



**ACCELERATE MS**

**2023  
MISSISSIPPI  
THE ROAD AHEAD**

# 2023 MISSISSIPPI THE ROAD AHEAD

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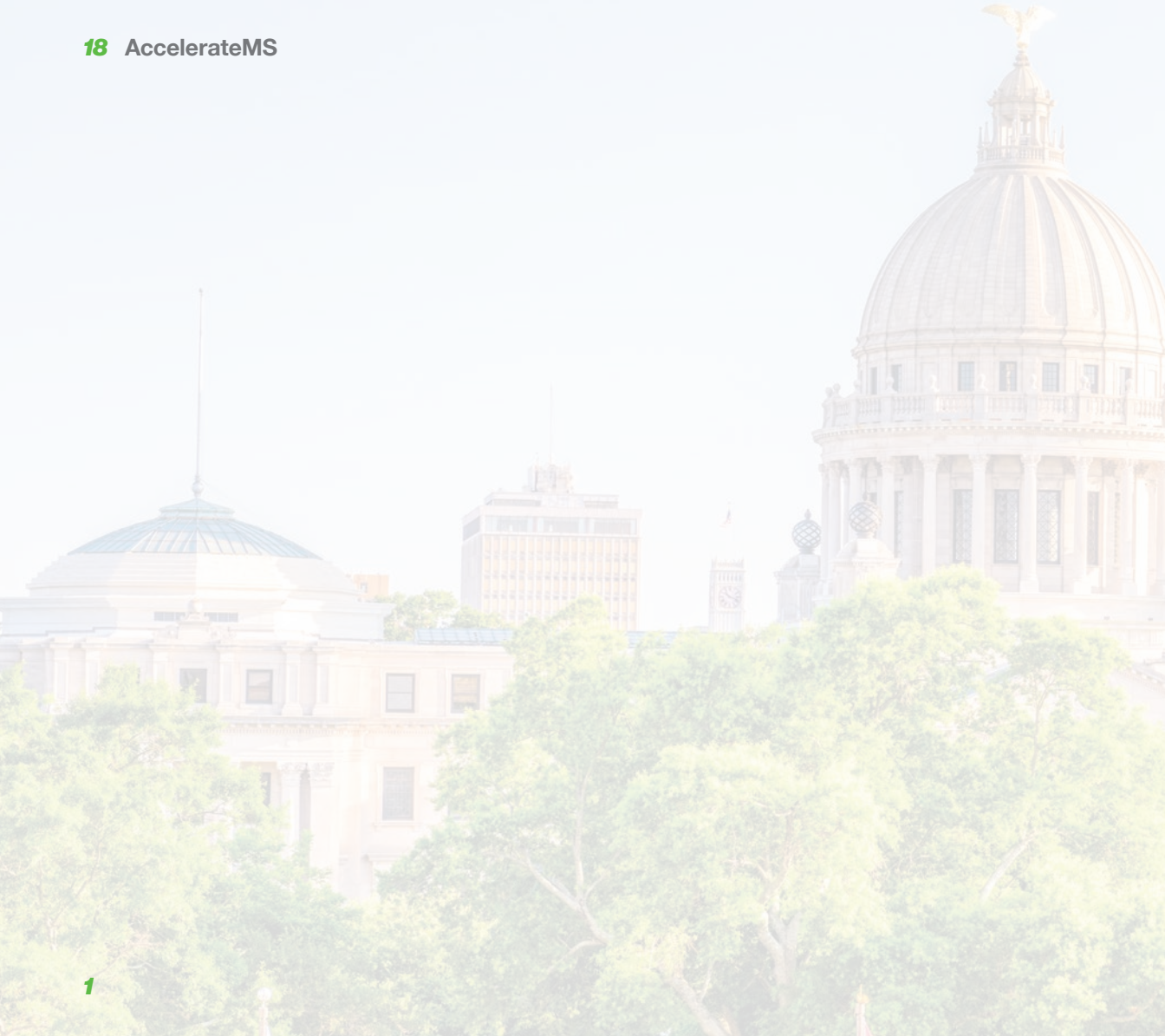
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**I**mprovement can be difficult, but it is always necessary, and AccelerateMS is proud to work with and support partners throughout the state for improved workforce strategy development and deployment. These advancements are designed to meet the workforce needs of today as well as prepare for the needs of tomorrow. In only the second year of its existence our office has taken major steps to see workforce resources utilized in ways that not only provide better access to existing pathways that lead to life-changing jobs

but also enhance career exploration efforts so that Mississippians, for generations to come, are prepared for what the economic future holds.

