



Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Guidelines

Effective July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
OVERVIEW	4
LEGISLATED PURPOSE AND USE OF WET FUNDS.....	4
ECOSYSTEMS.....	5
ALLOWABLE USE OF WET FUNDS	6
Eligible Populations	6
Braiding Funds.....	6
Eligible Industry Sectors.....	7
WET FUND ALLOCATIONS	7
Functional Analysis of Strategic Training Plan (FAST).....	7
Program Income.....	8
ACCOUNTABILITY & PERFORMANCE MEASURES.....	8
Accountability.....	9
Workforce Education Sub-Grant System.....	10
Programmatic Performance	10
Findings and Corrective Action	10
COLLEGE-PROVIDED TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT	12
Open-To-The-Public	12
Incarcerated Individual Training.....	13
Customized (Contract) Training	14
College Delivered Online Training.....	14
I. Synchronous Online Training	14
II. Non-synchronous Online Training.....	15
Intensive Delivery:.....	15
Digital Curriculum:	15
Advanced Technology (Special Projects)	16
Project Types	18
Zero-Dollar Projects.....	20
INDUSTRY-PROVIDED TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM.....	21
WORKFORCE REGULAR.....	21
Eligible Industry Sectors.....	21
PROJECT SUBMISSION PROCESS	24
Allocated WET Funds.....	24
Project Submission Requirements	24
PROJECT REIMBURSEMENT.....	25
Cost Categories	25
OTHER GUIDANCE	26
Instructor Hiring Practices, Salaries, and Benefits.....	26
Contractual Services	27
Compliance with Mississippi Employment Protection Act (MEPA).....	27
Appendix A.....	28

Appendix B	29
Appendix C	30
Basic Skills.....	30
Incarcerated Individual Training.....	31
National Career Readiness Certificate Assessments	31
Professional Development	31
Appendix D.....	36
Appendix E	38

OVERVIEW

Mississippi's Office of Workforce Development provides oversight and leadership for workforce initiatives across the state. The office, known as AccelerateMS, oversees the use of Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) dollars to support training¹ activities for Mississippians as stipulated within this document. The intended use of WET funds, as stated [in Miss. Code Ann. § 71-5-353](#), is to reimburse training providers the cost of certain related expenses incurred during the provision of training and upskilling programs for Mississippians that are designed to enhance employee productivity². The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to ensure compliance with laws and regulations and acceptable use of WET funds.

LEGISLATED PURPOSE AND USE OF WET FUNDS

Except as otherwise provided for in this subparagraph (i), all monies deposited into the Mississippi Workforce Enhancement Training Fund Treasury Account shall be directed by the Mississippi Office of Workforce Development, in collaboration with the Mississippi Community College Board, in accordance with the Workforce Training Act of 1994 ([Miss. Code Ann. § 37-153-1](#) et seq.) and under policies approved by the Mississippi Office of Workforce Development for the following purposes: to provide training in collaboration with the Mississippi Community College Board and individual community and junior colleges to employers and employees in order to enhance employee productivity. Such training may be subject to a minimal administrative fee of not more than 2% to be paid from the Mississippi Workforce Enhancement Training Fund as established by the Office of Workforce Development.

The initial priority of these funds shall be for the benefit of existing businesses located within the state. Employers may request training for existing employees and/or newly hired employees from the Mississippi Office of Workforce Development. The office, in consultation with the Mississippi Community College Board, will be responsible for approving the training.

A portion of the funds collected for the Mississippi Workforce Enhancement Training Fund shall be used for the development of performance measures to measure the effectiveness of the use of the Mississippi Workforce Enhancement Training Fund dollars. These performance measures shall be uniform for all training projects and shall be reported to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and members of the Legislature³.

Nothing in this section or elsewhere in law shall be interpreted as giving the Office of Workforce Development or State Workforce Investment Board authority to direct the Mississippi

¹ 'Training' includes occupational skills training, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, training programs operated by the private sector, skills upgrading and retraining, job readiness training in combination with skills training, customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ or advance employment for successful completers (sec. 134(3) of WIOA).

² 'Enhanced Employee Productivity' may be evaluated in terms of 1) a measurable increase in output (quantity/quality/value) of an employee that is realized by the company or entity; and/or 2) a measurable increase to the market value of the employee's skillset realized by the employee directly.

³ Performance measures reported include number of employees and employers trained, type and quantity of training course(s), and other information that can be determined from the project database available in WESS.

Community College Board or individual community or junior colleges on how to expend other funds, aside from funds appropriated to the Mississippi Workforce Enhancement Training Fund and Mississippi Works Fund, appropriated or received for workforce training. The Mississippi Office of Workforce Development, Mississippi Community College Board, individual community or junior colleges, State Workforce Investment Board and other agencies implementing or coordinating state-funded workforce development programs under state law shall cooperate with each other to promote effective workforce training in Mississippi, under the direction of the office. Any subsequent changes to these performance measures shall also be reported to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and members of the Legislature. A performance report for each training project and community college, based upon these measures, shall be submitted annually to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and members of the Legislature.

ECOSYSTEMS

AccelerateMS organizes a statewide structure through an ecosystem approach designed to improve strategies through localized communication and data research. A key priority is to build upon best practices, improve communication and provide clarity and consistency through enhanced collaboration using an ecosystem model that transcends traditional geographic and organizational boundaries.

Each ecosystem hosts a ‘table’ of local representatives tasked with identifying and addressing regional workforce needs. Regular meetings facilitated by the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) Director and AccelerateMS allow ecosystem stakeholders to share best practices, voice concerns, provide feedback, and participate in the development of workforce strategies appropriately focused upon the needs of that ecosystem. Each ecosystem routinely reviews labor market data, supply chain needs, available educational resources, and regional/community assets to meet needs more accurately in real time.

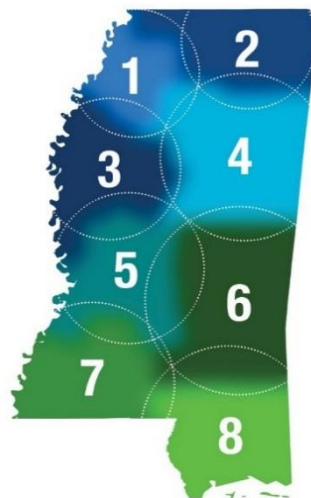


Figure 1: AccelerateMS Ecosystem Map

ALLOWABLE USE OF WET FUNDS

WET funds are intended to be used to fund eligible training activities resulting in enhanced employee productivity for core and horizon industry sector employers. WET funds are available for college-led, industry-led, or special project programs that can be evaluated as enhancing employee productivity.

Enhanced employee productivity must be evaluated in terms of:

1. A measurable increase in output (quantity/quality/value) of an employee that is realized by the company or entity; and/or
2. A measurable increase to the market value of the employee's skillset realized by the employee directly.

This evaluation is integral for determining whether a proposed training is eligible for WET funding. The assessment of its merit must be thoroughly documented including the anticipated outcomes and how those outcomes will be objectively measured.

Eligible Populations

WET funds are intended to fund training activities designed to enhance employee productivity and should target populations in need of upskilling, as well as individuals determined to be underemployed, unemployed and seeking training, or those incarcerated and expected to be released within the next 24 months. Programs may have participants who are enrolled in K-12 classes and participants must be in their final semester of high school. Additionally, K-12 participants cannot participate in programs running concurrent with a participant's K-12 coursework toward degree completion. Participants in High School Equivalency programs are eligible. See Accountability section for documentation requirements.

Braiding Funds

WET funds should be braided⁴ with funds from private industry, participant fees, WIOA, and other appropriate sources to ensure sustainability of all WET-funded activities. Braiding funds allows multiple funding streams to be mixed to support the total costs of the common goal of increasing opportunity for Mississippians to secure quality jobs. Each individual funding stream must maintain its program identity and be tracked separately following the rules and guidelines associated with each fund. This requires that shared costs of services be allocated to specific funding streams to ensure funding is not duplicated and that the appropriate amount of administrative costs are charged to each fund.

To ensure funds are braided appropriately, training providers must document which funds are

⁴ Braided funds refers to "lacing together funds from multiple sources to support a common goal or idea such that each individual funding source maintains its specific program identity" (Butler, Higashi, & Cabello, 2020). In braiding, the money from a program is used collaboratively with funds from other programs, but the funds are still tracked throughout the entire process from planning to final evaluation. Although several funding streams are laced together, program managers must monitor money from specific sources when they are used in a collaborative activity (Butler, Higashi, & Cabello, 2020).

braided, and the process by which funds are identified and utilized. Training providers must ensure accurate internal controls are in place to ensure funds are used appropriately and processes must be documented for both internal provider use.

