

2016 - 2019 State of Mississippi Delta Region Development Plan



State of Mississippi

Phil Bryant

Office of the Governor

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Mississippi Delta Region Planning and Development Districts

Central Mississippi Planning and Development District

P.O. Box 4395
Jackson, MS 39296-4935
7 DRA Counties: Copiah,
Hinds, Madison, Rankin,
Simpson, Warren, Yazoo

East Central Planning and Development District

P.O. Box 499
Newton, MS 39345
2 DRA Counties: Jasper,
Smith

Northcentral Mississippi Planning and Development District

28 Industrial Park Blvd.
Winona, MS 38967
7 DRA Counties: Attala,
Carroll, Grenada, Holmes,
Leflore, Montgomery,
Yalobusha

North Delta Planning and Development District

115 Eureka St.
Batesville, MS 38606
7 DRA Counties: Coahoma,
DeSoto, Panola, Quitman,
Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica

North East Mississippi Planning and Development District

619 E. Parker Dr.
Booneville, MS 38829
3 DRA Counties: Benton,
Marshall, Tippah

South Delta Planning and Development District

P.O. Box 1776
Greenville, MS 38702-1776
6 DRA Counties:
Bolivar, Humphreys,
Issaquena, Sharkey,
Sunflower, Washington

Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District

9229 Hwy 49
Gulfport, MS 39503
3 DRA Counties: Covington,
Jefferson Davis, Marion

Southwest Mississippi Planning and Development District

1703 Bridewell Ln.
Port Gibson, MS 39150
10 DRA Counties: Adams,
Amite, Claiborne, Franklin,
Jefferson, Lawrence, Lincoln,
Pike, Walthall, Wilkinson

Three Rivers Planning and Development District

75 S. Main St.
Pontotoc, MS 38863
2 DRA Counties: Lafayette,
Union

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INTRODUCTION

In 2001, Congress established the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) to address the chronic economic distress that denies the eight-state region full partnership in America's future. Congress issued a mandate for the Authority to address this economic dilemma through advocacy, assessment, regional planning, research, and grant making.

The Authority is comprised of the Governors of the eight DRA states and a Federal Co-Chair, Christopher Masingill, appointed by the President. The Federal Co-Chair has one vote and the eight Governors each have one vote, requiring all matters to be decided by both the Federal Co-Chair and a majority of the Governors. The consensus model ensures close collaboration between the federal and state partners in carrying out the DRA mission. The DRA headquarters is in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Michael Marshall (Missouri) serves as the Alternate Federal Co-Chair of the DRA.

The DRA is a partnership of federal, state, and local governments. This Federal-State-Local partnership provides the structure to accomplish the mission, goals, and objectives set forth by the Authority to accomplish its Congressional mandate. Because of its partnership approach, DRA can identify innovative cross-agency initiatives and serve as a strategic investment partner. Within this framework of shared decision-making, each state adapts and designs programs to meet the needs at the local level.

Governor Phil Bryant is the State of Mississippi's representative to the DRA and is serving as the State Co-Chair. The responsibility for the administration of the DRA program within Mississippi lies with the Office of the Governor in Jackson. Governor Bryant has appointed, Alice T. Perry, Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of the Governor, as his Alternate to DRA. State leaders work in a collaborative manner with local planning and development districts (PDDs), economic development organizations, local communities, and other state agencies in the development of eligible projects to address the needs in the 47 Mississippi DRA counties.

Governor Bryant's top priority for Mississippi is job creation. With that overarching goal in mind, his other priorities are workforce development, quality education at all levels, and sustainable communities with a high quality of life. These priorities reflect DRA's mission, principles, and priorities. Mississippi will focus (1) Public Infrastructure; (2) Intermodal Transportation; (3) Workforce Training; and (4) Community Competitiveness. This will be particularly true for the distressed counties and isolated regions of the Mississippi Delta Region.

In accordance with the DRA governing statute, this document will serve as the State of Mississippi's Delta Region Development Plan. It was developed with information and input from the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) staff and their partners and with assistance from the Mississippi Department of Employment Security.