AccelerateMS, in conjunction with our community college partners, has deployed millions of dollars through the Workforce Enhancement Training(WET) Fund. With improvements made to how these funds are accessed and utilized, new workforce programs have been developed in areas such as advanced manufacturing and fiber splicing for broadband roll-out. Existing capacity in programs such as nursing, diesel technology, CDL, and utility linework have all been increased in an effort to meet the growing and immediate market demand. Funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) has also contributed to the immediate workforce needs by not only creating new training opportunities in sectors directly impacted by COVID, but also by enhancing “wrap-around” services that increase the likelihood of Mississippians jumping back into the workforce and finding financial independence. These services include childcare options for single parents during non-traditional working hours, transportation to training locations or work sites, as well as more non-traditional educational resources in money management and life skill development. AccelerateMS is working tirelessly to help get our people back on their feet and our businesses to find the skilled people they need as quickly as possible.

Meeting the immediate workforce needs of the state is incredibly important. However, if we do not spend time focusing on what lies ahead, the state will always find itself in a position of reaction, losing out on the opportunity to be more proactive in workforce preparation. Along with many partners throughout the state, AccelerateMS has deployed well over one hundred career coaches to serve as mentors to high school students all across Mississippi. They serve as additional resources to students, parents, teachers, and school administrators as they highlight career paths above and beyond what is normally seen through traditional educational paths. With even more coaches being deployed in the coming year, we are moving closer to the day when every school district can have access to at least one career coach in helping students find a future that leads to a meaningful career. AccelerateMS has also taken the initiative to identify ways the state can improve the Career Technical Educational Programs throughout K12 and into our community college programs to ensure alignment and connection to industry opportunities in our communities.

Our office holds to the tenet that we are never done improving. We will always have the opportunity to find ways to make lives better, more fulfilling, and more productive through workforce strategy development and deployment. This document highlights some of the key initiatives that support that tenet as well as some of our teammates who work tirelessly to make our state better.

