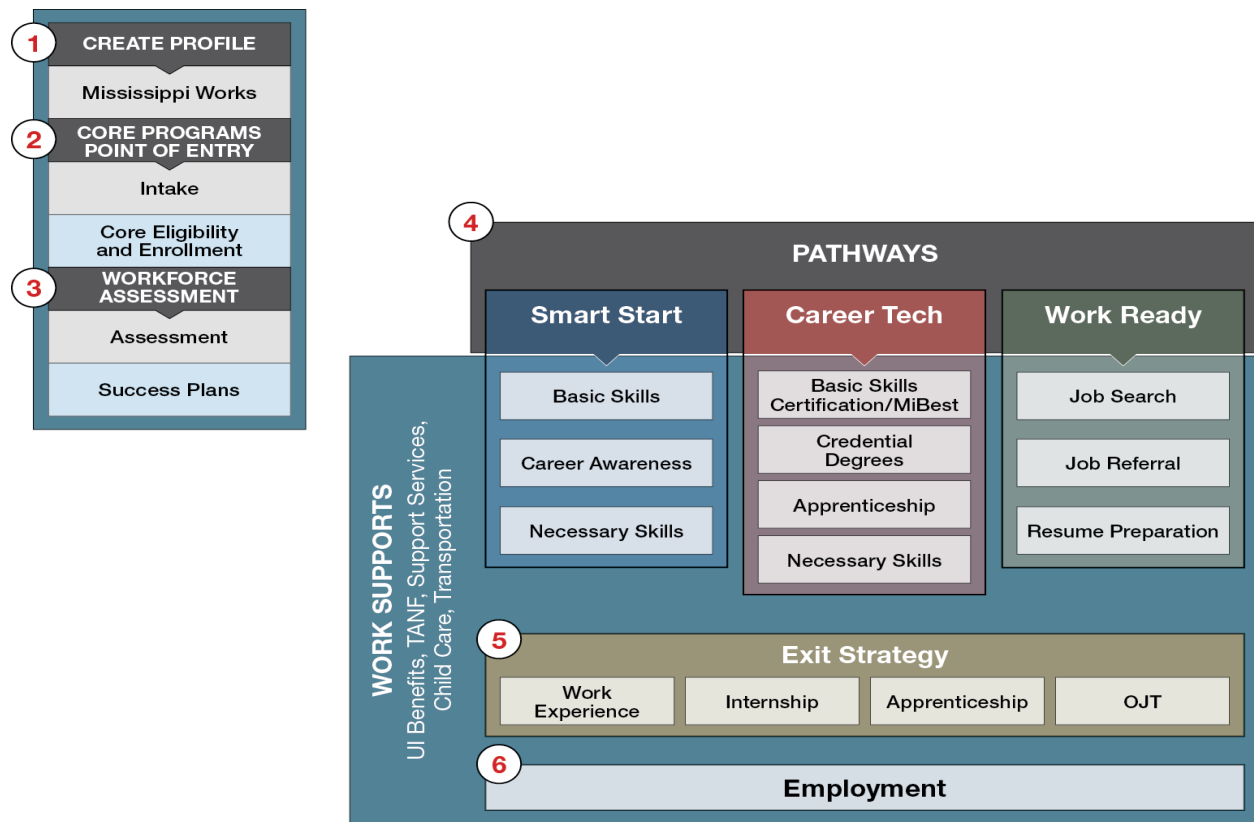
6. Engage partners to remain abreast of changing industry needs and the metrics to measure outcomes to realize the potential of the state's workforce programs and delivery systems.
7. Draft and communicate a unified vision/message.

Under the guidance of the LWDB and in concert with permanent and ad hoc committees and in partnership with system partners, the SMW LWDA strives to build programs and services that carry out these goals. Goals are continually reviewed and updated as necessary.

SMW LWDA performance is reviewed quarterly against the workforce area's negotiated performance standards to ensure that programs and activities meet those standards. The area's efforts in support of these goals are designed to meet or exceed the performance standards.

C.2. The SMW LWDA ensures that its local workforce area service providers carry out the core programs aligning available resources in order to achieve the strategic vision and goals of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. The Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway model is presented in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model



Participants may enter the Career Pathway Model through different on- and off-ramps provided among agency partners through a “No Wrong Door” ideology. An abbreviated description of the steps is:

Step 1: Point of Entry - All participants enter the Career Pathway Model through a Combined Plan Partner's intake process.

Step 2: Workforce Assessment – The Intake Partner works with the individual to assess the individual’s work-ready status and develops a Career Pathway Success Plan for employment. The results of the individual’s work-ready status assessment determine which pathway activity is appropriate for the individual. Depending on the assessment results and the success plan steps, the individual may receive subsequent services from the intake agency, if that agency has the resources and capacity to provide the services. If that is not the case, he/she is referred to the appropriate system partner service entity for service.

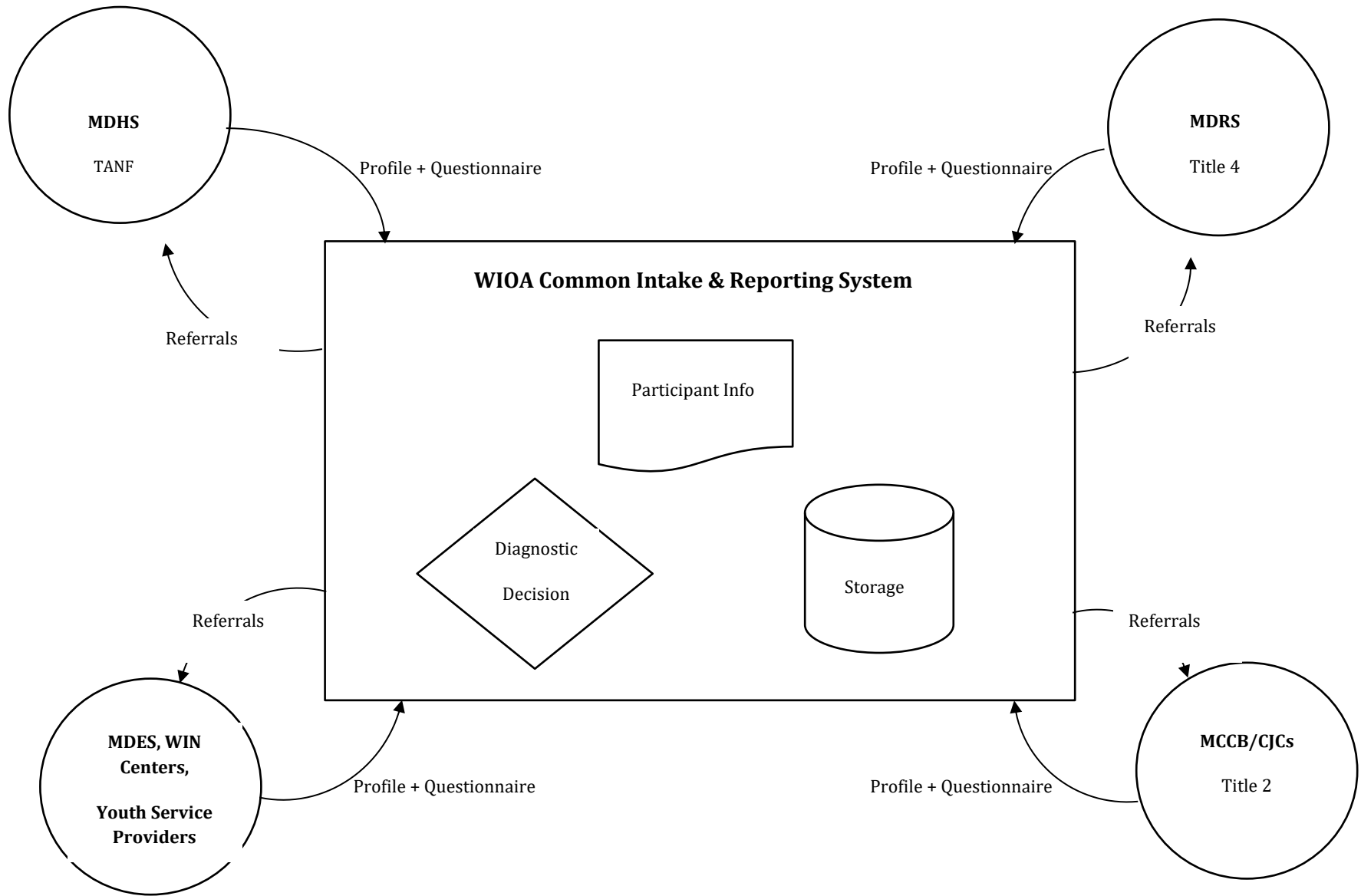
Step 3: Pathway Activities – The Career Pathway Model includes three main pathways:

- Smart Start Pathway – Participants who lack basic skills and those requiring the most intensive assistance to become job-ready are referred to the Smart Start Pathway for the provision of basic skills and services.
- Career Tech Pathway – Individuals who are determined to possess basic skills, but who need training to obtain career-specific skills are referred to the Career Tech Pathway. The Career Tech Pathway is designed to provide technical and career training and education in high-demand job skills or specific job skills that fit the current or future needs of local labor markets.
- Work-Ready – The Work-Ready Pathway is designed for individuals who possess both basic skills and a level of academic and/or technical skill that place them in a position to enter directly into the workforce. This pathway connects the individual with permanent unsubsidized employment.

Step 4: Exit Strategy – Upon completion of each pathway activity, participants may move into the next pathway activity or they may be directed to an exit strategy such as transitional employment programs or postsecondary degree programs.

Step 5: Unsubsidized Employment – Participants secure unsubsidized gainful employment.

Figure 11. WIOA Common Intake & Reporting System



C.3. The SMW 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 4. Combined Plan Programs

Agency	Program
LWDA	Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs (WIOA Title I)
MDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, amended by WIOA Title III) Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program (authorized under Title II-Chapter 2 of the Trade Act of 1974) Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38 United States Code) Unemployment Insurance Programs (authorized under state unemployment compensation laws) Senior Community Service Employment Programs (authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965)
MCCB	Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (WIOA Title II)
MDRS	Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV)
MDHS	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Table 5. Strategic Programs

Agency	Program
MDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment and training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008) Work programs authorized under section 6(o) Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act
MDE & MCCB	Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins and Technical Education Act of 2006
MDA	Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

C.4. The SMW LWDA MOUs with the core program provider partners specify responsibilities and goals of each. The MOUs are developed in coordination with each provider and serve to increase

individuals' access to training, education and support services resources. The provision of these services, in addition to utilization of the core program provider partners, serves to expand opportunities to connect individuals with employment, particularly those individuals with barriers to employment. Table 6 below indicates the number of individuals by category with barriers to employment. The workforce area's population consists of large numbers of low-income individuals ages 18 – 64, individuals ages 65 and older and single parent households. Co-enrollment of individuals in workforce partner programs is accomplished where appropriate. Based on an applicant's assessment, the development of his/her individual success plan includes, where appropriate, the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential, an industry-recognized certificate or a certification, and a pathway to employment that provides a self-sustaining wage. Preference is given to the attainment of credentials or certifications that are industry-recognized, portable and stackable and provide for progression along the career pathway.

Table 6: Populations with Barriers to Employment in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Group	Number
Low-Income Individuals, Age 18-64 ¹	86,031
American Indians/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians ¹	1,336
Individuals with Disabilities, Age 18-64 ¹	65,108
Individuals Age 65 and Older ¹	113,599
Individuals Age 65 and Older, Low-Income ¹	14,469
Ex-Offenders, Age 18-64 ²	1,737
Homeless Children and Youth ³	3,517
Children in Foster Care ⁴	2,105
English Language Learners with Low Level of Literacy ⁵	1,813
Individuals within 2 Years of Exhausting TANF Eligibility ⁶	264
Single Parent Households ¹	70,231
Single Mother Households ¹	56,777
Single Fathers Households ¹	13,454

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

Sources: 1) American Community Survey, 2014-2018 5-Year Estimates. 2) Mississippi Department of Corrections, 2020. 3) Mississippi Department of Education, 2019. 4) Kids Count Data Center, 2016. 5) Adult Basic Education, 2019. 6) Mississippi Department of Human Services, 2020.

C.5. The SMW LWDA uses a variety of services and programs to meet the needs of businesses, including but not limited to, the following:

1. Connect to job seekers—Employers who want to electronically connect to potential job candidates can do so through an integrated, technology-based workforce system, Mississippi Works. Through use of this system, employers can post job openings, search for potential candidates, send an individual a request to submit a resume, invite a candidate to interview, and much more. The LWDB encourages employers to utilize this tool, which is available at no cost to the employer. For employers who do not have access to or the means to use the technology, additional services are available at WIN Job Centers, including WIOA funded OJT training and Work Experience/Internship opportunities. These programs assist the employer financially with hiring and training workers.
2. Expand employment opportunities—SMW LWDA provides employers with WIOA OJT and Work Experience/Internships to assist in their development of a technically-skilled workforce. The LWDA utilizes relationships with area industry associations, economic development entities, human resource directors' associations, and other community business groups to ensure that the programs' designs are structured to meet the needs of businesses and employers and also to ensure that businesses and employers are aware of these opportunities for assistance with developing their workforce. Programs that align training opportunities with employment within the identified in-demand industries and sectors are given priority. At the forefront of all program design is the goal of providing appropriate career pathways for job seekers.

In addition to WIOA-funded programs that are available through the SMW LWDA, employers may also utilize other available training resources, including:

Short-term training programs—Employers can utilize the Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Fund to customize pre-employment training, post-hire training, or evaluate applicant skills through coordination with local community colleges.

Job creation incentive—Employers who create new jobs and make corporate investments in Mississippi may be eligible for a number of tax incentives or for MS Works funding.