Mississippi Challenges and Opportunities



The Mississippi portion of the federally designated Mississippi Delta Region consists of the following 47 counties – 43 of them distressed, four non-distressed (based on the 2015 calculation for distressed county designation). Distressed designations are amended annually based on new data. To be deemed distressed, counties and parishes must meet one of the following criteria:

1. An unemployment rate of one percent higher (8.3 percent) than the national average (7.3 percent) for the most recent 24-month period; or
2. Have a per capita income of 80 percent or less of the national per capita income.

DISTRESSED				
Adams Amite Attala Benton Bolivar Carroll Claiborne Coahoma	Copiah Covington Franklin Grenada Holmes Humphreys Issaquena Jasper	Jefferson Jefferson Davis Lafayette Lawrence Leflore Lincoln Marion Marshall Montgomery	Panola Pike Quitman Sharkey Simpson Smith Sunflower Tallahatchie Tate	Tippah Tunica Union Walthall Warren Washington Wilkinson Yalobusha Yazoo
NON-DISTRESSED	DeSoto Hinds	Madison Rankin		

Mississippi has a high rate of poverty, over twenty-four percent according to the U.S. Census Bureau's latest calculation. Many of the DRA counties' poverty rates exceed 30 percent. Over 25,000 of the state's population receive SNAP and/or TANF benefits. During January 2015, over 14,000 people received Unemployment Insurance benefits. At the same time, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) registered over 40,000 unfilled jobs in its database. The challenge for the state in general, and DRA counties in particular, is to find a way to equip its citizens with the skills necessary to move them from dependence on public assistance to earning a living wage.

POPULATION

The state of Mississippi has seen a modest growth in population since 2000, which includes an overall growth in Mississippi Delta Regional Authority counties. (See Table 1) The net growth in the Mississippi DRA population is driven by large gains within a few of the Mississippi DRA counties; specifically, DeSoto, Madison, Rankin and Lafayette counties all had population growth exceeding twenty-five percent since 2000. Twenty-nine Mississippi DRA counties experienced losses in population, five of which lost more than twenty percent of their population in the last fourteen years.

Table 1 - US, Mississippi, MS DRA Region, and County Populations for MS DRA Region

Geography	2000 Census	2010 Census	2014 ACS	% Change 2000 to 2014
United States	281,421,906	308,745,538	314,107,084	11.61%
Mississippi	2,844,658	2,967,297	2,984,345	4.91%
MS DRA Region Total	1,513,266	1,578,569	1,583,077	4.61%
Adams	34,340	32,297	32,189	(6.26%)
Amite	13,599	13,131	12,957	(4.72%)
Attala	19,661	19,564	19,303	(1.82%)
Benton	8,026	8,729	8,573	6.82%
Bolivar	40,633	34,145	33,961	(16.42%)
Carroll	10,769	10,597	10,418	(3.26%)
Claiborne	11,831	9,604	9,396	(20.58%)
Coahoma	30,622	26,151	25,527	(16.64%)
Copiah	28,757	29,449	29,028	0.94%
Covington	19,407	19,568	19,495	0.45%
DeSoto	107,199	161,252	166,266	55.10%
Franklin	8,448	8,118	7,944	(5.97%)
Grenada	23,263	21,906	21,660	(6.89%)
Hinds	250,800	245,285	246,364	(1.77%)
Holmes	21,609	19,198	18,965	(12.24%)
Humphreys	11,206	9,375	9,106	(18.74%)
Issaquena	2,274	1,406	1,279	(43.76%)
Jasper	18,149	17,062	16,687	(8.06%)
Jefferson	9,740	7,726	7,634	(21.62%)
Jefferson Davis	13,962	12,487	12,100	(13.34%)
Lafayette	38,744	47,351	50,256	29.71%
Lawrence	13,258	12,929	12,636	(4.69%)
Leflore	37,947	32,317	31,772	(16.27%)