Sincerely,

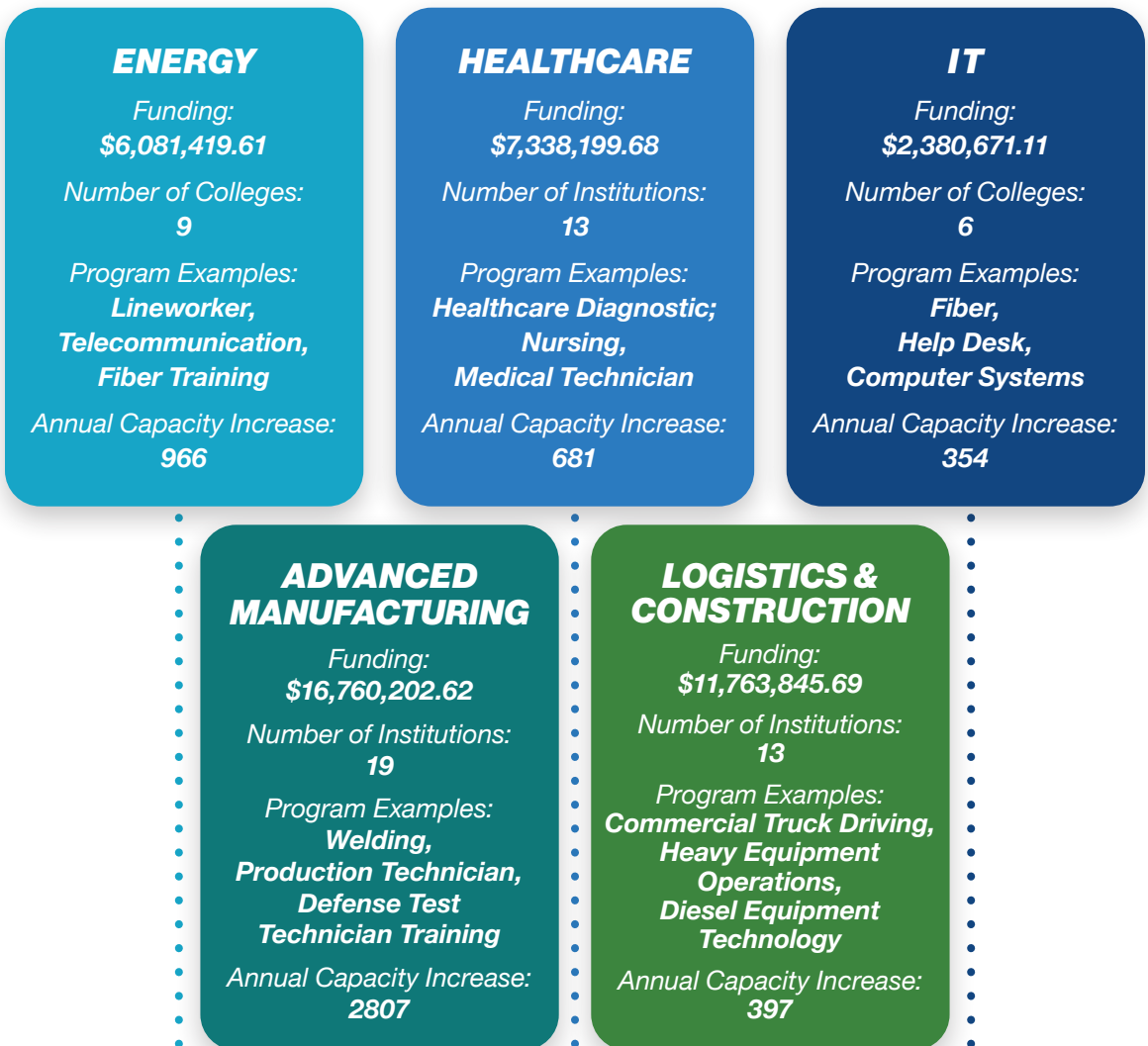
Ryan T. Miller  
Executive Director  
AccelerateMS

# FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

## ARPA AND SPECIAL PROJECTS BY PRIORITY SECTOR

One strategy used by AccelerateMS is referred to as “braiding funds”. This means leveraging funds from multiple sources to support and bolster a single priority sector. Last year, key training deficiencies were addressed through a combination of state and federal dollars to 15 community colleges and a collection of institutes of higher learning and K-12 institutions. More than \$20 million in funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was allocated to 10 Mississippi community colleges, two IHL institutions, two municipalities, and one school district to support direct training. In addition, significant state dollars have been allocated to support targeted training through Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) funds through the community college system.

### 2022-2023 INVESTMENT



## **SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS THROUGH ARPA FUNDS**

AccelerateMS allocated more than \$10 million in funding to eight organizations and agencies to provide wraparound services for specific populations impacted by COVID-19.

Funding for this program comes from the State of Mississippi's allocation of the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (CFDA 21.027), which was created by section 9901 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Special populations include, but are not limited to, military personnel, single parents, currently and formerly incarcerated individuals, underemployed individuals, and individuals with disabilities. The program's goal is to provide the supportive services and training necessary to increase employment opportunities among individuals impacted by COVID-19, many of whom also face barriers to employment.

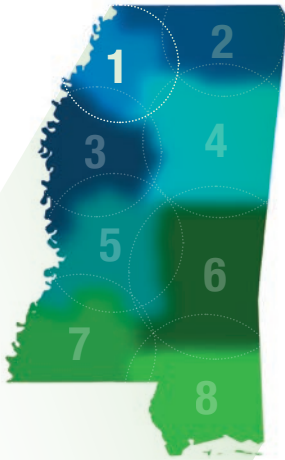
Activities eligible under this program include supportive services expenses, including childcare, transportation, retraining, mentoring and career pathway coaching, financial literacy training, and back-to-work support specific to the populations targeted for support.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH ACCELERATE MS, PLEASE VISIT**

**[IMPACT.ACCELERATEMS.ORG](https://IMPACT.ACCELERATEMS.ORG)**



# THE ACCELERATE MS ECOSYSTEM



## ECOSYSTEM 1

*This ecosystem includes the counties of Coahoma, Panola, Quitman, Tallahatchie, and Tunica.*



**Jennifer Levingston**  
Ecosystem Coordinator  
jlevingston@acceleratems.org

### WIOA FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

**Number of Individual Training Account Participants:**

**83**

**Total Dollar Amount:**  
**\$282,723.74\***

AccelerateMS works in coordination with the State's four local workforce areas to distribute WIOA funds.

