



Request for Applications

EquipMS FY2027

Program Purpose:

Successful career preparation begins long before high school graduation. Mississippi must expand high-quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) and workforce preparation programs within K–12 education to meet the rapidly growing talent needs driven by the state’s economic development activity. Major industrial investments across Mississippi require a larger pipeline of skilled workers prepared for high-demand technical careers. Building that pipeline begins in high school.

The EquipMS Grant Program, established in 2023 through House Bill 588 as the Mississippi K–12 Workforce Development Grant Program, provides targeted funding to modernize, replace, or otherwise enhance high school programs aligned with the state’s priority occupations and industry sectors.

This program is designed to expand training capacity in fields critical to Mississippi’s economy, not simply shift or reduce existing program offerings. The intent of EquipMS is to support school districts in adding high-quality workforce pathways that prepare students for careers that are in strong demand by Mississippi employers.

For the 2027 award cycle, priority sector programs include those leading to careers in:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Construction Trades (excluding Carpentry)

These sectors represent critical workforce gaps identified through industry engagement and statewide labor market analysis conducted by AccelerateMS.

A central objective of EquipMS is to strengthen meaningful partnerships between K–12 education and industry. While federal programs such as Perkins require advisory committees, EquipMS seeks deeper engagement with employers who are actively invested in developing the future workforce. Competitive applications will demonstrate partnerships with priority sector companies that contribute to program design, equipment selection, student engagement, work-based learning opportunities, and employment pathways.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to demonstrate collaboration with regional employers, economic development organizations, and workforce partners to ensure programs reflect real industry needs and prepare students for successful entry into Mississippi’s workforce.

EquipMS funding is intended to support high-quality, industry-aligned training environments, including modern equipment, instructional resources, and program enhancements necessary to prepare students for high-demand careers. Applicants should also describe how programs will be sustained beyond the life of the grant through district investment, industry partnership, or other funding sources.

Average awards will range between \$25,000 and \$150,000, with a period of performance not exceeding one calendar year. Priority will be given to new programs and conversions into high-quality CTE pathways aligned with the priority sectors listed above.

Eligibility:

Eligible applicants include Public Mississippi Secondary School Districts that currently operate, or will begin in School Year 2026–2027, a program aligned with a priority occupation identified by AccelerateMS (www.mspathfinder.org).

Other entities that facilitate industry-led training aligned with a priority occupation identified by AccelerateMS may apply in consortium with an eligible Public Mississippi Secondary School District. **Districts that currently have an open EquipMS grant are not eligible to apply during this award cycle.**

Application Timeline:

Event	Date/Deadline
Publication of Request for Applications	March 10, 2026
Deadline for Application	The deadline for application submission is no later than 5:00 p.m. CT on Friday, May 8, 2026. No late applications will be accepted.
Notifications of Awards	May 22, 2026

Please submit applications via email to grants@acceleratems.org with the subject line “EquipMS FY2027.” Direct any questions to Edward Hargrove at ehargrove@acceleratems.org .