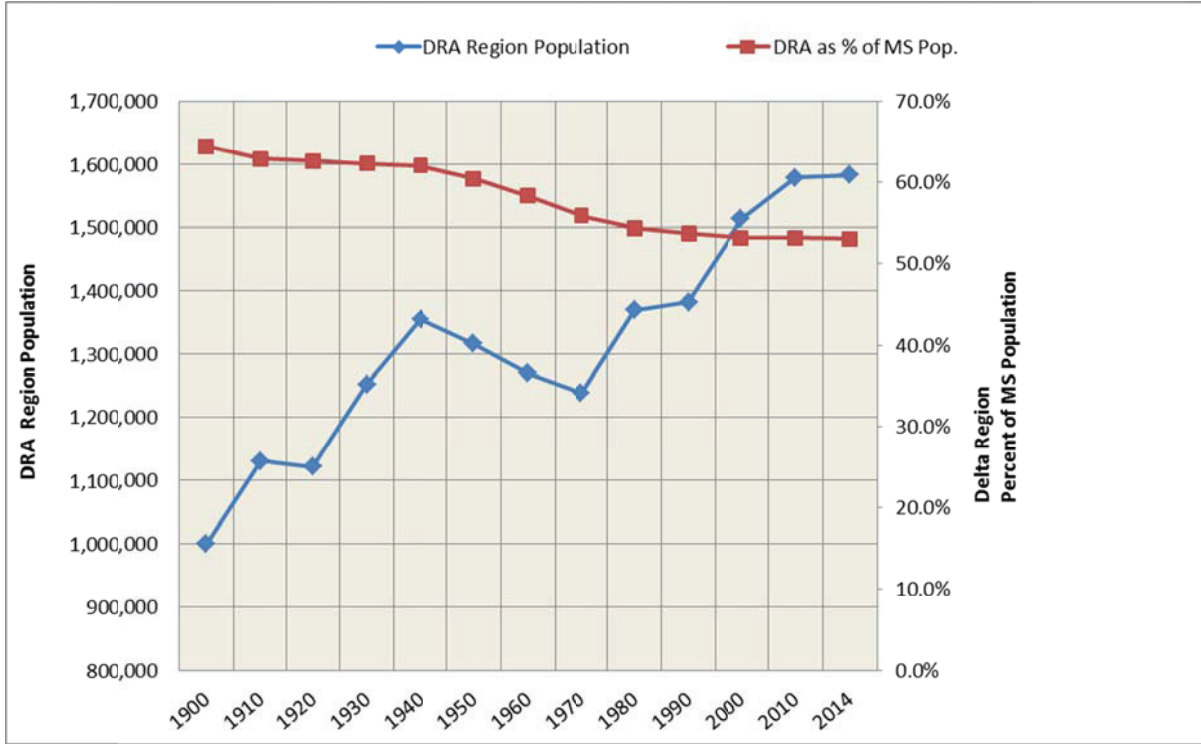
Table 1 - US, Mississippi, MS DRA Region, and County Populations for MS DRA Region

Geography	2000 Census	2010 Census	2014 ACS	% Change 2000 to 2014
Lincoln	33,166	34,869	34,824	5.00%
Madison	74,674	95,203	98,622	32.07%
Marion	25,595	27,088	26,449	3.34%
Marshall	34,993	37,144	36,636	4.70%
Montgomery	12,189	10,925	10,634	(12.76%)
Panola	34,274	34,707	34,507	0.68%
Pike	38,940	40,404	40,209	3.26%
Quitman	10,117	8,223	7,902	(21.89%)
Rankin	115,327	141,617	145,483	26.15%
Sharkey	6,580	4,916	4,898	(25.56%)
Simpson	27,639	27,503	27,425	(0.77%)
Smith	16,182	16,491	16,344	1.00%
Sunflower	34,369	29,450	28,314	(17.62%)
Tallahatchie	14,903	15,378	15,124	1.48%
Tate	25,370	28,886	28,557	12.56%
Tippah	20,826	22,232	22,069	5.97%
Tunica	9,227	10,778	10,583	14.70%
Union	25,362	27,134	27,536	8.57%
Walthall	15,156	15,443	15,126	(0.20%)
Warren	49,644	48,773	48,291	(2.73%)
Washington	62,977	51,137	50,038	(20.55%)
Wilkinson	10,312	9,878	9,481	(8.06%)
Yalobusha	13,051	12,678	12,433	(4.74%)
Yazoo	28,149	28,065	28,076	(0.26%)

At the same time, the population of counties in the Mississippi DRA declined as a percentage of Mississippi's total population. This trend is driven by large growth in a few counties.

Chart 1 - MS Delta Regional Authority Population Trends 1900 through 2014
Total Population and Population as a Percentage of MS Population

Source: US Census Bureau



INCOME

In 2014, the Mississippi DRA counties registered an average per capita income (PCI) of \$35,606, which is only 77.3% of the U.S. average PCI of \$46,049.