C.6. The SMW LWDA coordinates with and makes referrals to the community college Small Business Development Centers and other small business-focused service providers to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

C.7. The SMW LWDA promotes the use of apprenticeships to support the regional economy and individuals' career advancement through referral to and collaboration with entities such as the DOL Office of Apprenticeship, the Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP), and other registered apprenticeship programs. SMW also provides pre-apprenticeship training, which is available through ITAs. Apprenticeship opportunities funded through a combination of WIOA and other sources provides employers with financial assistance to enable the offering of apprenticeship employment to job seekers.

One of the largest workforce challenges for employers in the targeted healthcare sector is keeping qualified nurses. The first step SMW took to address this issue was to establish the Nurse Externship Program, which has shown to increase recruitment and retention in hospitals and other healthcare providers.

C.8. The SMW LWDA supports and participates in rapid response activities as described in the Mississippi WIOA Combined Plan to offer individuals affected by layoff or closure individualized comprehensive reemployment benefits and services. When any WIOA partner receives information concerning a layoff or closure, that information is shared with both state and local rapid response team members. The SMW LWDA coordinates Rapid Response activities with the state, to quickly respond to the needs of those affected by a layoff or closure of any type. The Rapid Response Team includes representatives and/or resource information from the appropriate local WIN Job Center, Community Colleges, MDHS, Home Saver Program, Small Business/Entrepreneurial Program, MDES, MDRS and the SMW LWDA to provide information to those facing a job loss. Information is provided to and reviewed with individuals affected and includes help on "Surviving a Layoff", a personal tool kit, tips on developing a resume, creating a MSWorks profile, interviewing tips, how to obtain National Career Readiness Certificates, how to apply for Unemployment Benefits, how to

register for employment services, training services available for dislocated workers, job leads, upcoming job fairs, housing assistance, mortgage assistance, insurance options, utility bill assistance, prescription assistance, and child care.

C.9. The SMW LWDA fully maximizes the coordination of services provided by the MS Department of Employment Security under the Wagner-Peyser Act and WIOA services provided in the local area through the WIN Job Center system. SMW LWDA utilizes the area's WIN Job Centers to deliver its WIOA services. A list of the SMW WIN Job Center locations is found in Appendix H. WIOA funded Career and Training services are provided to customers in addition to services that are available through the MDES Wagner-Peyser program. Most WIN Job Center staff is fully integrated in that each staff person has the knowledge and ability to provide Wagner-Peyser services as well as WIOA services. This serves to prevent duplication of services of the two programs. The state's technology system for registering and tracking services provided to individuals also serves to prevent the duplication of services.

C.10. The SMW LWDA supports and works with the Adult Education Program operated through the Mississippi Community College Board and the Mississippi Department of Education. The intake process in the Career Pathway Model, whereby individuals are assessed for basic and work ready skills, will connect adults needing to obtain a high-school equivalency degree. Where appropriate, Adult Education programs and services are made available at WIN Job Centers or at facilities in close proximity to the centers. Individuals seeking WIOA training services who do not currently possess a high-school diploma or a high-school equivalency are connected with Adult Education programs in the area.

C.11 The SMW LWDA supports and works with the MDRS to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities through flexible, customized services. The State Plan outlines the details of how services are administered including cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. MDRS has been an active workforce partner in the SMW LWDA for many years. The SMW LWDA works closely with MDRS staff to provide WIN Job Center and WIOA services to their clients, and when appropriate, WIOA services are combined with MDRS available services to meet the client's needs. The MOU includes a detailed description of this coordination of service

provision. The following Table 7 indicated the Demographic and Economic Characteristics of People with Disabilities.

Table 7: Demographic and Economic Characteristics of People with Disabilities in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

	Number	Percent
Total Disabled Population	108,628	-
Total Age 18-64	57,522	-
RACE (All Ages)		
Black	50,481	46.5
White	56,092	51.6
Other	2,055	1.9
GENDER (Ages 18-64)		
Female	29,041	50.5
Male	28,481	49.5
AGE (Ages 18-64)		
18-34	10,507	18.3
35-64	47,015	81.7
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS		
Employment Rate	-	87.1
Median Earnings	-	\$22,941
TYPE OF DISABILITY* (Ages 18-64)		
Hearing Difficulty	9,365	16.3
Vision Difficulty	10,459	18.2
Cognitive Difficulty	23,569	41
Ambulatory Difficulty	31,061	54
Self-care Difficulty	11,922	20.7
Independent Living Difficulty	22,794	39.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2018 5 Year Estimates.

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

C.12. The SMW LWDA follows the competitive procurement process used to award sub-awards and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under WIOA Title I in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Federal Grants 2 CFR 200, which outlines requirements for entities receiving and administering federal funds. All WIOA funded services are procured in this manner, unless unique circumstances dictate otherwise.

C.13. The SMW LWDA implemented a diagnostic checklist for information that is to be collected from individuals during the intake process. The checklist is used statewide and serves to assist intake staff in performing a work ready assessment, in developing the individual's success plan, determining WIOA eligibility and with making referrals to other workforce partner programs and services that may be utilized by the individual. The state's Combined Plan Partner system automatically generates recommended referrals to specific partner programs and services based on individuals' answers to the diagnostic questions. This formalized referral process enables greater accuracy and ease of referral for participants and service providers. The MS Works system allows the tracking of services provided to enrolled individuals and allows OGM to generate a quarterly performance report for the SMW LWDA indicating actual performance as compared to the workforce area's negotiated performance measures. These reports enable the SMW LWDA to manage programs and make adjustments as necessary to affect and improve performance outcomes.

C.14. The SMW LWDB is an active, involved board, not just a "rubber stamp" board. Meetings are well attended and members are engaged in the programs, activities and performance of the LWDA. These are the characteristics of a high-performing board. An excellent example of this board reaching towards high performance was the Chairman's goal for every SMW county to become an ACT Work Ready Community. He took the ACT WorkKeys assessment himself to earn a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) which, in turn, assisted his home county of Rankin in becoming work ready. Additionally, he challenged the other LWDB members to earn an NCRC (which many of them did) and recruited employers in the area to support the NCRC as a Work Ready Community Goal. All seventeen counties of the workforce area have earned the Work Ready Community designation.

The SMW LWDB has adopted policies and operating procedures as required and in accordance with the State Plan and updates those policies and procedures as necessary. A list of the SMW LWDA policies and operating procedures is provided in the appendices of this plan.

C.15. The SMW LWDA places emphasis on the SMW targeted Sector Strategy industries as well as Mississippi's economic sector goals as identified by the MDA. The SMW LWDA prioritizes programs and service delivery taking into account these target industry sectors which support economic developers in attracting these industries to Mississippi. SMW LWDB members are individuals who are active in their communities and have existing relationships with local economic developers. In this way, they are connected to the local economy and work with the economic developers to bring new business into their respective areas.

C.16. The SMW LWDA performs an annual review of the local plan in coordination with workforce partners and prepares and submits any necessary modifications that reflect change in local and or/state priorities, target industries and local area initiatives on an as needed basis.