WIOA funds support adults, dislocated workers, out-of-school youth, and registered apprenticeship programs.



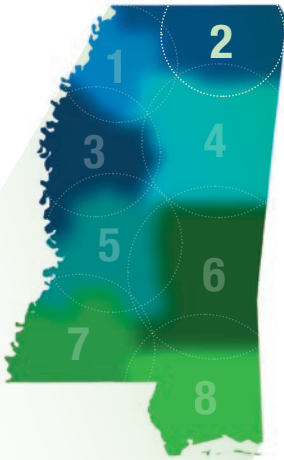
**SOUTH DELTA**  
Planning & Development District

### Ecosystem Feature: Commercial Truck Driving at Coahoma

With funding through AccelerateMS, Coahoma Community College expanded its Commercial Truck Driving program by offering night and weekend courses. The program prepares people to drive trucks and other commercial vehicles and includes instruction on operating diesel-powered vehicles, loading cargo, and maintaining necessary documentation. Funding supported the purchase of additional vehicles and a simulator. Prior to the program expansion, the program had a waiting list of more than 80 applicants.



\*Overall state ITA funding in Fiscal Year 2022 by Ecosystem



## ECOSYSTEM 2

*This ecosystem includes the counties of Alcorn, Benton, DeSoto, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Marshall, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, and Union.*



**Forrest Bryan**  
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**Suzy Bowman**  
Ecosystem Coordinator  
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### WIOA FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

*Number of Individual Training Account Participants:*

**218**

*Total Dollar Amount:*  
**\$483,682.20\***

AccelerateMS works in coordination with the State’s four local workforce areas to distribute WIOA funds.

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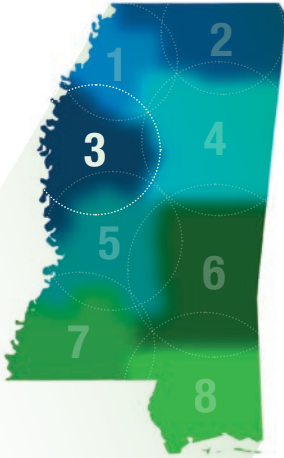


### **Ecosystem Feature: Production Technician Program at Northeast**

Northeast Mississippi Community College is offering area residents a free 52-hour Production Technician course. The course is designed to prepare workers for an entry-level job in advanced manufacturing. The program was designed with input from local businesses and includes instruction on safety and high-performance manufacturing principles. Students who complete the program receive a Production Technician Certificate from Northeast Mississippi Community College.

\*Overall state ITA funding in Fiscal Year 2022 by Ecosystem

# THE ACCELERATE MS ECOSYSTEM



## ECOSYSTEM 3

*This ecosystem includes the counties of Bolivar, Carroll, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Sharkey, Sunflower, and Washington.*



**Kimberley Gatewood**  
Ecosystem Coordinator  
kgatewood@acceleratems.org

### WIOA FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

*Number of Individual Training Account Participants:*

**335**

*Total Dollar Amount:*

**\$1,015,791.15\***

AccelerateMS works in coordination with the State's four local workforce areas to distribute WIOA funds.

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**SOUTH DELTA**  
Planning & Development District

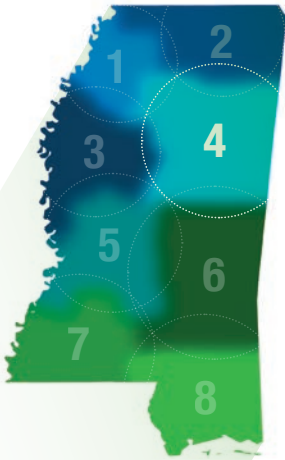
### Ecosystem Feature: Utility Lineworker at Mississippi Delta

Mississippi Delta Community College is offering a 16-week Electrical Utility Lineman Training program. The program covers connections, safety, utility pole training and installation, and vehicle operation. Tuition and fees for eligible in-state applicants are provided through AccelerateMS and the Mississippi Delta Workforce Area.