Table 2: Per Capita Income for DRA Counties

Area	2000	% of US	2010	% of US	2014	% of US
United States	30,602	100.0%	40,277	100.0%	46,049	100.0%
Mississippi	21,582	70.5%	30,783	76.4%	34,431	74.8%
Mississippi DRA	21,714	71.0%	31,278	77.7%	35,606	77.3%
Adams	21,534	70.4%	29,908	74.3%	34,908	75.8%
Amite	17,968	58.7%	27,358	67.9%	32,765	71.2%
Attala	17,968	58.7%	25,338	62.9%	29,516	64.1%
Benton	15,712	51.3%	22,323	55.4%	26,032	56.5%
Bolivar	17,596	57.5%	28,912	71.8%	33,377	72.5%
Carroll	18,799	61.4%	26,560	65.9%	30,262	65.7%
Claiborne	15,748	51.5%	27,520	68.3%	29,086	63.2%
Coahoma	20,187	66.0%	27,685	68.7%	30,037	65.2%
Copiah	16,982	55.5%	27,105	67.3%	31,151	67.6%

Area	2000	% of US	2010	% of US	2014	% of US
Covington	17,360	56.7%	28,159	69.9%	33,275	72.3%
DeSoto	26,545	86.7%	32,623	81.0%	36,242	78.7%
Franklin	15,862	51.8%	26,864	66.7%	29,962	65.1%
Grenada	20,472	66.9%	29,501	73.2%	33,574	72.9%
Hinds	25,413	83.0%	35,566	88.3%	38,344	83.3%
Holmes	13,593	44.4%	24,014	59.6%	26,308	57.1%
Humphreys	18,403	60.1%	28,047	69.6%	31,808	69.1%
Issaquena	13,082	42.7%	23,586	58.6%	25,516	55.4%
Jasper	17,160	56.1%	29,176	72.4%	35,207	76.5%
Jefferson	12,469	40.7%	26,238	65.1%	30,198	65.6%
Jefferson Davis	15,565	50.9%	25,429	63.1%	30,213	65.6%
Lafayette	21,862	71.4%	31,734	78.8%	34,703	75.4%
Lawrence	21,145	69.1%	28,163	69.9%	32,780	71.2%
Leflore	18,218	59.5%	28,900	71.8%	31,917	69.3%
Lincoln	20,307	66.4%	30,549	75.8%	34,964	75.9%
Madison	32,949	107.7%	48,308	119.9%	58,604	127.3%
Marion	17,504	57.2%	26,486	65.8%	32,338	70.2%
Marshall	17,783	58.1%	24,710	61.4%	28,009	60.8%
Montgomery	18,114	59.2%	27,844	69.1%	31,665	68.8%
Panola	17,597	57.5%	25,851	64.2%	29,585	64.2%
Pike	18,815	61.5%	26,360	65.4%	29,761	64.6%
Quitman	15,042	49.2%	24,658	61.2%	27,921	60.6%
Rankin	26,965	88.1%	35,606	88.4%	39,994	86.9%
Sharkey	15,955	52.1%	25,749	63.9%	30,511	66.3%
Simpson	18,646	60.9%	28,894	71.7%	34,710	75.4%
Smith	20,230	66.1%	26,948	66.9%	32,824	71.3%
Sunflower	16,188	52.9%	24,626	61.1%	26,863	58.3%
Tallahatchie	15,636	51.1%	21,897	54.4%	29,269	63.6%
Tate	21,494	70.2%	27,515	68.3%	31,570	68.6%
Tippah	19,550	63.9%	25,080	62.3%	29,137	63.3%
Tunica	17,120	55.9%	26,919	66.8%	31,570	68.6%
Union	20,074	65.6%	25,162	62.5%	30,096	65.4%
Walthall	16,335	53.4%	23,676	58.8%	28,678	62.3%
Warren	25,722	84.1%	33,375	82.9%	36,623	79.5%
Washington	18,955	61.9%	29,022	72.1%	32,475	70.5%
Wilkinson	14,687	48.0%	24,176	60.0%	26,304	57.1%
Yalobusha	18,842	61.6%	26,237	65.1%	29,883	64.9%
Yazoo	17,905	58.5%	24,819	61.6%	27,588	59.9%