Eligible Industry Sectors

Funding priority must be given to projects with identified employer partners who have provided matching funds, equipment, or in-kind donations. Further, priority shall be given to above-average-wage opportunities for the ecosystem, as identified by AccelerateMS or utilizing Local labor market data from MDES, Lightcast, JobsEQ, or documented employer requests. WET funds may only be utilized to support the following industry sectors:

Core

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agribusiness
- Construction, Distribution, and Logistics
- Forestry, Energy, and Chemicals
- Health Care
- Information Technology

Horizon

- Blue Economy
- Renewable Energy
- National Corporate Headquarters⁵
- Mobility Technology Innovation

WET FUND ALLOCATIONS

Functional Analysis of Strategic Training Plan (FAST)

To effectively utilize WET funds and ensure funds are available to support priority projects, colleges must estimate the amount of funding needed annually by project type in the Functional Analysis of Strategic Training Plan (FAST) for college and industry-led training. Templates for associated plans are located in Appendix A (AccelerateMS will send the template to ease completion). Quarterly reports are required for all associated funds to ensure adequate funding and associated documentation.

College Led Training- College-led training consists of open-enrollment, incarcerated individual, contract/customized, and college-delivered online training. Each type of training must meet the needs of an eligible industry and be led by the college. Colleges must estimate the training funds needed annually through the FAST plan to allow resources to be adequately utilized. College-led training must be non-credit bearing training and serve eligible participants.

⁵ A national headquarters is that office or location of a multistate business, where managerial, professional, technical, and administrative personnel are domiciled and employed. It is the location where the centralized functions such as financial, legal, technical and personnel functions are performed. The function and purpose of the national headquarters is to plan, direct and control all aspects of the organization's operations, and it has final authority over all regional offices, operating facilities, or any other offices of the business enterprise. The national headquarters is subordinate only to the ownership of the organization or its representatives.

Industry-Led Training (Workforce Regular) – Colleges, in partnership with eligible industry, must estimate funds needed annually to support eligible industry-led training by company and subject matter. This estimate must be based on the company’s previous year’s actual reimbursement(s) and the company’s provided estimate for the associated fiscal year including new training activities.

This plan allows AccelerateMS the opportunity to review and better understand each college and ecosystem’s needs while ensuring funds are utilized in the most efficient manner through estimation of activities. The purpose of this is not to predict the future, but instead to build a longer-term context for short-term decision making. Negative population trends, lack of interest in career and technical opportunities, and need for enhanced connection between K-12, community colleges, business and industry, and universities spurs the need for enhanced review of both current opportunities and future needs.

Plans must be submitted to and approved by AccelerateMS prior to the release of the next year’s funding allocation. AccelerateMS will begin reviewing FAST plans beginning on May 1 of the associated fiscal year. No allocations will be issued without an approved FAST plan.

Program Income

Program income⁶ is defined as the gross income earned by institutions that is directly generated or earned by a WET-funded activity. Program income is allowed and encouraged but must be identified, documented, and resulting revenue properly recorded and accounted for. Examples of program income include:

- Class registration fees charged to participants regardless of whether paid by cash, WIOA, third party, etc.
- Income generated through the sale of any WET-funded items, or any items produced during WET-funded courses.
- Income generated from employers and/or third parties during the course of contracted training activities.

Income generated or earned by a WET-funded activity must be reported on the final quarterly report. Program income must be identified and the FAST plan for the following fiscal year must show how this income will be re-invested in eligible programs within the approved FAST plan.

ACCOUNTABILITY & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Accountability for use of WET Funds is measured in terms of (a) fiscal accountability and (b) programmatic performance. Colleges must report quarterly on the fiscal and programmatic performance of WET-funded projects using the template found in the MS FAST plan document. Quarterly reports must include, at a minimum, updates related to number of participants served, number of classes held, number of companies served, and total dollars expended. Each measure must be reported in terms of percentage of expected served/expended to date. Quarterly reports

⁶ Office of Management and Budget Uniform Administrative Requirements, Section 2 CFR 200.307

must be submitted to AccelerateMS on the 15th of the month following quarter end.

AccelerateMS employs risk-based auditing practices to ensure stated goals and objectives have been measured and recorded accurately, and expenses have been documented and meet the purpose outlined within these guidelines.

Accountability

Training providers are responsible for maintaining program documentation that fully supports the underlying transaction. Documentation must be sufficient to accurately reflect a value, cost, or performance criteria relative to the use of funds. Supporting documentation must thoroughly substantiate and memorialize the nature, timing, extent, and use of program funding. Typical program documentation may include , but is not limited to the following:

- Financial records
- Memos
- Purchase orders
- Invoices
- Cancelled checks
- Class attendance records
- Trainee demographic records
- Reimbursement requests
- Third party contracts
- Receipts
- Time and Effort sheet (Special Projects only)
- Payroll source documents (paystubs, payroll registers, payroll summary, instructor affidavit, etc.)
- Cost allocation calculations (overhead or indirect costs allocated to the program)
- Documentation of proper procurement process for applicable item(s)
- Fixed asset ledger/inventory tracking system
- K-12 participant eligibility documentation acceptable: high school transcript, schedule/email from counselor and/or career coach.
- Parole participant eligibility documentation: Parole acceptable dates shall be checked to give priority to offenders with (12) twelve months or less to serve before parole eligibility or release date. Documentation must be provided either by email from official representative or on letterhead in file.

Training providers are expected to be responsible for how funds are directed, reported, and the documentation provided. Expenses must be necessary, reasonable, allocable, and allowable under the approved FAST plan.

Workforce Education Sub-Grant System

All projects will be submitted via the Workforce Education Sub-Grant System (WESS). WESS is used to track and maintain records for Workforce Enhancement Training Funds. This system allows for the collection of student level data as well as financial data. Statutory requirements apply to all types/categories of training including pass-through training submitted by a business and industry for reimbursement.

Each college is responsible for managing the addition or deletion of approved users in WESS. Further, each college must submit the names of users with project and reimbursement submittal authority (WESS Administrators) by July 1 annually to the Program Manager at AccelerateMS. WESS Administrator names must be submitted on community college letterhead with college's President serving as approver.

Programmatic Performance

Performance information, such as number of employees and employers trained, type and quantity of training course(s), and other information that can be determined from the project database will be available in WESS.

Colleges who have not spent 75% of their allocated funds by March 31 (end of Q3) each year will be required to submit a plan to AccelerateMS by April 15 to either expend the funds or release funds not anticipated to be spent. Failure to provide a reasonable plan to expend funds may result in reallocation of funds and/or a performance improvement plan.

Failure to maintain compliance with the common dataset for a training project may affect funding for future workforce projects.

Findings and Corrective Action

Failure to comply with WET Fund guidelines shall result in corrective action, including the reversal of erroneous allocations, and may result in suspension, termination, or modification of WET Fund allocations for the related entity.

Material⁷ findings in fiscal and programmatic performance may occur, and upon finding errors in reimbursement requests or payments, AccelerateMS will determine the correct course of action, included but not limited to reversal of reimbursement, modification of reimbursement, or cancellation of reimbursement. Additionally, AccelerateMS will identify opportunities for the community college's management to improve and implement a corrective action plan. Each plan will include the identification of the underlying root cause(s); development of an effective remediation plan; accountability for establishment and successful implementation of the

⁷Material findings would be any findings significant enough to alter reimbursement amounts or alter the eligibility of an expenditure or increase the risk of a reimbursement. Materiality judgements are made in light of surrounding circumstances and necessarily involve both quantitative and qualitative considerations.

corrective action plan; and validation of the successful implementation of the corrective action plan. If, upon review, AccelerateMS determines the corrective action plan to be successful, no further follow-up is required. However, if the plan is not deemed successful, AccelerateMS will provide technical assistance, professional development, or other support determined by the specific area(s) of deficiency.

COLLEGE-PROVIDED TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT

Open-To-The-Public

Training for the purpose of enhancing employability skills and to upgrade skills leading to Industry-Recognized Credentials⁸. When possible, basic skills training should be incorporated seamlessly within open-enrollment classes to ensure quality and relevance of training. All personnel expenses must be reasonable and in line with similar work in the institution's ecosystem.