\*Overall state ITA funding in Fiscal Year 2022 by Ecosystem





## ECOSYSTEM 4

*This ecosystem includes the counties of Attala, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Grenada, Lowndes, Monroe, Montgomery, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Webster, Winston, and Yalobusha.*



**Kelly Martin**  
Ecosystem Coordinator  
kmartin@acceleratems.org

### WIOA FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

*Number of Individual Training Account Participants:*

**196**

*Total Dollar Amount:*  
**\$364,948.36\***

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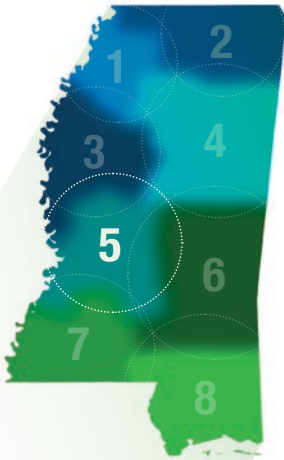
\*Overall state ITA funding in Fiscal Year 2022 by Ecosystem



### **Ecosystem Feature: FORGE in the Golden Triangle**

Serving Mississippi's Golden Triangle, FORGE (Family Organizations Recruiting Great Employees) is a group of like-minded, locally-owned businesses that partner with educators to recruit talented, skilled employees. Instead of competing for talent, FORGE members work together to develop and implement a long-term, regional strategy. In 2022, FORGE hosted a career education night for parents and a three-day Career Expo for 2,000 students from 18 different schools. In conjunction with the Career Expo, FORGE hosted an in-person counselor and career coach workshop.

# THE ACCELERATE MS ECOSYSTEM



## ECOSYSTEM 5

*This ecosystem includes the counties of Claiborne, Hinds, Madison, Rankin, Simpson, Warren, and Yazoo.*

Ecosystem Coordinator  
to be announced soon.

### WIOA FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

*Number of Individual Training  
Account Participants:*

**171**

*Total Dollar Amount:*  
**\$422,078.63\***

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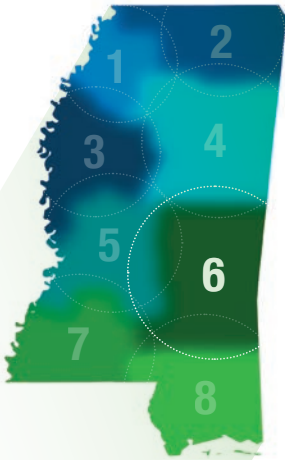


### Ecosystem Feature: Refill Jackson Initiative

Located in West Jackson, the Refill Jackson Initiative (RJI) equips young adults, ages 18-24, with the soft and technical skills needed to improve their quality of life. Through tailored support, personal and professional education programs, and on-the-job training, program participants explore careers, practice interview skills and effective communication, learn about conflict resolution, and create budgets. Students can earn a Smart Start credential and National Career Readiness certification by graduation. In 2022, RJI served 36 people—95% of whom went immediately on to education or employment.



\*Overall state ITA funding in Fiscal Year 2022 by Ecosystem



## ECOSYSTEM 6

*This ecosystem includes the counties of Clarke, Covington, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Scott, Smith, and Wayne.*



**LeAnne Nixon**  
Ecosystem Coordinator  
lnixon@acceleratems.org

### WIOA FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

*Number of Individual Training Account Participants:*

**196**

*Total Dollar Amount:*

**\$539,354.31\***

AccelerateMS works in coordination with the State's four local workforce areas to distribute WIOA funds.

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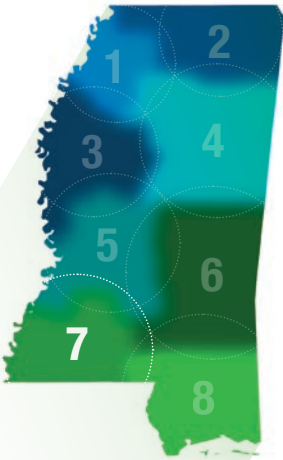


### **Ecosystem Feature: Raytheon Apprenticeships**

East Central Community College and Raytheon Intelligence and Space established a paid, three-year manufacturing program for electric technicians. The program is registered through the US Department of Labor and will allow students registered at ECCC to earn a credential while also gaining experience and mentorship. Raytheon expects 100 individuals to be enrolled in the program within the first 5 years.