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

D.1. The SMW LWDA contains seven full-time WIN Job Centers, one of which is a comprehensive center. One additional specialty center serves a very specific population group of mentally disabled individuals. Five of the seven WIN Job Centers are currently operated by MDES under subaward from SMW LWDA; one center is operated by Copiah-Lincoln Community College and one center is operated by Hinds Community College, both under subaward from SMW LWDA.

The SMW LWDA ensures that the WIN Job Center operators are properly monitored, evaluated and audited based on performance goals and other subaward criteria.

Periodic partner meetings along with meetings with WIN Job Center managers and staff are scheduled to explore ways to improve services, share successful practices and offer technical assistance.

D.2. The SMW LWDB has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with workforce system partners and service providers. The purpose of the MOU is to establish the design framework and partnerships of the SMW LWDA. While this document is a requirement of WIOA and is consistent with the directive of the State Plan, the intent of the MOU is to create and foster an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration among partners. Current Consortium Agreements/Infrastructure Funding Agreements are available for review at the office of the Central MS Planning & Development District. See Appendix G for the SMW Local Area Memorandum of Understanding.

D.3. The SMW LWDA WIN Job Centers uses the state's participant and service tracking system. Mississippi Works is an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system to administer programs carried out under WIOA and by WIN Job Center partners. Training is provided as needed to workforce partner staff regarding the use of the tracking system and the MS Works technology.

D.4. The SMW LWDA WIN Job Center staff and other workforce partner staff is trained in integrated case management processes and workforce services delivery either by SMW LWDA staff or by staff of the Office of Grant Management, a division of MDES. Training is provided to newly hired staff and to other staff on an as-needed basis.

D.5. The SMW LWDA conducts audits, monitoring and program oversight of the WIN Job Center system. All sub-awardees are audited in at least one in-depth review during the program year, which may be conducted either in person or via desk review. Generally, eight focus areas for the audit review include:

1. General Compliance
2. Cash receipts
3. Non-payroll cash disbursements
4. Payroll disbursements
5. Property and equipment
6. General administrative
7. Programmatic performance and compliance

8. Equal opportunity compliance

OGM has conducted reviews of customer service quality. The WIOA Customer Satisfaction Survey is performed by nSPARC through a survey process.

Results indicate that both the businesses and job seekers were satisfied with the services they received from the local WIN Job Centers. The results reveal a relatively high level of satisfaction among job seekers whereas customer satisfaction among business owners improved when compared to a previous customer satisfaction survey.

Job Seeker Satisfaction

Three Questions were used to determine how satisfied job seekers were with the services they received. Question 1 asked job seekers to rate their overall satisfaction with the services received. Question 2 asked how closely the services received met the expectation of the job seeker. Question 3 asked how closely the services received were ideal for an individual in the same circumstances. The average score for each question, on a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 indicating the lowest level of satisfaction and 10 indicating the highest level of satisfaction), was approximately 7.7 for the state as a whole. The average state weighted index was 75.20 with SMW at 77.06.

Employer Satisfaction

Three questions were used to determine how satisfied businesses were with the services they received. Question 1 asked the businesses to rate their overall satisfaction with the services received. Question 2 asked how closely the services received met the expectation of the employer. Question 3 asked if the services received were ideal for businesses in the same circumstances. The average score for each question, on a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 indicating the lowest level of satisfaction, and 10 indicating the highest level of satisfaction), was approximately 7.3 statewide. The average state weighted index was 70.15 with SMW falling slightly below at 70.74.

WIN Job Centers are monitored routinely for WIOA program compliance, documentation, and timeliness of service. Corrective action is initiated if necessary and technical assistance is provided as needed.

D.6. WIN Job Center location(s) include a Sector Training Plus Comprehensive, Comprehensive, Affiliate, and Virtual-Access sites. The locations of the area's WIN Job Centers are included in Appendix H.

WIN Job Center operators and the providers of WIOA career and training services and youth services are selected using a competitive procurement process. Five of the seven WIN Job Centers are currently operated by MDES under subaward from SMW LWDA; one center is operated by Copiah-Lincoln Community College and one center is operated by Hinds Community College, both under subaward from SMW LWDA. MDES and Hinds CC are a provider for WIOA career and training services for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth. MDRS and Warren County Association for Retarded Citizens provide specialized services to individuals with disabilities. Copiah-Lincoln Community College provides career services to Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth. The Madison County Youth Court, the Yazoo County Youth Court, the Refill Jackson Initiative, and Sunnybrook Childrens' Home provide services to youth.

D.7. The SMW LWDA has one Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Center within the area. A Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Center provides access to all Combined Plan Partner services and also provides in-house career education. The SMW LWDA continually works toward a goal of establishing multiple Sector Training Plus Comprehensive One-Stop Centers within the area.

D.8. Career services are provided in the SMW LWDA WIN Job Centers by the staff of MDES, Hinds Community College, and Copiah-Lincoln Community College. WIN Job Center staff utilizes local labor market information, training information, career pathway information and guidance to assist individuals.

D.9. The SMW LWDA MOU contains a description of the processes for providing services to individuals through the Smart Start Career Pathway. The individual assessments, which are

completed during face-to-face interviews, include the development of an individual's success plan. The individuals are introduced to the MS Works system and assisted with registration and the development of a profile. The flow chart of services is found previously in this plan in section C.2 and is also found as Appendix I.

D.10. All job seekers, even those restricted to remote areas, can connect to employers through an interactive website (www.mississippiworks.org) and integrated iPhone and Android mobile applications, both referred to as Mississippi Works. Job seekers can 1) build a profile; 2) generate a resume; 3) search for job openings and apply for them online; 4) receive emails or text messages when new openings match the job seeker's criteria; 5) receive real-time feedback on how well matched the job seeker is for a particular position; and 6) access easy-to-understand labor market information. For job seekers who lack computer skills, WIN Job Center staff can also log into the Mississippi Works Labor Exchange to assist job seekers in applying for positions through a "staff-assisted referral" or other Wagner-Peyser services.

D.11. The SMW 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 subaward with the one-stop operator. These costs are an evaluation factor in selecting the one-stop operator and the location of the WIN Job Centers.

D.12. The SMW LWDA MOU identifies the role and activities of each partner agency including an inventory of all services directly delivered or accessible through each and 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 include but are not limited to, ITA, Work Experience/Internships, and OJT.

Descriptions of employment and training activities include:

Individual Training Account (ITA) - is a scholarship award established by a WIN Job Center on behalf of a WIOA eligible individual. ITAs are available to eligible adults, dislocated workers and out-of-school youth as authorized under Title I of WIOA and are used to purchase training services through community colleges and some private training facilities

who have been approved as training providers and have been placed on the state's Eligible Training Provider List. ITAs will fund the cost of tuition and select other costs, but may be utilized only after other available financial aid has been applied, as required by the WIOA law. The goal of the ITA program is to provide unskilled individuals with a level of training appropriate to obtaining unsubsidized permanent employment upon completion of the training.