Open-Enrollment Training: Projects must serve opportunities at multiple eligible employers in the identified ecosystem unless the ecosystem only boasts a single company in the subsector. Projects must be included in the college's FAST plan request and must have documented demands (local labor market data from MDES, Lightcast, JobsEQ, or documented employer requests) within the ecosystem.

- a. Training projects in this category must be non-degree and shall result in industry-recognized credential, as identified by local employers (ex: welding certificate from the institution, NCCER Level 1, etc.).
- b. Eligible costs (must be approved in FAST plan):
 - i. Community College instructor wages and benefits for training and preparation for costs actually incurred.
 1. Eligible costs include Social Security, Medicare, Retirement, and Worker's Compensation.
 2. Preparation time is limited to 10% and must include time and effort documentation.
 3. No health or life insurance benefits will be reimbursed.
 - ii. Educational Supplies such as consumables and non-consumables must be related to direct training expenses (must be held separate from non-WET-funded workforce classes). Expenses should be entered on the specific project under the educational supply line item.
 - iii. Equipment⁹ – Colleges may purchase equipment for less than \$5,000 per project to support specific needs. Any purchases over \$5,000 must be applied for through a Special Project. Equipment purchased must:
 1. Be purchased in accordance with the State of MS Procurement Manual and purchasing policies of the buying entity;
 2. Remain solely owned by the purchasing college during and after

⁸ Industry-Recognized Credentials are credentials recognized in the labor market, are portable across state borders and are valid assessments of student skills. They can take many different forms, including, certificates, certifications, and licenses. Source: https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/files/resources/Credentials_of_Value_2016_0.pdf

⁹ Equipment is defined as visible, tangible state property that is non-consumable in nature and with an anticipated life of more than one year. Is considered a capital investment made to perform skills in training programs. See MS Office of State Auditor's Property Manual <https://www.osa.state.ms.us/documents/property/propoffman08.pdf>

- the project;
- 3. Be tracked in accordance with the college's asset inventory policy; and
- 4. Must comply with the college's disposition of equipment policy.
- ii. In no case should the total reimbursed amount exceed actual costs.

c. Ineligible costs:

- i. Licensure Fees – Including, but not limited to CDL, NCLEX, and CNA
- ii. Standalone CPR, OSHA, and other compliance-only training¹⁰
- iii. Textbooks and workbooks for legacy programs.
- iv. Wages for travel time.
- v. Travel for open-enrollment instructors.

Incarcerated Individual Training

Projects serve non-degree training for the purpose of enhancing employability skills and to upgrade skills of incarcerated individuals in Mississippi. When possible, basic skills training must be incorporated seamlessly within program(s) to ensure quality and relevance of training. All personnel expenses must be reasonable and in line with similar work in the institution's ecosystem.

a. Eligible costs:

- i. Community College instructor wages and benefits for training and preparation for costs actually incurred.
 - 1. Eligible costs include Social Security, Medicare, Retirement, and Worker's Compensation.
 - 2. Preparation time is limited to 10% and must include time and effort documentation.
 - 3. No health or life insurance benefits will be reimbursed.
- ii. Educational Supplies such as consumables and non-consumables must be related to direct training expenses (must be held separate from non-WET-funded workforce classes). Expenses should be entered on the specific project under the educational supply line item.
- iii. Parole dates shall be checked to give priority to offenders with 24 months or less to serve before parole eligibility or release date. Documentation must be provided. See Accountability section for documentation requirements.

¹⁰ Compliance training refers to the process of educating employees on laws, regulations, and company policies that apply to their day-to-day job responsibilities.

Customized (Contract) Training

Projects serve one or more employers and include non-degree programs developed specifically to serve customized needs of associated employer(s). This training must support occupations in eligible industry sectors.

Eligible Costs

- I. Community College instructor wages and benefits for training and preparation for costs actually incurred.
 - i. Eligible costs include Social Security, Medicare, Retirement, and Worker's Compensation.
 - ii. Preparation time is limited to 10% and must include time and effort documentation. Prep hours must include justification for number of hours and need for preparation (i.e., new course being developed; customization or contextualization of curriculum, etc.).
 - iii. No health or life insurance benefits will be reimbursed.
- II. Consumables must be related to direct training expenses (must be held separate from non-WET-funded workforce classes). All consumables must be tracked in a local tracking system. Expenses should be entered on the specific project under the educational supply line item.
- III. In-state travel will be reimbursed for workforce training instructors employed by the college who must travel to an off-site location for a class within a project. Travel cost for instructors will be reimbursed from college location to offsite location for an instructor who must travel a minimum of twenty-five miles or more. The appropriate mileage rate is the current college rate, this rate may not exceed the state rate. In-state travel must have the points of travel, starting and ending points of travel, number of roundtrips, and the number of miles documented in the project file for monitoring purposes, including the justification for travel reimbursement. Travel from individual's official residence to the regular place of work is not reimbursable.

College Delivered Online Training

College Delivered Online Training refers to the instructional methods of in-person and online non-degree training to create a personalized learning environment. Online training became more prevalent due to COVID 19 and has seen interest grow to the point that mechanisms to support this instructional technology must be made for workforce courses. Training in this category is either 'synchronous' or 'non-synchronous' and available for open-enrollment or contract training.

- I. *Synchronous Online Training*: Synchronous online training refers to training courses where participants are learning from a distance through a platform determined by the college but attend class the same time as instructor and classmates. Communications are real-time, scheduled, and occur by instructional platform (Canvas, Blackboard, Zoom, Teams, etc.).
 - a. Eligible costs:

- i. Community college instructor wages and benefits per relevant open-enrollment or contract training policy. Course schedules and session attendance/login records must be maintained for all course sessions.
 - i. Community college hourly instructor wages and benefits for training and preparation for costs actually incurred. Preparation time cannot exceed training time. Eligible costs include Social Security, Medicare, Retirement, and Worker's Compensation.
 - ii. No health or life insurance benefits will be reimbursed.
 - iii. In no case should the total reimbursed amount exceed actual costs for salary and allowable benefits.
- II. *Non-synchronous Online Training:* Non-synchronous (also called asynchronous) online training refers to training courses where there is not a live component and participants engage with the course content and each other at different times.
 - a. Eligible costs:
 - 1. Community college instructor wages and benefits are eligible using one of the following compensation structures.
 - i. Adjunct Equivalency – Instructor wages and benefits must be paid in-line with established adjunct pay rates, if not paid per hour.
 - ii. Community college instructor hourly wages and benefits for training and preparation for costs actually incurred. Eligible costs include Social Security, Medicare, Retirement, and Worker's Compensation.
 - iii. In no case should the total reimbursed amount exceed actual costs.
 - iv. No health or life insurance benefits will be reimbursed.

Intensive Delivery: Intensive (also called hybrid) training delivery refers to a combination of synchronous and asynchronous training delivery methods.

Eligible costs:

- i. Instructor wages and benefits are paid at an effective hourly rate and volume that is supported through the following required documentation:
 - a. Instructor timesheet
 - b. Time and effort log, including documentation of non-session activities.
 - c. Instructor and student login record(s)
- ii. Community College instructor hourly wages and benefits for training and preparation for costs actually incurred. Eligible costs include Social Security, Medicare, Retirement, and Worker's Compensation.
 - d. In no case should the total reimbursed amount exceed actual costs.
 - e. No health or life insurance benefits will be reimbursed.

Digital Curriculum: Digital curriculum purchases are eligible for synchronous, non-synchronous, or hybrid online training support (also called instructional platforms). Digital curriculum refers to an enhancement tool purchased through an external provider and serves as the curriculum

and associated platform for the training. Purchases in this category must be used to enhance course content and be integrated within the identified programs provided by the college through open-enrollment or contract training.

- a. Course outline must be on file that describes the courses within the digital curriculum, why the specific curriculum/platform was chosen, and how progress is monitored, and outcomes reported.
- b. Maximum reimbursement costs are \$200 per student.
- c. Proof of payment must be on file.
- d. Ineligible costs:
 - a. Licensure Fees – Including, but not limited to CDL, NCLEX, and CNA
 - b. Standalone CPR, OSHA, and other compliance-only training¹¹
 - c. Textbooks and workbooks for legacy programs.
 - d. Wages for travel time.