\*Overall state ITA funding in Fiscal Year 2022 by Ecosystem

# THE ACCELERATE MS ECOSYSTEM



## ECOSYSTEM 7

*This ecosystem includes the counties of Adams, Amite, Copiah, Franklin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lincoln, Pike, Walthall, and Wilkinson.*



**Krystle Culver**  
Ecosystem Coordinator  
kculver@acceleratems.org

### WIOA FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

*Number of Individual Training Account Participants:*

**104**

*Total Dollar Amount:*

**\$298,567.55\***

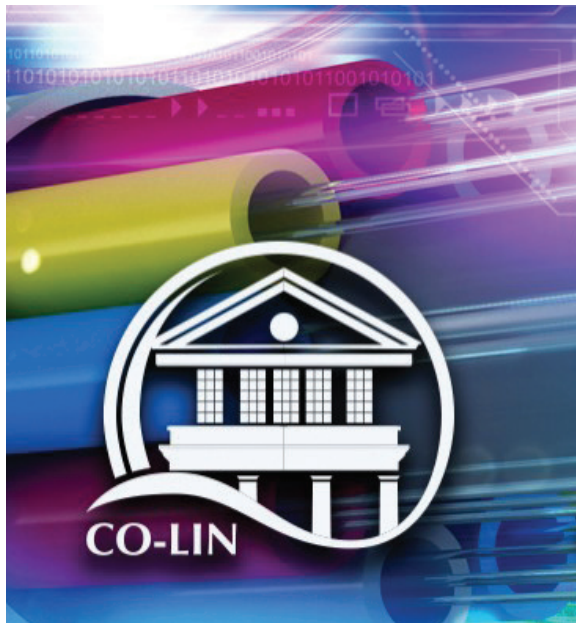
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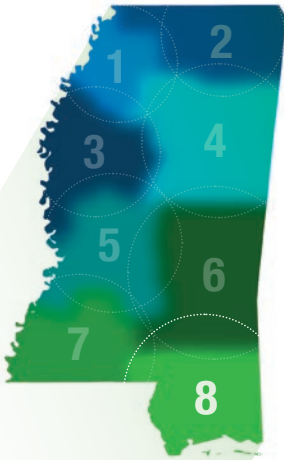


### Ecosystem Feature: Fiber at Copiah Lincoln

Copiah-Lincoln Community College is responding to the dramatic expansion of broadband across the state by offering state-of-the-art training in fiber splicing. This program, prepares individuals in a short term program to enter directly into the telecommunications and internet service provider industry to work making enhancing connectivity in Mississippi and getting more people access to high speed internet.



\*Overall state ITA funding in Fiscal Year 2022 by Ecosystem



## ECOSYSTEM 8

*This ecosystem includes the counties of Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, and Stone.*



**Ed Hargrove**  
Ecosystem Coordinator  
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**Tracy Yanez**  
Ecosystem Coordinator  
tyanez@acceleratems.org

### WIOA FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

*Number of Individual Training Account Participants:*

**302**

*Total Dollar Amount:*

**\$913,333.72\***

AccelerateMS works in coordination with the State's four local workforce areas to distribute WIOA funds.

WIOA funds support adults, dislocated workers, out-of-school youth, and registered apprenticeship programs.



### **Ecosystem Feature: Roger Wicker Center at the University of Southern Mississippi**

The University of Southern Mississippi's Roger F. Wicker Center for Ocean Enterprise brings together scientists, researchers, government, and industry for the purpose of supporting Mississippi's blue economy and driving innovation in the areas of uncrewed maritime systems, ocean-friendly plastics, precision aquaculture, smart ports, coastal data, and sea-space systems. The center includes laboratories, conference and training space, and deep and shallow water access.

\*Overall state ITA funding in Fiscal Year 2022 by Ecosystem

# WORKFORCE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## MS SHIPS

The Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation, through the Defense Manufacturing Community Support program, awarded \$4.99 million to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security for the AccelerateMS-led Mississippi Shipbuilding Industry Preparedness for National Security (MSSHIPS) Consortium to undertake a \$6,694,579 project. The goal of the project is to bolster national security by modernizing Mississippi's shipbuilding industry through enhancing sector capacity, capability, competitiveness, and resiliency. The project will create a skilled and diverse talent pipeline for the region's shipbuilding industry, accelerate adoption of Industry 4.0 manufacturing practices in the shipbuilding supply chain, and develop advanced solutions designed to enhance worker safety.