Work Experience/Internship - is used to help eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth gain practical work experience and sharpen their leadership skills while working and getting paid with the goal of unsubsidized permanent employment at the conclusion of the Work Experience/Internship period. Work Experience/Internships are available to eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) - is training provided by an employer to workers during a prescribed period, the length of which is based on the difficulty and complexity of the skills that are to be learned by the WIOA program participant. The program reimburses the employer a portion of the wage paid to the employee during the training period. The goal of OJT is unsubsidized permanent employment at the conclusion of the training period. OJT is available for eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers.

The SMW LWDB regularly reviews the type of services offered within the area to ensure that they are the most appropriate allowable by law to meet the needs of the job seekers and employers and that they align with the area's in-demand occupational sectors.

Youth Services

D.14. The SMW LWDA has a standing Youth Committee to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the development and the provision of services to youth. The LWDB appoints the committee's membership. It ensures at least one community-based organization representative is on the committee who has a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. The committee makes recommendations to the LWDB regarding youth activities and ensures that the programs provided meet the needs of the SMW LWDA youth and serve to meet the

area's negotiated performance measures. The SMW Youth Committee meets on an as-needed basis. A list of the current members of the Committee is found at Appendix J. The Youth Committee plans the workforce area's youth programs and activities to ensure that the workforce area meets the requirements of the WIOA law that 75% of the total youth funds be spent on serving Out-of-School Youth and that at least 20% of the total youth funds are spent in a work experience activity.

The available WIOA funded youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities, are included below:

1. Paid Internships which have as a component academic and occupational education and on-the-job training opportunities.
2. ITAs (occupational skills training) which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.
3. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
4. The SMW LWDA does not currently provide supportive services. Youth are referred to community agencies if services are needed.
5. Follow-up Services for not less than 12 months after exiting the program to ensure continuity of services and progress toward performance outcomes.
6. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
7. Labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area.
8. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

D.15. The SMW LWDA utilizes the state's intake and assessment system to maximize linkages between the WIN Job Center system and unemployment insurance program requirements. This intake and assessment system is part of the Smart Start Career Pathway Model, which requires a close working relationship among workforce partner agencies and staff to help Mississippians navigate the workforce system.

A committee of workforce partner agency representatives developed a diagnostic assessment questionnaire to determine partner referrals. Each one of the diagnostic questions is targeted towards a specific core program to easily determine if an individual should be referred to that program's services based on the individual's response. One of the diagnostic questions asks if the person has worked in the last 18 months. Based on the individual's response(s), he/she may be provided information on how to apply for UI.

Individuals receiving unemployment benefits are required to register for and actively seek employment, which they can do utilizing an online job search training tool (OJST) made available by MDES. The OJST allows customers to strengthen their marketability during the early stages of their employment pursuit without the expense of traveling to a WIN Job Center location multiple times. The goal is to increase customer engagement and preparedness while decreasing the average weeks an individual is unemployed. Rapid response services respond to mass layoffs and plant closings in coordination with the state Dislocated Worker unit and the SMW staff to decrease long-term unemployment.

Conversely, individuals entering the WIN Job Center seeking employment and/or training services are assessed and if the need indicates, they are instructed in the process for filing for unemployment benefits. Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) is a service provided by MDES through the WIN Job Center system that focuses on individuals who may exhaust their 26 weeks of unemployment benefits before they return to work. RESEA concentrates on those Mississippians re-entering the workforce in less time.

D.16. In support of the Mississippi Combined Plan, TANF activities are coordinated through the Comprehensive WIN Job Center and may be coordinated through some Affiliate Sites. 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 SMW LWDA supports the State Plan dropout prevention and recovery initiatives. The MDE coordinates partnership initiatives to prevent dropouts, including but not limited to career academies, dual-enrollment, occupational diploma program, and work-based learning experiences.

SMW LWDA staff participate with numerous community and educational organizations to ensure that K-12 students, particularly those enrolled in career tech classes, are informed on available opportunities. Meetings with key K-12 school district administrators serve to strengthen the relationship between the workforce area and the schools in an effort to ensure that students take advantage of all workforce resources. Community College leaders are key players in these partnerships to ensure that appropriate K-12 training allows students dual enrollment and or college credit upon high-school graduation.

D.18. The SMW 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 8 indicates the Unemployment and Workforce Participation Rates of Vulnerable Populations in the area.

Table 8: Unemployment & Workforce Participation Rates of Vulnerable Populations in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Group	Percent
Veterans	
Unemployment Rate	3.9%
Workforce Participation Rate	70.2%

Disabled	
Unemployment Rate	13.4%
Workforce Participation Rate	32.2%
Low Income	
Unemployment Rate	27.1%
Workforce Participation Rate	45.2%
Native American/Hawaiian	
Unemployment Rate	25.4%
Workforce Participation Rate	53.8%
Individuals Age 16-19	
Unemployment Rate	32.9%
Workforce Participation Rate	29.9%
Individuals Age 16-19, Not enrolled in School	
Unemployment Rate	19.2%
Workforce Participation Rate	54.5%

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

Source: American Community Survey, 2014-2018 5-Year Estimates.

The following Table 9 indicates the Characteristics of Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) Program Work-Eligible Recipients.

Table 9: Characteristics of Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) Program Work-Eligible Recipients in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

	Number	Percent
Total TANF Recipients	2,896	-
Total Ages 18-64	395	-
RACE (Ages 18-64)		
Black	368	93.2
White	27	6.8
Other	<10	-
GENDER (Ages 18-64)		

Female	391	99
Male	<10	-
AGE (Ages 18-64)		
18 - 25	125	31.6
26 - 35	211	53.4
36 - 45	45	11.4
46 - 64	14	3.5
EDUCATION (Ages 18-64)		
Less than High School Graduate	102	25.8
High School Diploma/GED	24	6.1
Some College	226	57.2
Not Available	43	10.9
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (Ages 18-64)		
Employment Rate for the cohort 2020	-	77.5
Median Earnings for the cohort 2020	-	\$9,101
Employment Rate One Year After Exit for the cohort 2019	-	78.8
Average Earnings One Year After Exit for the cohort 2019	-	\$12,931

Source: Mississippi Department of Human Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, 2020.

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

The following Table 10 indicates the Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Recipients.

Table 10: Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Recipients in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

	Number	Percent
Total SNAP Recipients	163,301	-
Total Ages 18-64	59,838	-
RACE (Ages 18-64)		

Black	44,588	74.5
White	14,656	24.5
Other	594	1
GENDER (Ages 18-64)		
Female	39,439	65.9
Male	20,399	34.1
AGE (Ages 18-64)		
18 - 25	8,885	14.8
26 - 35	13,484	22.5
36 - 45	13,542	22.6
46 - 64	23,927	40
EDUCATION (Ages 18-64)		
Less than High School Graduate	8,804	14.7
High School Diploma/GED	2,978	5
Some College	16,858	28.2
Not Available	31,198	52.1
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (Ages 18-64)		
Employment Rate for the cohort 2020	-	46.4
Median Earnings for the cohort 2020	-	\$15,969
Employment Rate One Year After Exit for the cohort 2019	-	59.9
Average Earnings One Year After Exit for the cohort 2019	-	\$18,876

Source: Mississippi Department of Human Services, 2020.