Documentation required for completion of digital curriculum:

1. Completion certificate.
2. Any credentials gained.

Advanced Technology (Special Projects)

Special projects consist of training beyond the scope of current guidelines and priority is given to non-credit, short-term training programs and needs. Community college career technical education programs producing talent for eligible industry partners are eligible to apply for certain opportunities identified below. All projects must include labor market data from MDES or Lightcast specific to the program's proposed location and be supported by commitment to hire from specific employers. Special projects will be reviewed and approved quarterly by the committee in FY 24 on the following schedule:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Q1 Application Deadline – July 14, 2023. Approvals will be sent by July 28, 2023 | • Q3 Application Deadline – January 19, 2024. Approvals will be sent by February 2, 2024 |
| • Q2 Application Deadline – October 13, 2023. Approvals will be sent by October 27, 2023 | • Q4 Application Deadline – April 12, 2024. Approvals will be sent by April 26, 2024 |

Eligible Industry Sectors

Priority shall be given to above-median-wage opportunities for the ecosystem, as identified by AccelerateMS. WET funds may only be utilized to support the following industry sectors:

¹¹ Compliance training refers to the process of educating employees on laws, regulations, and company policies that apply to their day-to-day job responsibilities.

Core

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agribusiness
- Construction, Distribution, and

Logistics

- Forestry, Energy, and Chemicals
- Health Care
- Information Technology

Horizon

- Blue Economy
- Renewable Energy
- National Corporate Headquarters¹²
- Mobility Technology Innovation

All applications (located in Appendix B) must be received by 5:00pm Central Time on the due date to be considered in that round of funding reviews. Projects with incomplete, missing, or inaccurate information will be sent back to applicant to correct and will be reviewed during the next quarterly review cycle.

All special projects submitted must include the following before being considered by the committee:

- Projects must serve eligible industries, have a minimum of (1) industry commitment letter documenting how the employer partner(s) will support the specific project and/or program.
 - Partnering companies must document, at a minimum, the following on the commitment letter:
 - How many program completers expected to be employed by the committed company and/or how many trainees will be upskilled by the committed company;
 - How, specifically, each company will utilize the training or partner to employ completers.
- Projects must generate an increased and sustainable capacity to train individuals or have documented needs of new or existing industry justifying program enhancement.
- Site location and campus of the program.
- Description of how outcomes and results will be assessed, measured, and documented.
- Identification of activities leading to an industry recognized credential or certifications to enable portability of skills.
- Detailed marketing plan of program (if marketing or outreach funds are requested).
- If program is a for-credit CTE Program, applicant must document current status of

¹² A national headquarters is that office or location of a multistate business, where managerial, professional, technical, and administrative personnel are domiciled and employed. It is the location where the centralized functions such as financial, legal, technical and personnel functions are performed. The function and purpose of the national headquarters is

to plan, direct and control all aspects of the organization's operations, and it has final authority over all regional offices, operating facilities, or any other offices of the business enterprise. The national headquarters is subordinate only to the ownership of the organization or its representatives.

approval process with Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB).

- Listing of all occupations and expected regional rates of pay program completers expect to attain in the field.
- Description how the Special Project will be sustained at the completion of the grant-if program goes beyond period of performance.
- Documentation of any leveraged or braided funds (to include funding from federal, state, or local sources).

* Ineligible Costs:

Wage offsets for trainees (OJT). Examples include wages for interns or employees.

Project Types

1. **Coalitions (Eligible Applicants CTE and Workforce Divisions):** At times, limited coalitions may be necessary to meet a critical need and college(s) may apply for funding to meet needs identified by employer partners. These coalitions should include: two or more community college partners, at least one four-year research institution partner when appropriate; two or more employer partners; documented commitments from employer partners; documented leveraged funds; representative(s) from the LWDA, and appropriate community partners.
2. **New or Enhanced Programs (Eligible Applicants CTE and Workforce Divisions):** Colleges may apply for funds to reimburse certain costs for establishing new programs or enhancing existing programs. Allowable costs include:
 - a. Instructor wages and allowable benefits (maximum of 12 months unless otherwise approved by AMS);
 - b. Consumables;
 - c. Classroom set of textbooks (new programs, e-books not allowed);
 - d. Outreach costs (if marketing dollars requested, a marketing plan must be included);
 - e. The purchase of equipment must meet the following criteria:
 1. Capitalized Equipment Purchases: Equipment can be purchased, but must be located at a college campus, in a college mobile unit, in a facility used by the college for associated training, or at a training facility leased by the college. All colleges are required to maintain a complete and current inventory list of each property item exceeding a cost of \$1,000. Equipment purchased must be purchased in accordance with the State of MS Procurement Manual and purchasing policies of the buying entity;
 2. Remain in sole ownership of the purchasing college during and after the project;
 3. Must be tracked in accordance with the college's asset inventory policy; and
 4. Must comply with the college's disposition of equipment policy.
 - f. Leased Equipment: Equipment may be leased or by virtue of agreement at the

college for training purposes and must be designated as such. This equipment cannot be used for production or profit. Leased equipment is a contractual expense. This equipment must be in a facility owned and operated by the college.

3. **Special Requests (Eligible Applicants CTE and Workforce Divisions):** AccelerateMS may, from time to time, request proposals related to special projects. Proposals shall include (at a minimum): scope of work, budget, expected outcomes, methodology for measurement, project timeline, employer partner(s); and all leveraged funds. These calls are limited to:
 - a. Identified triage needs of employers. These may be state-wide or within specific ecosystem(s);
 - b. Preparation for horizon workforce needs within specific ecosystem(s);
 - c. Customized training needs of identified ecosystems and employer partner(s).
4. **Program Support (Eligible Applicant Workforce Division Only):** Innovative projects designed to expand and/or enhance the capacity of the workforce center. Projects may include the cost of direct WET-funded support staff and software. Projects must build competency in current and planned industry technologies and/or identified best practices. Projects must include, at a minimum:
 - a. Specified employer partners served by project;
 - b. Identified competency gaps and justification for each identified position. Instructor positions must include associated wages, training plan, and metrics. Training plan must include industries served, number of projected classes, number of instructional hours, identification of any leveraged funds, number of projected students, and a job description. Staff positions are limited to Information Specialist, Training Developer, or Sector Based Project Manager. Additional positions may be approved but must be discussed prior to application. All positions must include evaluation metrics;
 - c. Data system directly utilized to support WET Funded activities (to input and store programmatic data, track participants, and costs of workforce training);
 - d. Certain Professional Development Costs:
 - i. Train the trainer for workforce staff and instructors.
 1. Justification must be on file for all individuals attending training, which addresses how training relates to courses taught and/or participant's current job.
 2. Funds may be used for training and professional development in subject areas identified as priority by AMS.
 - ii. AccelerateMS will reimburse fees up to \$5,000/year/college for registration, hotel, and meals for participants from the college to attend approved conferences or events. Participants must utilize a college vehicle; mileage is not reimbursable.
 1. MS Horizons Conference
 2. MCCB Summer CTE/Workforce Development Conference
 3. Other conferences or events, as identified by AccelerateMS

- e. Reimbursements shall be limited to published state rates for hotel and food. All actual receipts must be provided before reimbursements will be made. For more information on rate calculations, please visit <https://www.dfa.ms.gov/dfa-offices/purchasing-travel-and-fleet-management/bureau-of-purchasing-and-contracting/travel/>.
- f. Total amount of funding for program support may not exceed 15% of overall WET fund reimbursement from previous year unless documented increase in current year is approved.

5. Outreach Projects (Eligible Applicant Workforce Division Only): Colleges may write projects for workforce training outreach. Projects requesting outreach funds must include a marketing plan which, at a minimum, includes the following:

- a. Identified training programs.
- b. Identifying the goal of the outreach plan including measurable objectives and general timeline
- c. Implementation plan for the outreach plan.
- d. How will the impact of the outreach plan be measured?
- e. Identified target audience.
- f. Itemized cost for outreach.

6. Basic Skills (Eligible Applicant Adult Education Division Only): See Appendix C

Zero-Dollar Projects

Training projects not requesting reimbursement should be entered into WESS to capture training hours and student level data student for reporting purposes. The “Non-WET” training category should be utilized to enter these projects.

INDUSTRY-PROVIDED TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

WORKFORCE REGULAR

Mississippi employers are encouraged to use community college training partners (called college-led training) for their training needs when utilizing WET funds. However, AccelerateMS recognizes there are situations in which this is not feasible. To ensure Mississippi's human capital has access to quality opportunities, funds are available for employers in eligible industry sectors to offset the costs of certain training for middle-skill occupations. These funds can be used for training of incumbent workers and vendor training. WET funds are intended to be used to fund eligible training activities, resulting in enhanced employee productivity, for core and horizon industry sector employers.