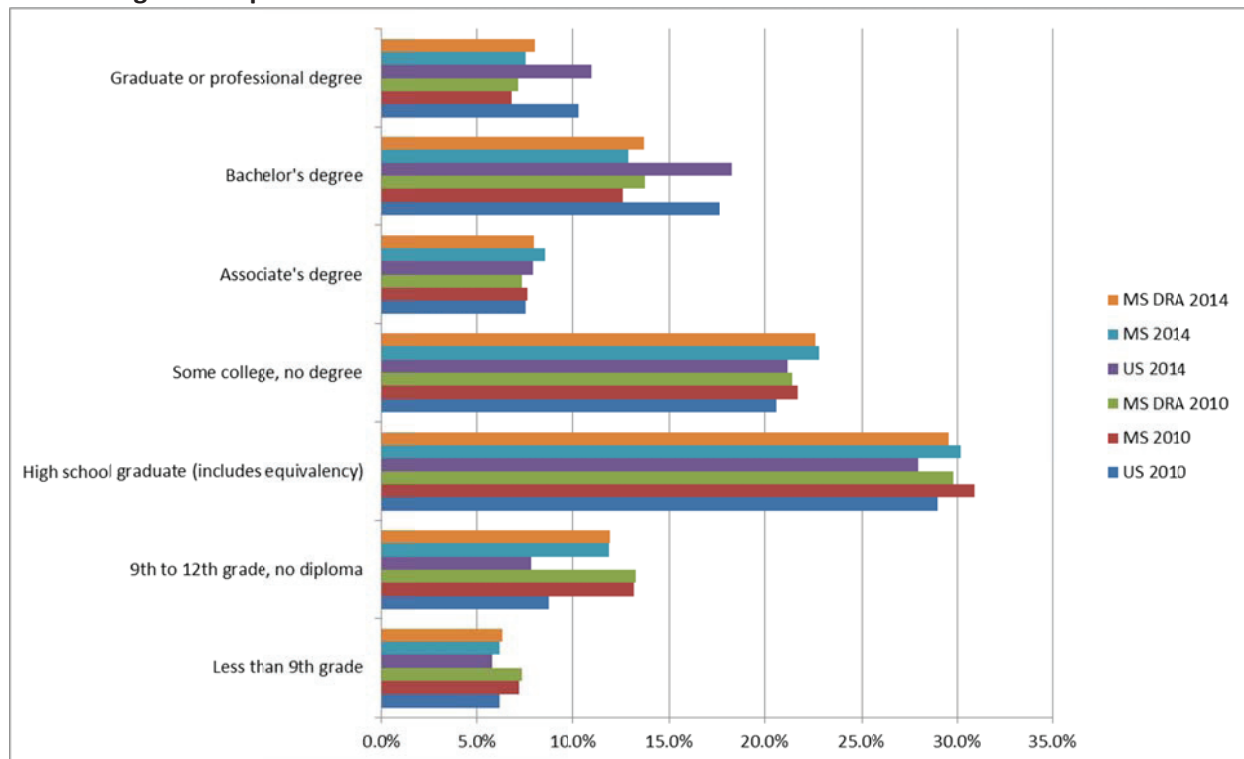
EDUCATION

Since 2010, the percentage of people in the Mississippi DRA counties who have Bachelor’s and Professional degrees increased when compared to the state numbers. At the same time, the number of people in the region with no diploma, or less than a 9th grade education has declined.

Although the number of people without a diploma or less than a 9th grade education has declined in the DRA region and in the state, those people make up almost twenty percent of the population. The largest educational segment of the population in the state and in the DRA counties is people with a high school diploma. This statistic mirrors U.S. numbers, so Mississippi must find ways to elevate its population’s skills in order to compete in the global marketplace. Mississippi is making strides to do just that. Changes in our educational system have produced gains for our students. Last year, our 4th graders scored highest for improvements in reading and math and ninety-five percent of our at-risk Jobs for Mississippi Graduates students stayed in school.

The state must continue to invest in education as the way to develop a strong workforce for the entire state. Education includes K-12, industry recognized certifications, workforce training programs and secondary and post-secondary education. A work-ready labor force is imperative to luring businesses into the area or for existing businesses to expand.