Note: May not total to 100 percent due to rounding

Table 11 below indicates Characteristics of Ex-Offenders

Table 11: Characteristics of Ex-Offenders in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

	Number	Percent
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Total Ex-Offenders	1,757	-
Total Ages 18-64	1,737	-
RACE (Ages 18-64)		
Black	1,106	63.7
White	608	35
Other	23	1.3
GENDER (Ages 18-64)		
Female	182	10.5
Male	1,555	89.5
AGE (Ages 18-64)		
18 - 25	213	12.3
26 - 35	683	39.3
36 - 45	522	30.1
46 - 64	319	18.4
EDUCATION (Ages 18-64)		
Less than High School Graduate	663	38.2
High School Diploma/GED	85	4.9
Some College	238	13.7
Not Available	751	43.2
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (Ages 18-64)		
Employment Rate for the cohort 2020	-	29.1
Median Earnings for the cohort 2020	-	\$16,480

Source: Mississippi Department of Corrections, 2020.

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

D.19. The SMW LWDB supports the State Plan for providing services for individuals who qualify under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services,

technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. ADA compliance is evaluated during the WIN Job Center certification process.

E. Sector Strategy Plan

E.1. The SMW Sector Strategy Plan originally developed in 2017 is attached as Appendix K. The plan identifies needs, objectives, and goals for the major employment providers and economic driving workforce sectors of Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Transportation/ Distribution/ Logistics. The SMW workforce area encompasses the capital city metropolitan area, which contains the majority of the healthcare providers in the entire state. The state's only teaching hospital is located in the area. These healthcare facilities employ vast numbers of employees and contribute to the economic environment of this area of the state. The following table indicates the current supply, demand, and gap for middle-skill occupations in the SMW LWDA Target Sectors as compiled by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Sector	Supply	Demand	Gap
Advanced Manufacturing Industry	70	89	19
Agribusiness Industry	38	231	193
Automotive Industry	750	1,138	388
Forestry, Energy, & Chemical Industry	42	135	93
Healthcare Industry	329	2,115	1,786
Total	1,229	3,708	2,479

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020; Mississippi Works, 2020; Mississippi Community Colleges, 2020

The sectors of particular importance in the SMW 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 in Table 12.

Table 12 : Target Advanced Manufacturing Industry Structure in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Industry	Employment	Percent	Earnings	Establishment
Machinery Manufacturing	2,207	47.1	\$60,453	29
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	843	18	\$61,709	15
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	753	16.1	\$49,290	47
Primary Metal Manufacturing	407	8.7	\$68,584	<10
Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	373	8	\$121,365	10
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	77	1.6	\$75,989	<10
Railroad Rolling Stock Manufacturing	21	0.4	\$52,895	<10
Total	4,681	100	\$64,666	117

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

Agribusiness: The State WIOA Plan definition of Agribusiness industry contains the occupations shown below in Table 13.

Table 13: Target Agribusiness Industry Structure in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Industry	Employment	Percent	Earnings	Establishment
Food Manufacturing	4,122	83.2	\$34,475	51
Animal Production and Aquaculture	357	7.2	\$41,798	36
Crop Production	273	5.5	\$28,945	55
Support Activities for Crop Production	107	2.2	\$42,043	23
Support Activities for Animal Production	94	1.9	\$29,749	<10
Total	4,953	100	\$34,772	173

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

Automotive Industry: Contains the following occupations shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Target Automotive Industry Structure in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Industry	Employment	Percent	Earnings	Establishment
Truck Transportation	7,293	22.7	\$49,694	350
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	5,661	17.6	\$62,199	527
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	5,332	16.6	\$47,391	367
Motor Vehicle Manufacturing	4,480	14	\$71,068	<10
Rental and Leasing Services	2,865	8.9	\$39,204	165
Repair and Maintenance	2,800	8.7	\$39,910	539
Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing	2,008	6.3	\$44,953	15
Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	878	2.7	\$23,596	42
Motor Vehicle Body and Trailer Manufacturing	768	2.4	\$43,037	<10
Total	32,085	100	\$51,541	2,009

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

Forestry, Energy & Chemical Industry Structure contains the following occupations shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Target Forestry, Energy, & Chemical Industry Structure in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Industry	Employment	Percent	Earnings	Establishment
Utilities	1,867	35.2	\$80,854	109
Chemical Manufacturing	1,168	22	\$57,818	37
Forestry and Logging	949	17.9	\$41,531	141
Support Activities for Mining	855	16.1	\$88,671	101
Support Activities for Forestry	188	3.5	\$52,740	37
Mining (except Oil and Gas)	168	3.2	\$75,536	14
Oil and Gas Extraction	108	2	\$101,535	31
Total	5,303	100	\$69,260	470

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

Healthcare Industry contains the following occupations shown in Table 16.

Table 16 : Target Healthcare Industry Structure in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Industry	Employment	Percent	Earnings	Establishment
Ambulatory Health Care Services	16,128	38.6	\$59,401	1514
Hospitals	15,529	37.1	\$56,913	36
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	10,171	24.3	\$28,219	120
Total	41,828	100	\$50,895	1,670

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

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

Table 17: Top 10 Occupations in the Advanced Manufacturing Industry in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Occupation	Employment	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Minimum	Median	Maximum
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other, Including Team Assemblers	515	11	\$9.76	\$14.68	\$22.01
Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	272	5.8	\$12.26	\$18.65	\$24.17
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	221	4.7	\$16.13	\$27.43	\$50.87
Machinists	209	4.4	\$13.24	\$20.95	\$29.19
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	205	4.4	\$13.74	\$19.24	\$28.20
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	151	3.2	\$9.65	\$15.29	\$28.16
Mechanical Engineers	146	3.1	\$28.60	\$44.59	\$62.51
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	145	3.1	\$12.82	\$24.88	\$49.70

Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	122	2.6	\$8.58	\$11.86	\$18.08
General and Operations Managers	116	2.5	\$12.52	\$32.02	\$85.11
Total	2,102	44.8	\$13.73	\$22.96	\$39.80

Notes: State WIOA Plan defined Advanced Manufacturing to certain Agriculture, Automotive, Chemical, and Energy manufacturing occupations; this Regional Plan highlights these industries and occupations in separate categories.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

*Percent of all Industry jobs.