Enhanced employee productivity must be evaluated in terms of:

1. Measurable increase in output (quantity/quality/value) of an employee that is realized by the company or entity (ex. increased productivity);
2. A measurable increase to the market value of the employee's skillset realized by the employee directly (ex. wage increase). This evaluation is integral for determining whether a proposed training is eligible for WET funding. The assessment of its merit must be thoroughly documented including the anticipated outcomes and how those outcomes can be objectively measured.

Eligible Industry Sectors

Priority shall be given to above-median-wage opportunities for the ecosystem, as identified by AccelerateMS. WET funds may only be utilized to support the following industry sectors:

Core

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agribusiness
- Construction, Distribution, and Logistics
- Forestry, Energy, and Chemicals
- Health Care
- Information Technology

Horizon

- Blue Economy
- Renewable Energy
- National Corporate Headquarters¹³
- Mobility Technology Innovation

For Industry-Led training only the salary (at effective hourly rate) shall be eligible for reimbursement. No benefits, taxes, insurance, incentives, or employer incentives are eligible. Each employer must complete and submit an estimate annually for funds needed for the following fiscal year (July to June). Each community college must establish its own process for

¹³ A national headquarters is that office or location of a multistate business, where managerial, professional, technical, and administrative personnel are domiciled and employed. It is the location where the centralized functions such as financial, legal, technical and personnel functions are performed. The function and purpose of the national headquarters is

to plan, direct and control all aspects of the organization's operations, and it has final authority over all regional offices, operating facilities, or any other offices of the business enterprise. The national headquarters is subordinate only to the ownership of the organization or its representatives.

collecting this information to submit with the FAST plan and may require additional information than what is listed below. All reimbursements for salaries require wage validation by the requesting business and must be kept on file at the college for monitoring purposes. Recipients of funds for these areas must validate training results. Employers are responsible for ensuring accurate information is provided to their community college partner.

To qualify for WET fund reimbursement, each business must work with the identified community college partner to:

1. Estimate need to include number of trainees, identified occupations targeted, and targeted occupation starting and ending wages;
2. Establish and document associated training plans;
3. Secure up-to-date accountability documentation and processes;
4. Ensure training is allowable and approved prior to training start; and
5. Report quarterly and annual expenses and outcomes in accordance with guidelines and associated MOAs.
6. Reimbursements must be validated with pay stubs to substantiate requested reimbursement amount for each training.

Projects that may be funded include:

- **Incumbent Worker Skills Training:** Training serving existing employees. Training plans must be provided and approved.
 - a. Training must provide demonstrated skill increases. Priority is given to training resulting in an industry-recognized credential.
 - b. Training should focus on quality up-skilling to meet the future demands of the business and must meet the definition of enhanced employee productivity.
 - c. Ineligible costs:
 - i. Wage offsets for trainees (OJT). Examples include wages for interns or employees.
 - ii. Licensure and Credentialing Fees – Including, but not limited to CDL, NCLEX, SHRM, PMP, and CNA
 - iii. Benefits
 - iv. Standalone Safety, CPR, OSHA, and other compliance-only training. This includes training costs associated with re-certifying and refreshing employees in these areas, regardless of the associated program. Training plans must be provided to be considered as eligible training.
 - v. Online training for reimbursement.
- **Vendor and 3rd party Training:** Training projects designed to allow companies to receive training needed to enhance or expand the skills of associated human capital, not available from a Mississippi Community College. As such, up to \$25,000 per company, per fiscal year may be approved as stated below. Vendor training may consist of vendor traveling to company site in MS or trainees traveling to vendor training site.

Eligible expenses for reimbursement include:

- a. Actual cost of training
- b. Funds can be utilized for multiple trainings per company per fiscal year.
- c. In state or out of state travel costs (including mileage, airfare, hotel or rental car) must be included in the travel section in WESS and must include points of travel. Reimbursement for the use of a personal vehicle for official college business (includes private airplanes flown by the employee) is based on actual miles traveled and will be at the same rate that federal employees are reimbursed for using private vehicles for official federal business travel. The General Services Administration, commonly referred to as GSA, not the IRS, publishes this rate. The current reimbursement rate is listed in the Mileage Reimbursement Rate memo (<http://www.dfa.ms.gov/dfaoffices/purchasing-travel-and-fleet-management/bureau-of-purchasing-and-contracting/travel/>). Documentation supporting actual miles should be included with reimbursement request.
 - i. Reimbursement for airfare must include a cost comparison showing a minimum of two fares. The least expensive route shall be used. Preferred seating, business, or first-class service will not be reimbursed unless approved in advance. The least expensive routing, as referenced in the DFA manual is in regard to assessing whether it is more cost efficient to fly or drive. This cost comparison must show the fare and any issuance cost and must show a savings and shall be submitted along with the traveler's documentation for reimbursement. Fees for checked bags are reimbursable (receipts must be included with reimbursement documentation.)
 - ii. Reimbursement for hotels must include an itemized receipt. Parking fees can be reimbursed for hotels. Lodging rates should not exceed the daily maximum for the specific location of the assignment per the published GSA rate.
 - iii. Meals will be reimbursed at actual cost, not to exceed the daily maximum for the specific location of assignment per the published GSA rates. Receipts are required for meal reimbursement.
- d. Maximum duration for cost associated with lodging will be limited to four consecutive weeks per person, per production training area.
- e. Proper documentation (e.g, receipts, invoices, etc.) is required for all travel reimbursement request. The Mississippi DFA Office of Purchasing, Travel, and Fleet Management State Travel Policy, Rules and Regulations should be used as a guide for determining eligibility of travel reimbursements.

https://www.dfa.ms.gov/sites/default/files/Office%20of%20Purchasing%2C%20Travel%20and%20Fleet%20Home/Resources%20Manuals%20Guidelines/1116_TravelCardGuidelines.pdf

PROJECT SUBMISSION PROCESS

WET funds are available to community colleges through two funding mechanisms: 1) allocated funds and 2) special projects. Allocated funds should be utilized to support training projects in open-to-the-public, workforce regular, basic skills, and train-the-trainer and must be estimated annually through the FAST plans. Special projects (advanced technology) should be used to support triage and horizon projects needed to support the community college's ecosystem.

Allocated WET Funds

WET funds are allocated based on each college's annual budget request, priority of the request, and available funding by AccelerateMS. While it is possible that certain times of the year or certain years' experience decreased availability of funds, this method allows AccelerateMS to ensure, within reason, that priority projects receive funding and colleges have the confidence to perform training for their communities. It is expected that companies wishing to utilize WET funds will provide their associated documentation to the colleges by the start of each calendar year's second (2nd) quarter for funds to be available in the third (3rd) quarter of the calendar year.

Each college is responsible for gathering requested projects and prioritizing them based on the eligibility of the request and priorities within their FAST plans to ensure critical training is funded first. After completion of the FAST plan, each college must submit it to AccelerateMS for review. AccelerateMS will review and provide an allocation amount to each requesting college based on eligibility of request, priority of request, and available funding.

Special Project: Special project funding is available to colleges to support triage, customized training, and horizon needs based on availability of funding, project eligibility, and priority of the proposed need. Projects may be submitted to support additional needs of eligible employer partners. Special projects are approved quarterly through a committee within AccelerateMS, which includes related AccelerateMS staff and a staff member from MCCB, when funds are available.

Project Submission Requirements

All projects submitted for WET reimbursement must include a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) completed and signed by the business and the associated college. Colleges must keep a signed agreement in the project folder for each project.

Boilerplate Language

A legal boilerplate is a standard provision in a contract. This language will be required to be included in all projects. Boilerplate language is description of uniform language used normally in legal documents that has a definite, unvarying meaning in the same context that denotes words, which have not been individually fashioned to address the legal issue presented.

PROJECT REIMBURSEMENT

Upon completion, each institution must internally review and audit each course/project for fiscal and programmatic accuracy, prior to submitting a reimbursement request. ***All budget categories must be equal to or less than ACTUAL cost.***

Cost Categories

To ensure clarity and consistency in the treatment of the expenditures for WET funds, the information below clarifies what costs are administrative and what costs are programmatic. Only costs included in each institution's FAST Plan and approved by AccelerateMS will be eligible for reimbursement.

Administrative Costs: Costs that are not related to providing direct training services, to participants and employers. These costs can be both personnel and non-personnel and both direct and indirect. Administrative expenditures for any given program year are limited to no more than 2 percent of total WET fund expenditures calculated based on previous year's actual total reimbursement.