The region centers on Jackson County, which contains leading defense contractors working on the US Navy Fleet on shipbuilding (Bollinger MS Shipbuilding, Ingalls Shipbuilding, Raytheon Technologies & Space), as well as a cluster of unique suppliers directly associated in the areas of shipbuilding and repairing, boat building, engine parts manufacturing, aircraft manufacturing, auxiliary equipment manufacturing, and guided missile & space vehicle manufacturing.

This work seeks to enhance efforts to create a skilled and diverse talent pipeline for shipbuilding and defense manufacturing by focusing on three goals aligned with Department of Defense priorities: (1) Workforce Development: Recruit, train, place, and upskill a diverse and agile labor pool that provides the range of talent needed by the shipbuilding industry; (2) Increasing Competitiveness: Provide awareness-building, training, and customized support for small- and medium-sized companies in the shipbuilding supply chain to facilitate the transition to i4.0 practices; and (3) Industrial Modernization: Develop, test, and refine an advanced wearable device to detect heat fatigue in industrial workers. A diverse consortium of members including defense manufacturers and suppliers, academic institutions, government agencies, economic development organizations, and nonprofits is working together to tackle the associated initiatives.

***// This investment will strengthen the State's already strong defense sector and ensure that Mississippi remains a leader for years to come. //***

Roger Wicker  
U.S. Senator



## CURRENT CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

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**Industry:** Ingalls Shipbuilding, VT Halter Marine, Rolls Royce, Raytheon Intelligence and Space

**Academia:** East Mississippi Community College, Jones Junior College, Meridian Community College, Mississippi Community College Board, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Mississippi State University Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems (CAVS) and CAVS Extension, Pearl River Community College, Southwest Mississippi Community College, and the University of Southern Mississippi's - Mississippi Defense Initiative. Additionally, local K-12 districts will partner with community colleges to engage students directly into shipbuilding pathways.

**Government and Other:** AccelerateMS, Jackson County Economic Development Foundation, Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Mississippi Governor's Office of Military Affairs, the Mississippi Manufacturers Association-Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Mississippi Partnership Local Workforce Development Area, and NextFlex.

## LABOR MARKET DEMAND

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### Mississippi Statewide:

**Manufacturing:** \$9.8 Billion (total annual earnings) / 144,383 (number of jobs)

**Boat and Shipbuilding:** \$1.1 Billion (total annual earnings) / 12,493 (number of jobs)

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### Implementation Strategy and Impact:

**Workforce Development:** Create a skilled and diverse talent pipeline for the region's shipbuilding industry (10% increase in available workforce)

**Increasing Competitiveness:** Accelerate adoption of Industry 4.0 (i4.0) manufacturing practices in the shipbuilding supply chain (15% increase in estimated productivity)

**Industrial Modernization:** Develop advanced solutions designed to enhance worker safety (25% estimated reduction in injury)



***// I am proud that Mississippi is a leader in the area of defense and in supporting the protection of our country's freedoms. //***

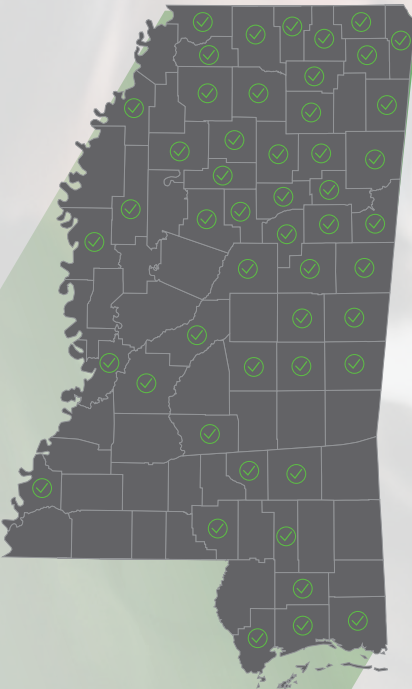
Cindy Hyde-Smith  
U.S. Senator

# WORKFORCE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## CAREER COACHES

The program, which was created through House Bill 1388 of the 2022 Legislative Session, aims to connect and prepare high school students with Mississippi's most in-demand careers. The program was funded at \$8 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in 2022 and most recently at \$12 million of state general funds in 2023. As a result of this and other projects, Mississippi's career coach program is increasing by almost 600% from 20 coaches to over 170 coaches.