Table 18: Top 10 Occupations in the Agribusiness Industry in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Occupation	Employment	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Minimum	Median	Maximum
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	1,037	15.4	\$8.69	\$13.02	\$15.30
Slaughterers and Meat Packers	566	8.4	\$10.94	\$13.60	\$17.53
Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	372	5.5	\$8.33	\$15.48	\$29.68
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	356	5.3	\$9.35	\$12.39	\$17.46
Packers and Packagers, Hand	285	4.2	\$8.19	\$11.01	\$14.48
Helpers--Production Workers	270	4	\$8.84	\$11.53	\$14.95
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	262	3.9	\$8.58	\$11.86	\$18.08
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	260	3.9	\$21.12	\$41.94	\$65.72
Food Batchmakers	226	3.4	\$8.45	\$11.13	\$16.85
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	212	3.2	\$8.85	\$11.74	\$18.34
Total	3,846	57.2	\$10.13	\$15.37	\$22.84

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

*Percent of all Industry jobs.

Table 19: Top 10 Occupations in the Automotive Industry in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Occupation	Employment	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Minimum	Median	Maximum
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,653	14.9	\$12.06	\$20.96	\$32.21
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other, Including Team Assemblers	3,702	11.9	\$9.76	\$14.68	\$22.01
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1,500	4.8	\$9.24	\$16.67	\$29.70
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,428	4.6	\$8.58	\$11.86	\$18.08
Retail Salespersons	1,098	3.5	\$8.26	\$10.95	\$19.11
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,055	3.4	\$12.82	\$24.88	\$49.70
Light Truck Drivers	903	2.9	\$8.83	\$12.51	\$22.67
Office Clerks, General	846	2.7	\$8.36	\$12.17	\$20.92
Parts Salespersons	746	2.4	\$9.97	\$16.25	\$34.67
General and Operations Managers	738	2.4	\$12.52	\$32.02	\$85.11
Total	16,669	53.5	\$10.04	\$17.30	\$33.42

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

*Percent of all Industry jobs.

Table 20: Top 10 Occupations in the Forestry, Energy, & Chemical Industry in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Occupation	Employment	Percent*	Hourly Wage		
			Minimum	Median	Maximum
Logging Equipment Operators	435	6.6	\$9.43	\$15.87	\$33.91
Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	318	4.8	\$17.96	\$29.52	\$36.64
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	310	4.7	\$12.06	\$20.96	\$32.21
Customer Service Representatives	192	2.9	\$9.06	\$13.07	\$23.92

General and Operations Managers	180	2.7	\$12.52	\$32.02	\$85.11
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	171	2.6	\$16.13	\$27.43	\$50.87
Office Clerks, General	166	2.5	\$8.36	\$12.17	\$20.92
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	159	2.4	\$13.30	\$21.50	\$30.09
Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	153	2.3	\$16.80	\$23.61	\$37.07
Power Plant Operators	142	2.2	\$23.08	\$37.19	\$48.82
Total	2,226	33.7	\$13.87	\$23.33	\$39.96

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

*Percent of all Industry jobs.

Table 21: Top 10 Occupations in the Healthcare Industry in the Southcentral MS Works LWDA

Occupation	Employment	Percent *	Hourly Wage		
			Minimum	Median	Maximum
Registered Nurses	4,375	12.1	\$20.53	\$28.72	\$38.84
Nursing Assistants	2,936	8.2	\$8.89	\$11.00	\$14.19
Personal Care Aides	2,741	7.6	\$8.08	\$9.55	\$15.95
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,518	4.2	\$14.87	\$18.66	\$23.51
Medical Assistants	1,450	4	\$9.14	\$13.62	\$20.55
Home Health Aides	1,216	3.4	\$8.03	\$9.61	\$12.08
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1,163	3.2	\$10.22	\$14.31	\$20.71
Receptionists and Information Clerks	1,110	3.1	\$8.86	\$12.51	\$17.57
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	726	2	\$10.68	\$14.71	\$23.34
Dental Assistants	708	2	\$11.97	\$16.61	\$23.70
Total	17,943	49.8	\$11.13	\$14.93	\$21.04

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

*Percent of all Industry jobs.

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

Occupation	Job Openings in 2019 ¹
Production Workers, All Other	235
Helpers--Production Workers	119
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	41
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	34
Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	25
Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	23
Retail Salespersons	23
Managers, All Other	14
Paving, Surfacing, and Tamping Equipment Operators	12
Engineers, All Other	12
Total	538

Notes: State WIOA Plan defined Advanced Manufacturing to certain Agriculture, Automotive, Chemical, and Energy manufacturing occupations; this Regional Plan highlights these industries and occupations in separate categories.

Source: ¹Mississippi Works, 2020.

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

Occupation	Job Openings in 2019 ¹
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	2,116
Butchers and Meat Cutters	178
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	136
Production Workers, All Other	102
Helpers--Production Workers	92
Agricultural Equipment Operators	67
Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	64
Maintenance Workers, Machinery	50
Cashiers	30
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	24
Total	2,859

Source: ¹Mississippi Works, 2020.

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

Occupation	Job Openings in 2019 ¹
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	380
Production Workers, All Other	209
Customer Service Representatives	154
Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	139
Driver/Sales Workers	125
Light Truck Drivers	117
Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	102
Retail Salespersons	100
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	89
Parts Salespersons	86
Total	1,501

Source: ¹Mississippi Works, 2020.

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

Occupation	Job Openings in 2019 ¹
Forest and Conservation Workers	257
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	94
Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	82
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	59
Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	27
Helpers--Production Workers	24
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	19
Customer Service Representatives	16
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	16
Petroleum Pump System Operators, Refinery Operators, and Gaugers	16
Total	610

Source: ¹Mississippi Works, 2020.

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

Occupation	Job Openings in 2019 ¹
Registered Nurses	874
Home Health Aides	608
Nursing Assistants	492
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	379
Medical Assistants	222
Personal Care Aides	196
Medical and Health Services Managers	89
Social and Human Service Assistants	67
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	63
Therapists, All Other	49
Total	3,039

Source: ¹Mississippi Works, 2020.

E.2. The SMW LWDB membership contains at least 51% private sector membership as required by law. These business representatives are used as a catalyst for encouraging employers to not only participate in the public workforce system, but more importantly, to voice their needs and the ways in which the local workforce area programs, activities and processes can better meet those needs. Local economic developers serving on the LWDB are involved in employer engagement activities and also participated in developing the SMW Sector Strategy Plan. The LWDB membership includes representatives of the workforce area's targeted sector industries. SMW staff works closely with the area's economic development entities to engage local businesses to keep them apprised of available resources and to receive feedback regarding business needs and challenges.

E.3. As the SMW 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 SMW 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.

E.4. Increasing public awareness, particularly for the targeted industry sector employers, of services offered at the WIN Job Center requires routine, on-going initiatives at both the state and local level. At the local workforce area level, all partners of the workforce system actively participate in efforts to increase employer and job seeker awareness of services available through the system and how to access them. The SMW staff regularly markets WIOA services through participation in Work Ready Community events, local job fairs, focus groups, community awareness events scheduled by various partners in various counties, and also in making presentations to business group. The LWDB chairperson often participates in these activities, either along with the SMW staff or on his own. Marketing of the WIN Job Centers services is a responsibility of the one-stop operator, who is required to have staff participate in local business events and organizations in their communities. Other SMW WIOA service providers are also given the responsibility to educate businesses and others regarding the available programs and opportunities.