Chart 2: Degree Comparison 2010 to 2014

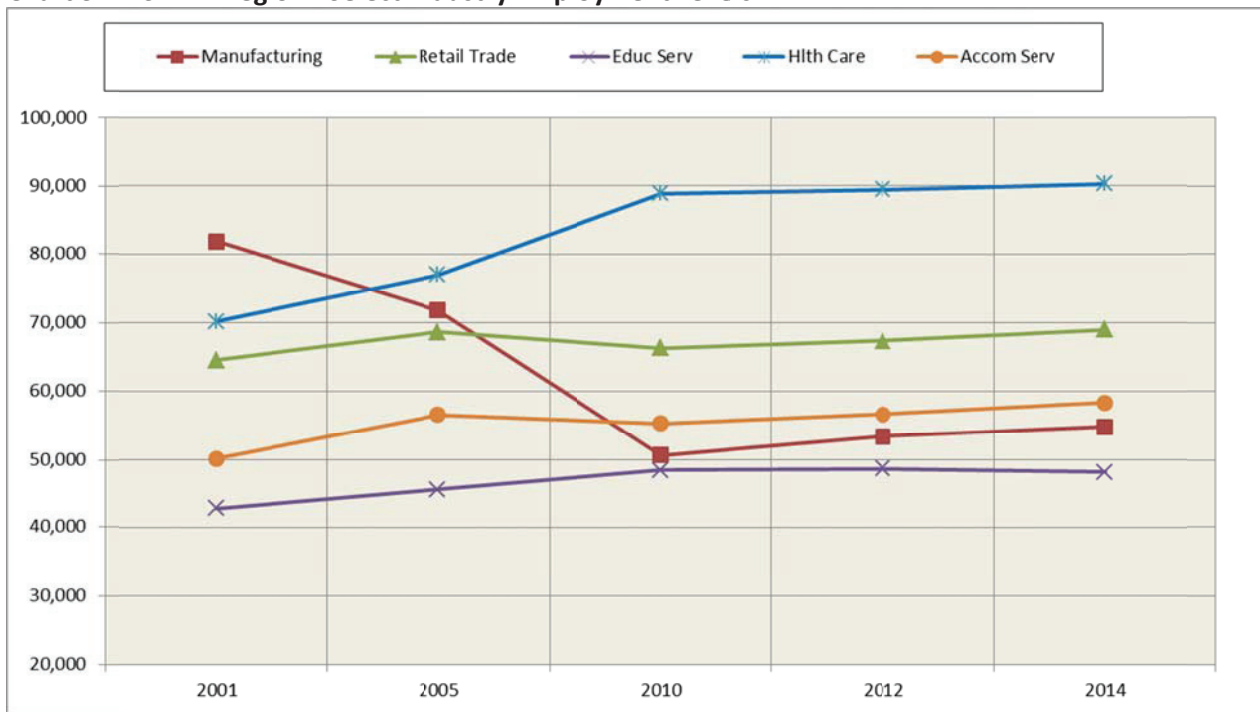


The industry sectors with the largest gains in employment levels since 2001 are healthcare, retail, education, manufacturing and hospitality. Healthcare and manufacturing in particular do not require a 4-year degree; however, they do require some education beyond high school.

INDUSTRY SECTORS

Prior to 2001, manufacturing was the largest employment industry sector in the Mississippi DRA region. Since that time, manufacturing experienced a steep decline through 2010, when it began to rebound. During the same time, Health Care began to overtake all other sectors of employment in the region. The other top employment sectors for the region have remained fairly steady.

Chart 3 - MS DRA Region - Select Industry Employment Levels



NOTE: selected the top five industry sectors for 2014, then compared employment levels for 2001 - 2014
 Source: Mississippi Department of Employment Security; Covered Employment & Wages

Goals, Priorities and Programs



Governor Bryant's top priorities for Mississippi are job creation, workforce development, quality education at all levels, and sustainable communities with a high quality of life. To achieve these priorities, Mississippi will focus on (1) public infrastructure; (2) intermodal transportation; (3) workforce training; and, (4) community competitiveness. These priorities are in alignment with the DRAs mission, principals, and priorities.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE: Basic public infrastructure, such as upgrading our wastewater treatment systems in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress

The State of Mississippi must have an infrastructure that supports economic growth in distressed or isolated areas.