Program Costs: Costs that are directly related to the provision of WET-funded workforce training activities that are not defined as administrative costs and are allowable costs by function.

Administrative Cost Limitations:

Administrative Functions: Administrative costs are expenditures incurred by AccelerateMS, recipients, and sub-recipients of funds that provide the specific functions below, which are not related to the direct delivery of workforce training activities. The costs of administration can be both personnel and non-personnel, and both direct and indirect. Administrative costs are general allowable costs associated with performing the following functions directly related to WET-funded activities:

1. Performing oversight and monitoring responsibilities related to related administrative functions below;
2. Accounting, budgeting, financial and cash management functions;
3. Procurement and purchasing functions;
4. Property management functions;
5. Personnel management functions;
6. Payroll functions;
7. Coordinating the resolution of findings arising from audits, reviews, investigations, and incident reports;
8. Audit functions;
9. General legal services functions;
10. Fiscal agent responsibilities;
11. Costs of goods and services required for administrative functions of program(s), including goods and services such as rental or purchase of equipment, utilities, office supplies,

- postage, and rental and maintenance of office space;
12. Personnel and related non-personnel cost of staff that perform both administrative functions and programmatic services or activities must be allocated as administrative or programmatic costs to the benefitting cost objectives/categories based on documented distributions of actual time worked or other equitable cost allocation methods;
 13. Travel costs incurred for official business in carrying out administrative activities;
 14. Costs associated with monitoring are classified as administrative costs;
 15. Where possible, entities must make efforts to streamline the services to reduce administrative costs by minimizing duplication and effectively using information technology to improve services; and

Programmatic Functions: Programmatic costs are tied to the direct provision of workforce training services including services to participants and employers. Programmatic costs are general allowable costs associated with performing the following functions:

1. Personnel and related non-personnel costs for individuals directly engaged in providing direct training services;
2. Other personnel and related non-personnel costs of program managers, supervisors and/or coordinators, whose time has been properly allocated among benefitting cost categories (e.g., specific allocation between administrative and program) above \$300,000 and approved in a special project as described within this document;
3. Specific costs charged to an overhead or indirect cost pool that can be identified directly as a program cost are to be charged as program cost. Documentation of such costs, must be maintained; and
4. Tracking or monitoring of participants and performance information.

OTHER GUIDANCE

Instructor Hiring Practices, Salaries, and Benefits

Community colleges may hire college personnel to serve as workforce instructors/trainers. The use of college personnel must meet two legal and ethical standards:

1. Community colleges must comply with Section 25-4-105 (3) (a) of the Mississippi Code regarding hiring practices. This requires the college to develop an addendum to the employee's contract that describes the work to be performed beyond the employee's original contract.
2. Workforce training projects utilizing current employees as instructors/trainers must show a zero-dollar amount in the salary line of the workforce project; unless the college can clearly document that the employees are not being paid twice for the same hours worked.
 - a. Sufficient documentation includes reimbursement records, matching instructors' time sheets on training hours, rate of pay per hour, and fringe benefits, and employee contracts when required.

- b. Instructional hours must be documented by training classes via timesheets for all instructors. No project manager can be hired to teach a program that is managed by him or herself.

Reimbursement of benefits shall depend on the type of contract the college uses with their workforce instructors and shall be based on current rates applied by the college business office. These rates will be reimbursed based on actual cost to the community college for instructor wages and benefits. In no case should the total reimbursed amount exceed actual costs for salary and allowable benefits. No health or life insurance is reimbursable.

NOTE: Actual costs will be substantiated by instructor pay stubs, official payroll reports, or other valid source documentation to verify requested reimbursements match actual college rates.

Contractual Services

The following items are allowable costs:

1. Acquisition of software specific to actual training needs
2. Repairs and maintenance of WET-funded training equipment
3. Leased equipment
4. Approved maintenance or licensing fees for educational software used on equipment owned by the college.
5. NCRC assessments

Compliance with Mississippi Employment Protection Act (MEPA)

Contractor/Seller represents and warrants that it will ensure its compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act (Senate Bill 2988 from the 2008 Regular Legislative Session) and will register and participate in the status verification system for all newly hired employees. The term “employee” as used herein means any person that is hired to perform work within the State of Mississippi and to whom a United States Internal Revenue Service Form W-2 or Form 1099 must be issued. As used herein, “status verification system” means the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 that is operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security, also known as the E-Verify Program, or any other successor electronic verification system replacing the E-Verify Program. Contractor/Seller agree to maintain records of such compliance and, upon request of the State, to provide a copy of each such verification to the State. Contractor/Seller further represents and warrants that any person assigned to perform services hereunder meets the employment eligibility requirements of all immigration laws of the State of Mississippi. Contractor/Seller understands and agrees that any breach of these warranties may subject Contractor/Seller to the following: (a) termination of this Agreement and ineligibility for any state or public contract in Mississippi for up to three (3) years, with notice of such cancellation/termination being made public, or (b) the loss of any license, permit, certification or other document granted to Contractor/Seller by an agency, department or governmental entity for the right to do business in Mississippi for up to one (1) year, or (c) both. In the event of such termination/cancellation, Contractor/Seller would also be liable for any additional costs incurred by the State due to contract cancellation or loss of license or permit.

Appendix A

FAST PLAN

← ↻ 📄 <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/8e8d6462e3e94940869ed6fa3278f110>

A[®]



[ADD COLLEGE NAME]

Mississippi Functional Analysis of Strategic Training Plan (FAST)

The FAST Plan analysis should be used by each college to develop associated strategy and action plan to address gaps. Information is to be included in the following FAST Plan Estimator for programs seeking WET funding for the next fiscal year.

To ensure funding for workforce training efforts ties to Mississippi workforce development goals, community colleges must complete an annual workforce action plan. Each plan is reviewed by the AccelerateMS office annually for approval prior to funding allocation(s) in June and evaluation of the previous year each August.

The purpose of this is not to predict the future, but instead to build a longer-term context for short-term decision making. Negative population trends, lack of interest in career and technical opportunities, and need for enhanced connection between K12, community colleges, business and industry, and universities spurs the need for enhanced review of both current opportunities and future needs.

To complete this document, colleges must each conduct a workforce analysis to highlight the quantity and type of workforce needed today and within next year. It is recommended colleges review demand estimates for 2 years for counties served or within assigned ecosystem to ensure over-production of associated programs doesn't become a problem and to ensure accurate planning for potential needs is occurring.

Steps to complete this document:

- a. Conduct annual demand forecast using MDES or EMSI data (or comparable). Can include direct demand data from employers (in writing or email)
- i. By occupation (to include turnover, not just anticipated or previous growth or decline)
- ii. Identify known shifts in local skills/competencies required (i.e. are local manufacturing companies shifting to more automation? Will that change the competencies needed by workforce?). Recommend working with ecosystem table, local employers, universities engaging with employer partners to identify throughout the year.
- iii. Analyze changes in region's trends.
- iv. Include known MDA/Economic Development Announcements (project name is

Appendix B

Special Project Application

← ↻ <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/3c6bf8d77ecd488c884ec958c3aa49e9>

A 



[ADD COLLEGE NAME]

Special Project Workforce Training Grant Proposal

This application must be completed/submitted to and approved by AccelerateMS prior to conducting any special workforce training. The purpose of this application is to ensure that the applicant complies with the following conditions:

- (1) requires the applicant to summarize the proposed project and provide supporting documentation ensuring the project will be conducted in compliance with all applicable guidelines, laws, regulations, of the current Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Guidelines, Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), Mississippi Works Fund, and/or all other funding sources,
- (2) ensures the proposed workforce training has institutional support and the endorsement of an individual at the institution/organization who assumes responsibility for the project and the required reporting related to the project,
- (3) provides the applicant with the documentation that AccelerateMS has reviewed the proposed project.
- (4) Submit industry support letters, if applicable.

If you have questions, during the completion stage; please call Shelika @ 769-257-0736 or email shooker@acceleratems.org

If Proposal is Approved (Community College):

- Project Proposals must be entered into the WESS system for tracking purposes of the reimbursements requested and paid.
- CTE Special Project Proposals must also be entered into the enrollment system your college is currently utilizing in order to produce the reports needed for measuring.