"We believe that access to one-on-one career coaching will open the eyes of Mississippi high school students to the kinds of high-tech, high-skill jobs available right here at home," said AccelerateMS Executive Director Ryan Miller. "We've seen this model create a positive impact in communities across the state and believe that - with support from elected officials and members of business and industry - this program will continue to make that impact and grow it exponentially."



Those organizations include:

- ***Central Mississippi Planning and Development District***
- ***South Delta Planning and Development District***
- ***Three Rivers Planning and Development District***
- ***North Central Planning and Development District***
- ***South Mississippi Planning and Development District***
- ***Simpson County Development Foundation***
- ***Economic Development Authority of Jones County***

This map shows counties with a career coach as of fiscal year 2023.





***“I am a retired teacher who returned to Alcorn Central High School, my home school, to become a career coach. I cannot say enough about the positive response I have seen from my school and community. Almost daily I see the excitement building for the opportunities that are available for our students. I have seen students who have little interest in school really flourish when they realize there are numerous options that can lead them to a well-paying career.***

***I love what I do so much that I almost feel guilty getting paid to do it. Being able to help students identify their passions and pursue them has been a joy. I am excited to see our community embrace and share the career coach vision for providing educational experiences outside of the classroom. Together we are working to achieve our 55% that Ascent to 55 is striving for. I am excited to see what is in store for Mississippi.”***

Rebecca Lewis  
Career Coach – Alcorn Central High School



***“Being a career coach has been an answered prayer for me. Everyday is different; every student’s situation is unique, but as I drive home every day, the overwhelming feeling of gratitude for being able to do this as my job is the same. Being in Desoto County enables various opportunities in industry as well. There are numerous industries that are willing to take our students and train them in a valuable skill. I had the honor of partnering with Future Electronics to secure an internship for a senior interested in information technology. The best part of my job is getting to experience the most amazing kids, their stories, and play a small part in encouraging kids to do exactly what God made them to do. I am beyond grateful for AccelerateMS and Three Rivers PDD for the opportunity to be the career coach at Desoto Central High School.”***

Avery Grace Basil  
Career Coach – Desoto Central High School

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## **STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**

**Patrick Sullivan (Chair)**

Mississippi Energy Institute

**Bob Anderson**

Mississippi Department of Human Services

**Trey Baxter**

Madison County Board of Supervisors

**Jacqueline Beasley**

MINACT, Inc.

**Donnie Bell**

Mississippi House of Representatives

**Anne Hall Brashier**

Office of the Governor

**Brad Bounds**

Working Solutions LLC

**Sondia Christian**

Huntington Ingalls Industries

**Pablo Diaz**

Vicksburg Warren Economic  
Development Partnership

**Jim Flanagan**

DeSoto County Economic  
Development Council

**Monica Harrigill**

The Sunray Companies, LLC

**Laura Hipp**

Mississippi Development Authority

**Chris Howard**

Mississippi Department of  
Rehabilitation Services

**Frank Howell**

Delta Council

**Darius Johnson**

International Longshoremen's Association

**J.R. Jones**

Sanjo Security

**Mike Kent**

Mississippi Department of Education

**Kristy Luse**

CREATE Foundation

**Carolyn McAdams**

Mayor of Greenwood

**John McKay**

Mississippi Manufacturers Association

**Fontaine McNair**

PriorityOne Bank

**Bobby Morgan**

Atmos Energy

**Nic Parish**

Burns Dirt Construction

**David Parker**

Mississippi Senate

**Al Rankins**

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning

**Kell Smith**

Mississippi Community College Board

**Robin Stewart**

Mississippi Department of  
Employment Security

**John Brent Swanson**

Empire Trucking

**Dr. Valmadge Towner**

Coahoma Community College

**Scott Waller**

Mississippi Economic Council

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