

Opportunity Statement

For Mississippi, the future is now. Today, there are more than 40,000 unfilled jobs that can change Mississippi's landscape for years to come, setting the state for long-term, sustainable economic growth. These are jobs in opportunity occupations with high earning power. Unlike the past, completion of a four year college degree is not the only route to employment in high earning potential. In fact, only half of opportunity occupations require a four-year college degree, but do require some form of industry credential.

The key in the new labor market is dependent on creating an economic environment that allows individuals to secure a new workforce currency that includes both college credentials and industry credentials, along with life and practical skills. The future of Mississippi relies on ensuring our citizens have the ability to acquire the skills necessary to gain employment with high earning power.

“Adult skill level must be elevated. Meeting this demand will require every Mississippian to be successful, regardless of socio-economic background.”

-Education leader



ENDEAVOR - A Blueprint to Advance Mississippi

To position Mississippi for long-term growth and sustainability, it is vital to identify the key components necessary to advance an economic environment conducive to today's opportunities while preparing for future possibilities.

Endeavor is a blueprint for building an economic environment where people can secure the new workforce currency necessary to advance Mississippi. The goals outlined in Endeavor are designed to:

- Develop workforce opportunities for people to gain academic and industry credentials along with life and practical skills to succeed in the job market
- Increase educational achievement so people can be workforce- and college-ready
- Provide pathways with a clear career in mind
- Compel integration of workforce programs within and between education and workforce sectors
- Retain and attract highly-qualified workers in the state
- Prepare citizens to be future innovators and Mississippi leaders

Endeavor is an inclusive and transformational approach for guiding the state's trajectory and cultivating opportunities for Mississippi citizens and communities to thrive and achieve.

“One of the issues today is students not knowing what careers they can pursue and how to get there. Students should not have to choose between lifelong learners and lifelong earners.”

-National labor official

How will Endeavor help accomplish this?

Through Endeavor, MEC will undertake a five-year approach to promote public and private sector solutions focused on providing Mississippians with the opportunity to gain academic and industry credentials along with the life and practical skills necessary for the job market. It is critical that education and workforce are viewed as “one issue” in order to improve outcomes that lead to a quality workforce, especially in career and technical development.



“We have a tremendous challenge and opportunity with 40,000 unfilled jobs in Mississippi and not enough prepared people to fill them.”

-Leading Mississippi Employer



Endeavor will identify short- and long-term policy and program initiatives with the goal of accomplishing the following:

- I. **Educate MEC members, legislators, policymakers, industry groups, other stakeholders, and the general public** about the current state of our workforce and the opportunity Mississippi has to create jobs for now and the future.
- II. Compel **coordination of workforce training programs, funding mechanisms and private sector efforts** to better manage expectations and outcomes.
- III. **Promote innovation, competition and improved results in education.**
- IV. **Celebrate statewide and local successes** - i.e. Districts of Innovation, apprenticeship, mentoring and internship programs, improved reading scores and graduation rates, training impact on filling job vacancies and economic development wins.
- V. **Identify and explore successful programs from across the country.** Adapt, implement and promote where appropriate.
- VI. **Capitalize on available, yet unfilled jobs in Mississippi** to recruit newcomers to our state, while persuading more students to stay in Mississippi.

The Process

Through Endeavor, MEC leadership is setting forth a scope of work and five-year strategic plan to work with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House and other legislative and public policy leaders to bring educational and public and private sector entities together in a concerted effort to advance Mississippi's economy and economic opportunities for our citizens.

While conceived as a five-year plan, our hope is Endeavor will become a way of life for Mississippians as we work to advance our state and economic opportunities for our citizens.