Contact Person *

Contact Person E-mail *

Appendix C

Basic Skills

Basic Skills projects are designed to provide trainees with fundamental instruction in reading, math, writing, language (English as a Second Language), HSE preparation, Smart Start Pathway Course, ACT WorkKeys® Curriculum and Assessments leading to a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and digital literacy training. Basic Skills projects are subject to ALL federal ABE guidelines and policies. Class size should depend on the average number of students attending classes provided by the Adult Education Director at MCCB.

Please refer to MCCB Office of Adult Education Guidelines.

https://www.mccb.edu/sites/mccb/files/Adult%20Education/Local%20Program%20Resources/PY23_OAE_Program_Guidelines_8-15-22.pdf

Basic Skills projects are intended to be utilized for the following services:

- a. Basic literacy skills training and high school equivalency education
- b. English as a Second Language
- c. Smart Start Pathway Course Instruction
 - o Employability Skills
 - o Career Readiness
 - o ACT WorkKeys® Curriculum and Assessments leading to NCRC
- d. Digital Literacy Skills
- e. Inmate Training Classes

Eligible expenses include:

- i. Instructor - Basic Skills Training project instructors shall be reimbursed at a rate not to exceed \$25.00 per hour.
 - a. Time and effort sheet will be completed by full -time employees. Part-time employees will be required to follow the college's policy on documenting time worked.
 - b. Please refer to MCCB Office of Adult Education Guidelines.
- ii. 2nd instructor (academic assistant) for a class.
 - a. Prior approval from AccelerateMS and MCCB for an academic assistant is required.
 - iii. Community College instructor wages and benefits for training and preparation for costs actually incurred. No health and life insurance benefits are reimbursable. Eligible costs include Social Security, Medicare, Retirement, and Worker's Compensation.
- iii. Preparation Time -Up to 20% of the total class instructional time for classes may be allowed for instructor preparation. Time spent for the direct use of the class is allowable. Prep time is allowed only for instructors employed by the college and shall be documented similar to instructional hours.

Ineligible expenses include:

- i. Reimbursement of personnel listed but not limited to College and Career Navigator, Academic Assistants, Data Intake Specialists, and Testing Administrators.
- ii. Travel to teaching site locations.
- iii. In no case should the total reimbursed amount exceed actual costs for salary and allowable

benefits.

- iv. No health or life insurance benefits will be reimbursed.

Incarcerated Individual Training

Eligible costs:

- a. Instructional salaries, inclusive of prep time and benefits. No educational materials and supplies or equipment are eligible for reimbursement.
- b. Parole dates shall be checked to give priority to offenders with 24 twelve months or less to serve before parole eligibility or release date. Documentation must be provided. **See Accountability section for documentation requirements.**
- c. Participants are required to follow the ABE Assessment Policy and will be given the Test of Adult Education (TABE).
- d. Projects shall be reimbursed at a rate not to exceed \$24.00 per hour.
 - iv. Community College instructor wages and benefits for training and preparation for costs actually incurred. Eligible costs include Social Security, Medicare, Retirement, and Worker's Compensation.
- e. In no case should the total reimbursed amount exceed actual costs for salary and allowable benefits.
- f. No health or life insurance benefits will be reimbursed.

National Career Readiness Certificate Assessments

- a. Participants enrolled in Adult Education may take the WorkKeys tests, which include Workplace Documents, Applied Mathematics, and Graphic Literacy, one time.
- b. WET funds may cover the cost of one retest for Adult Education participants, per fiscal year, for Workplace Documents, Applied Mathematics, and/or Graphic Literacy
- c. Testing costs only for NCRC assessments are reimbursable for Adult Education test students only and must be entered in the Contractual Services line item in WESS.

Ineligible expenses include:

- i. Proctor costs for testing.

Professional Development

Costs for professional development training for Adult Education 2023-2024 Summer Conference are eligible for reimbursement and include registration costs, hotel, and meals. Participants must travel in college vehicle, therefore reimbursement for mileage is not an eligible expense. All actual receipts must be provided before reimbursements are made. For more information on rate calculations, please visit: <https://www.dfa.ms.gov/dfa-offices/purchasing-travel-and-fleet-management/bureau-of-purchasing-and-contracting/travel/>. No travel time or mileage is reimbursable.

Basic Skills projects that utilize existing resources of the college are encouraged. In particular, special consideration will be given to those projects which share an audience with, compliment, utilize and/or otherwise build upon, strengthen and enhance the colleges' career and technical and adult education component.

Required Basic Skills Component

All Basic Skills projects are subject to ALL Federal ABE guidelines and policies. The Basic Skills component includes courses in College and Career Readiness which lead to a high school diploma or equivalent. Students must be pre-tested using one of the ABE state-approved standardized assessments (TABE) and must be post-tested in accordance with the state ABE assessment policy. Pre- and post-test results must be recorded in the LACES NexGen adult education database. Students with high school diplomas or the equivalent are eligible for Basic Skills services if they are basic skills deficient (below 8th grade) in at least one academic area.

The Office of Adult Education has primary responsibility for implementation of the Mississippi Works Smart Start Career Pathway Model. Through the pathway, the Smart Start Course is designed around 3 components:

1. Basic Skills (ACT WorkKeys® Curriculum)
2. Career Awareness (career counseling, job search, financial awareness, etc.)
3. Necessary Skills (communication, teamwork, work ethic, etc.)

Student Eligibility

- 16 years of age;
- Not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law;
- Basic skills deficient (less than 8th grade on the TABE)
- Does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- English language learner

Allowable Costs

All costs must be supported by source documentation including canceled checks, paid bills, payrolls, time and attendance records, purchase orders and signed copies of sub-grant award documents. Mississippi purchasing and procurement laws must be followed by all state agencies receiving Basic Skills funds in the acquisition of all goods associated with a project.

Program Accountability and Monitoring

The Mississippi Community College Board's monitoring team has organized a schedule for monitoring Basic Skills Projects for each fiscal year. This monitoring will be concurrent with the monitoring for AE, ESL, IELCE, and Corrections. The monitoring team has the discretion to randomly select projects to review.-AccelerateMS will monitor Basic Skills projects annually if a project is selected in the sample for a particular college.

The monitoring team has the discretion and authority to review all reimbursements associated with any project when financial discrepancies are uncovered in an individual reimbursement. If the monitor observes a pattern of financial discrepancies by a project manager in more than one reimbursement, the monitor at his/her discretion has the option to review all reimbursements in all projects written by the project manager in question.

The monitor team at MCCB at his/her discretion reserve the right to conduct a 100% monitoring review of all projects by all fifteen community/junior colleges at least once every three years. This means colleges will be monitored in a rotating three-year cycle annually.

The monitoring process includes reviewing the following:

1. The following items are required to be in each student folder:
 - a. Student Success Plan
 - b. MS Works Registration Verification
 - c. Copy of state issued picture I.D.
 - d. TABE Profile/Instructional Assignments/TABE CLAS E Educational Plan/Instructional Assignments
 - e. Work Samples
 - f. All standardized tests answer sheets/scores (locator – if applicable, TABE portfolio, pre-test, post-test, official HSE practice tests)
 - g. Transcripts, including HiSET®, GED® and college (MIBEST) transcripts, if applicable
 - h. Copy of stackable credentials, i.e. Forklift, ServSafe, CPR, OSHA, North Star (examples)
 - i. MS OAE Smart Start Student Record
 - j. Copy of Smart Start Credential or Certificate, if applicable
 - k. Copy of NCRC Scores
 - l. Documentation of accommodations, if applicable
 - m. 16-17 Year Olds (additional items required)
 - i. *Verification of Withdrawal/Transfer from school system or home school setting as indicated by initials, signature, and stamp or seal.*

Requirements for Basic Skills Instructors

Instructors must hold a B.S. or a B.A. degree in any field and a proof of this degree is required to be on file at the local ABE Director's office. It is recommended that all new employees attend the New Teacher Academy to learn basic instructional competencies and prepare for the state competency assessment. It is also highly recommended that new AE Program Directors attend the New Teacher's Academy.

All full-time instructors are required to complete at least twenty (20) clock hours of professional development annually and all part-time instructors are required to complete at least ten (10) clock hours of professional development annually. The program director will maintain all professional development activities and all hours will be entered into the LACES Management System for each instructor. Sign in sheets must be utilized to document participant attendance.

Performance Accountability

All Basic Skills Project are subject to the same performance accountability requirements as the Adult Education classes. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 2014, the following measures will be applicable to all basic skills projects and AE programs.