E.5. The SMW LWDA has formed relationships with both public and private educational institutions and other eligible training providers to provide short-term, credential-based training programs and two-year degree programs intended to develop a qualified and quantifiable labor pool. As a result of the development and implementation of the Sector Strategy Plan, SMW revised the local area's ITA, Work Experience/Internship and OJT policies to place emphasis on training in the area's targeted sectors. Additionally, SMW has implemented specific criteria for funding for training in these targeted sectors.

E.6. The workforce system provides information to individuals regarding occupations, including what training is needed for that occupation, job requirements, salaries and wages, opportunities for advancement in the field, working conditions, etc. so that individuals fully understand the occupation and can make informed decisions regarding the selection of a career pathway. Attainment of a credential or certificate is one of the basics of the Smart Start Career Pathway. The SMW LWDA will not expend WIOA funds on training that does not produce a certificate or an industry-recognized credential that is stackable and portable and proposed training is assessed to ensure that it not only produces a credential, but also results in permanent employment for the

individual. Completion of certain modules of the Mississippi Smart Start Pathway Class and attainment of the National Career Readiness Certificate at no less than a bronze level is an application requirement for an ITA and is strongly encouraged for those individuals desiring to enter OJT training. The SMW has engaged with the Skills Foundation to develop and expand their website to include specific, detailed information regarding the targeted industry sectors. Information such as where training is offered, the pre-requisites for entering the training, expected job opportunities and income levels, etc. In addition, videos were developed aimed at secondary students to educate them in the use of the website and the available information.

F. Business Plan

F.1. The SMW LWDA has adopted and continues to implement the goals identified in the State Plan:

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

Goal 2: Strengthen interagency partnerships.

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

Goal 4: Develop cross-program performance metrics.

Goal 5: Continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of the WIOA and other federal initiatives.

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

Goal 7: Draft and communicate a unified vision/message.

The SMW LWDA intended outcomes are 1) to increase the labor force participation rate in the area; 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 SMW LWDA citizens.

F.2. The goals and intended outcomes are to be achieved in accordance with the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. This model provides opportunities for education, not only that of basic and occupation specific skills, but also industry and occupational knowledge so that individuals can be trained in and matched with appropriate careers and pathways. Once individuals are subsequently connected with unsubsidized employment, the above goals can be realized. Smart Start classes are administered at multiple sites within the workforce area, making this training more accessible to all partner participants. Smart Start Pathway Classes are also offered at either a WIN Job Center or a community college campus.

F.3. The SMW LWDA MOU defines the procedures for how local partners will work together to achieve Goals 1, 2, 4 and 7 (Section F.1. above). Creating a pipeline for the workforce (Goal 3 in Section F.1.) is accomplished through the career pathway model. Goal 5 is established by the SWDB regarding quality control procedures for data input and output accuracy. The SMW LWDA continues to support, both financially and otherwise, the state's integrated technology development. Goal 6 is accomplished through the SMW LWDA annual review of local services.

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

Table 27. Timetable for Plan Milestones

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

The SMW LWDB meets 3 times per program year, usually in October, December and May. Additional meetings may be called from time to time, if the need warrants.

F.5. The SMW LWDA assesses, on a quarterly basis, progress toward meeting the milestones established above. Status of milestones is reported to the LWDB at their regularly scheduled meetings. Areas where progress is not being achieved are given priority and are immediately addressed by SMW LWDA staff and appropriate partner agencies.

F.6. Population Totals

The table below shows the estimated population in the SMW LWDA, as per the most recent census, for the 2000-2010 time period. The 2020 census is underway at this time.

Area Name	2000 Estimated Population	2010 Estimated Population	Estimated 2000-2010 Population Percent Change
South Central Mississippi Works	763,780	802,166	5.03%
Mississippi	2,844,658	2,970,316	4.42%
United States	281,421,906	309,346,863	9.92%

The table below shows the labor force, employment and unemployment in the SMW LWDA. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Civilian Labor Force</u>	<u>Number Employed</u>	<u>Number Unemployed</u>	<u>Unemployment Rate</u>	<u>Preliminary Data</u>
October, 2020	359,797	334,758	25,039	7.0%	Yes

The table below shows the number of job openings in the SMW LWDA on December 4, 2020.

Area Name	Job Openings
South Central Mississippi Works	16,600

WIOA funded programs are developed in such a manner as to be consistent with the WIOA Smart Start Pathway model and in an effort to engage a higher percentage of the overall population to enter the labor force. Training programs are offered that afford individuals employment opportunities in in-demand occupations within the local area.

F.7. This matrix identifies the types of resources and services offered by each stakeholder to ensure appropriate alignment of services.

Table 28. Matrix of Resources and Services Provided by Each Stakeholder

	Stakeholder Agency					
	MDES	MCCB & CJs	MDRS	MDHS	MDE	SMW LWDA
Services						
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

	Stakeholder Agency					
	MDES	MCCB & CJs	MDRS	MDHS	MDE	SMW LWDA
Services						
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 SMW LWDA performs fiscal audits of subawardees and contractors on a yearly basis. Programmatic monitoring is conducted on an on-going basis. A copy of the monitoring policy and documents are attached at Appendix L.

G.2. The SMW LWDA service providers are monitored on an on-going basis to ensure that they are meeting or exceeding the goals established in the subaward or contract. In the event that it is determined that any service provider is not meeting the employment needs of the local employers and job seekers, immediate steps will be taken to implement corrective action. The service provider will be notified in writing of the required action to be taken and must then submit a timetable for accomplishing the corrective action.

Equal Opportunity

G.3. All subawards and contracts contain language prohibiting discrimination against any individual on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, color or national origin. Audit and monitoring visits, including EO monitoring, review service providers' actions to ensure that no discrimination

has occurred. Service providers are required to submit a quarterly report on any EO complaint that is received. The Equal Opportunity Policy is attached as Appendix M.

G.4. The SMW LWDA's current Equal Opportunity Complaint Grievance Procedure is attached. 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 EO Officer, Ms. Debra Hartfield, and updated as necessary.

Other Policies

G.6. The SMW LWDA Supportive Services policy is attached as Appendix O.

G.7. The SMW LWDA does not provide Needs-Related Payments and therefore, has no Needs-Related Policy.

G.8. The SMW LWDA does not provide Incumbent Worker Training and therefore, has no Incumbent Worker Training Policy.

G.9. The SMW LWDA Internship Policy (Transitional Jobs) is attached as Appendix P.

G.10. The SMW LWDA uses OJT as a source of training assistance for the area's employers. The SMW LWDA OJT Policy is attached as Appendix Q.

G.11. The SMW LWDA Priority of Service Policy is attached as Appendix R.

G.12. The SMW 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 SMW LWDA ITA Policy is attached as Appendix S.

G.13. The SMW LWDA Conflict of Interest Policy is attached as Appendix T.

G.14. The SMW LWDA Sunshine Provision Policy is attached as Appendix U.

G.15. The SMW LWDA Youth Incentive Policy is attached as Appendix V.

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