State Strategies

- The state will pursue community infrastructure development strategies to grow the state economy and encourage job creation and private capital investment. Because we know that community development precedes economic development, the State will also pursue strategies to foster vibrant communities through investment in basic public infrastructure and financial support for local health, safety and quality of life improvements.
- The state will increase access to low-cost high-speed internet, especially in rural areas.
- The state will improve access to capital funding for the purpose of expanding economic development projects in the DRA distressed areas.

INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION: Transportation infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating economic development in the region

The State of Mississippi relies on a well-maintained and efficient transportation system to support economic vitality in the region. The State shall pursue opportunities to foster the growth and development of an intermodal transportation network to include all forms of public/private commercial and non-commercial transportation means.

State Strategies

- The state will pursue transportation network improvements and business development activities including, but not limited to the intermodal needs of the region.
 - In-land ports
 - Airports
 - Public Carrier
 - Roadways
 - Railways

WORKFORCE TRAINING: Training to support local business needs

Successful workforce training requires partnerships between MDES, MDA, PDDs, community colleges, universities, K-12 educators, employers and other stakeholders. The new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates partnerships between these stakeholders and other state agencies for the purpose of moving individuals from public assistance into the workforce through training.

To respond to the challenges and opportunities of the global economy, workers must continually build skills, knowledge, and experience. Students, the unemployed and low-skilled workers must have access to training programs, which provide them with the skills required by business. The Delta Region must train for 21st Century skillsets. Business location and expansion decisions are increasingly based on the presence of a talented workforce. The K-12, community college, and university systems along with WIN Job Centers and other publicly supported training programs are critical to the success of this goal.

State Strategies

- Place more emphasis on industry-focused short-term, credential based training programs and two-year degree programs that provide the regions with a qualified and quantifiable labor pool, which aids greatly in the recruitment of new business.
- The Workforce Investment Areas should work with MDA, local economic developers, community colleges, and other stakeholders to identify highest priority target industries for the region, assess the relevant skills that are necessary for those targeted industries, and then ensure alignment between workforce training programs offered and the skills demanded by target industries.
- Reduce dropout rate through expanded dropout prevention and school-to-work programs for at-risk and disadvantaged youth, such as our Jobs for Mississippi Graduates initiative.
- Expand GED programs, which also offer industry-based certifications.
- Increase STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programs in K-12 to encourage students to become engineers, healthcare specialists, scientists, etc.
- Implement Work Ready Community initiatives, which provide individuals with industry recognized certificates and aid in business recruitment efforts.
- Upgrade the training delivery capabilities of community colleges to reach rural participants (ex. Mobile training labs and online learning).
- Support innovative healthcare programs such as nursing externships, simulation equipment, and telehealth training programs.
- Utilize state agency databases to identify potential candidates for training among TANF and SNAP recipients and people with disabilities.

COMMUNITY COMPETITIVENESS: Community leadership training to improve skills to focus on building communities that can effectively compete for economic development opportunities and grow their local economies

The MDA, along with other partners, will work with communities to increase the local leadership skills and in developing community strategic plans. These plans will help them take advantage of available assets, make connections with other resources and aid leaders in becoming more competitive economic developers. This will be accomplished through improved industrial recruitment practices, better understanding of long-term planning and building strong working relationships with key support organizations.

State Strategies

- The State will pursue training opportunities to build up the competitiveness of communities through increased leadership and planning skills of local leadership. This program will be presented in a series of workshops designed to provide real world guidance, best practices, and tools to grow their economies and help build relationships between local leaders and the MDA. Leaders within the DRA region will have the opportunity to inform the MDA of their communities' accomplishments and problems. They will cover the following topics:
 - Industrial recruitment
 - Financial assistance
 - Long-term planning
 - Improving Request for Proposals (RFP) and Request for Information (RFI) responses
 - Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets (creative economy, tourism, crafts industries, etc.)
 - Leadership development
 - Relationship building
 - Improving quality of life and services
 - Economic gardening to identify and capitalize on existing industry growth potential
- The State will pursue economic development initiatives targeted, but not limited to the following industry sectors, with a particular focus on communities in distressed and isolated areas:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Aerospace
 - Agribusiness and Food Processing
 - Automotive
 - Energy
 - Health Care
 - Shipbuilding
 - Tourism and Film
 - Distribution and Warehousing
 - Data Centers and Information Technology

Alignment of State Priorities with DRA



DRA has a mission to eliminate the chronic economic distress of the region and, thereby, bring its 252 counties into full partnership with America's future.