Primary Indicators of Performance

The primary indicators of performance within the NRS are the primary indicators of performance required by WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A). The indicators are:

- Measurable skill gains
- Employment-related indicators
- Credential attainment indicators
- Effectiveness in serving employers

Measurable Skill Gains

Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) are used to demonstrate participants' progress toward achieving a credential or employment. For adult education programs, participants can demonstrate MSG in three ways: educational functioning level (EFL) gain and receipt of a secondary school diploma, and Integrated Education and Training (IET) or workplace literacy enrollment resulting in the achievement of an IET MSG. For participants not enrolled in an IET or workplace literacy program, skill gains are only measured by achievement of at least one educational functioning level or documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

1. EFL gain can be demonstrated in one of two ways:
 - a. comparing a participant's pretest with the participant's posttest, using a test approved for use by the NRS
 - b. enrollment in postsecondary education or training after exit
2. Receipt of a secondary school diploma can be demonstrated by achieving passing scores on state-approved high school equivalency tests or obtaining a secondary diploma or state-recognized equivalent
3. IET MSG can be demonstrated in one of three ways:
 - a. Secondary or Postsecondary Transcript or report card documenting a sufficient number of credit hours, which is at least 12 hours per semester
 - b. Progress Toward Milestones such as completion of OJT or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training
 - c. Passing Technical/Occupational Skills Exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams

Employment-Related Indicators

There are three WIOA indicators related to employment:

1. Employment Rate—Second Quarter after Exit: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the *second quarter* after exit from the program
2. Employment Rate—Fourth Quarter after Exit: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the *fourth quarter* after exit from the program
3. Median Earnings—Second Quarter after Exit: The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the *second quarter* after exit from the program

Participants in correctional education programs (WIOA Section 225), who remain incarcerated at program exit, are excluded from the employment-related indicators, as are participants excluded due to the circumstances listed in the Exclusions section.

Credential Indicator

The credential indicator measures two types of credentials:

1. Receipt of a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent *during participation or within 1 year after exit* from the program. The receipt of a secondary diploma is only counted if the participant also enters postsecondary education or training, or employment within 1 year after exit.
2. Receipt of a recognized postsecondary credential during participation or within 1 year after exit from the program.

Program Accountability and Data Management

All students must be entered into the adult education management system, LACES NexGen. This system was developed for the state to be in compliance with the requirements of the National Reporting System (NRS). The LACES NexGen is a student accountability solution that analyzes student performance outcomes and program quality.

Appendix D

Memorandum of Agreement

All projects must include a memorandum of agreement. The following information must be included:

1. Company Description and Commitment: Company will request reimbursement at least every 30 days to college. Projects exceeding 30 days past completion may not be eligible for reimbursement. Company will comply with E-Verify as specified in the Mississippi Employment Protection Act.
2. Description of Training: Each project shall provide a training plan, including goals and objectives for each course classification for the purpose of measuring how the training event will enhance employee productivity throughout the program period and/or at completion. Use this section to provide justification for training request, the requested training plan, and to identify goals and objectives for each course classification.

Enhanced employee productivity must be evaluated in terms of:

1. Output metrics: Output metrics are based on the quantity and quality of work produced by employees. Examples of output metrics include the number of units produced, sales revenue, customer satisfaction ratings, and error rates.
2. Efficiency metrics: Efficiency metrics measure how effectively employees are using resources to complete their work. Examples of efficiency metrics include time to complete tasks, the ratio of output to input, and utilization rates of equipment and facilities.
3. Financial metrics: Financial metrics measure the impact of employee productivity on the financial performance of the organization. Examples of financial metrics include revenue growth, profit margins, and return on investment (ROI).
4. Employee engagement metrics: Employee engagement metrics measure how engaged and motivated employees are in their work. Examples of employee engagement metrics include job satisfaction, retention rates, and employee feedback.
5. Quality metrics: Quality metrics measure the level of quality of the work produced by employees. Examples of quality metrics include defect rates, customer complaints, and compliance with quality standards.
6. A measurable increase in output (quantity/quality/value) of an employee that is realized by the company or entity (ex. increased productivity).
7. A measurable increase to the market value of the employee's skillset realized by the employee directly (ex. wage increase).

The Training Plan must include, at a minimum, the following:

- Location of training
- Number of employees to begin training;
- Current wage rates/range for trainees;
- Projected wage increases post-training;
- Specific skills gain through training, training program capacity growth as a result of the funding, and future training growth opportunities for trainees (if applicable); and
- How the effectiveness of the training will be evaluated.

3. Company Commitment

- Request reimbursement at least every **30 days** to college.
- Provide individual demographic data required for state reporting purposes.
- Comply with E-Verify as specified in the Mississippi Employment Protection Act.
- Company agrees to provide all required documentation in accordance with AccelerateMS guidelines and understands projects not reimbursed within the required time period will be excluded.
- Complete attendance sheet(s) (sign-in sheets) for all training requesting reimbursement and ensure sheet(s) are signed by instructor, dated, have course name listed, and course start and end time. Submit attendance sheet(s) documenting training to college for reimbursement of training.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the training.
- Scanned copies of original attendance sheet(s) sent to the college by the company will be accepted for documentation for audit.
- Keep and maintain all original attendance sheet(s) on file for a period of 3 years and be available upon request.

NOTE: Failure to complete and maintain required documentation may result in forfeiture of WET funds reimbursement. The company will be responsible for returning funds if documentation is not provided or has been falsified.

4. College Commitment

- Request reimbursements every 30 days.
- Comply with E-Verify as specified in the Mississippi Employment Protection Act.
- Keep and maintain all original attendance documentation for college led training.

5. MCCB and AccelerateMS Commitment

- Reimburse community colleges within 45 days.
- Provide funding as approved in the budget.

Appendix E

WESS (Workforce Education Subgrant System)

Projects to be entered under the Projects by Type Category in WESS:

- **Open to the Public**
 - **Open Enrollment Training**
 - **Course Information** is to be entered under **Classes Tab** which includes but not limited to hours of class, instructor rate, prep hours, dates of trainings, enrollment etc....
 - **Educational Supplies:** Enter consumables and non-consumables under this line item under the **Project Tab**.
 - **Equipment:** Enter all equipment under this line item under the **Project Tab**.
 - **Contractual Services:** Enter all costs associated with repairs and maintenance of equipment and description under the Contractual Services Line item on the **Project Tab**.
 - **Incarcerated Individual Training**
 - **Course Information** is to be entered under **Classes Tab** which includes but not limited to hours of class, instructor rate, dates of trainings, enrollment etc....
 - **College Delivered Online Training**
 - **Course Information** is to be entered under **Classes Tab** which includes but not limited to hours of class, instructor rate, prep hours, dates of trainings, enrollment etc....
 - **Contractual Services:** Enter costs for digital curriculum and descriptions under this line item under the **Project Tab**.

All three categories of **Open Enrollment Training, Incarcerated Individual Training, and College Delivered Online Training** will be entered under the **Open to the Public Project** by Type Categories in WESS. Please include in the project titles of these projects the type of training listed above (i.e., **CDL Open Enrollment Training Jackson Campus, Congressional Facility Incarcerated Individual Training, Basic Manufacturing Skills College Delivered Online Training**).

- **Short-Term Adult**
 - **Customized Contract Training**
 - **Course Information** is to be entered under **Classes Tab** which includes but not limited to hours of class, instructor rate, prep hours, dates of trainings, enrollment etc....
 - **Travel:** Enter travel related to a course under this line item under the **Projects Tab**. **(Note: Must enter the course first to tie to the travel.)**

Please include in the project title of the type of training listed above (i.e. **AccelerateMS Customized Contract Training**).

- **Workforce-Regular (Industry Led)**
 - **Course Information** is to be entered under **Classes Tab** which includes but not limited to hours of class, instructor rate, dates of trainings, enrollment etc....
 - **Contractual Services:** Enter all costs associated with vendor training and description under the Contractual Services Line item on the **Project Tab**.
- **Non-WET Projects**
 - **Enter all projects that have a \$0 cost.**

- **Special Projects**
 - **Course Information** is to be entered under the **Non-WET Projects by Type Category** in WESS as \$0 classes which includes but not limited to hours of class, dates of trainings, enrollment etc....
 - **Contractual Services:**
 - **Personnel costs such as Salaries and Benefits**
 - **Software costs**
 - **Outreach costs**
 - **Travel costs**
 - **Educational Supplies:** Enter consumables and non-consumables under this line item under the **Project Tab**.
 - **Equipment:** Enter all equipment under this line item under the **Project Tab**.
 - **NCRC Assessments-(Adult Education Only)**