The authorizing statute for the Delta Regional Authority provides that the state's development plan reflect DRA's mission, goals, and guiding principles. Those guiding principles are:

- The most valuable investment that can be made in the Region is in its people.
- Entrepreneurial economies that focus on high-value-added goods and services offer the best future for many parts of the Region.
- Strategies and objectives should take into consideration participation in the global economy.
- Economic development should be community-based and should emphasize local decision-making.
- DRA investments should take advantage of technology and telecommunications applications.
- DRA should promote an atmosphere of open and productive communication among all stakeholders in the Region.
- DRA should focus special attention on the areas of greatest need.

The DRA authorizing statute also provides that federal funds used for economic and community development "shall be focused on the activities in the following order or priority:

- Basic public infrastructure in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.
- Transportation infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating economic development in the region.
- Business development, with emphasis on entrepreneurship.
- Job training or employment-related education, with emphasis on use of existing public educational institutions located in the region."

The statute further provides that 75% of funds should be allocated to distressed counties and isolated regions. The Delta Regional Authority's goals are as follows:

- Workforce Competitiveness – Advance the productivity and economic competitiveness of the Delta workforce;
- Infrastructure – Strengthen the Delta's physical and digital connections to the global economy; and
- Community Development – Facilitate local capacity building within Delta communities.

Mississippi's priorities reflect DRA's mission, principles, and priorities and will be particularly true for the distressed counties and isolation regions of the Mississippi Delta Region.

State Resources



The State of Mississippi has many challenges to economic development for every region of the state. High unemployment, low per capita income and loss of population in many DRA counties increase the challenges in the Mississippi DRA.

The state will leverage its investment in the people of the DRA to create a skilled and work-ready labor force for the region. The state will replicate or expand some of its successes to accomplish this goal.

Education Successes

- Jobs for Mississippi Graduates – this program targets at-risk youth to help them stay in school; so far, 95% of these at risk students have stayed in school, with 82% going to college, a career or the military.
- MSGradJobs.com is a website that connects graduates of Mississippi’s public and private colleges and universities with employers hiring in the state.
- Last year, Mississippi 4th graders lead the nation in math and reading improvement
- Over 90% of Mississippi 3rd graders passed their reading tests.
- As our General Fund grew, Mississippi invested an additional \$400 million in K-12 education, including \$100 million in teacher pay raises.

Community & Health Successes

- In 2014, each of the 14 Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) developed Mobile Crisis Response Teams to provide community-based crisis services that deliver solution-focused and recovery-oriented behavioral health assessments and stabilization of crisis in the location where the individual is experiencing the crisis. The service is available statewide.
- MDHS Partnered with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) to pilot colocations of their staff and MDHS Field Operation staff in an effort to insure applicants and recipients are fully engaged in finding employment. The first located office is Hancock County.

Economic Successes

- Gov. Bryant was named one of the 15 Best Governors for Recruiting Private Sector Jobs according to “On Numbers,” a national business publication.
- To strengthen Mississippi’s economy, the governor has signed bills to:
 - Create the Mississippi job training grant for private businesses;
 - Establish a pilot program to allow at-risk high school students to learn a trade;
 - Establish a committee of small businessmen and women to recommend changes to state regulations on businesses;

- Provide for tax credits to offset the inventory tax; and
 - Direct \$12 million to workforce enhancement training without raising the unemployment tax
- Mississippi is ranked in the #3 state in export growth and the #2 best state for the cost of doing business, according to the U.S. Chamber Foundation.
- In the past four years, MDA projects have brought over 21,000 jobs and \$3 billion of private investment into the state.
- Mississippi's ROI for dollars spent to incentivize industry generated eleven dollars for every dollar spent.

Workforce Development Successes

- Mississippi was the first state to bring all the necessary partners together to compile and submit its Workforce Innovation and Opportunity action plan to the U.S. Department of Labor.
- MDES has transferred over \$213 million to the Workforce Enhancement Training (WET) Fund for workforce training programs.
- In 2015, over 30,000 people found work through their local WIN Job Centers.
- Mississippi has leveraged technology that provides its citizens with greater access to job openings, support services and benefits.
 - Mississippiworks.org
 - MSWorks mobile app
 - 2FILEUI mobile app
- South Delta Planning & Development District received a \$50,000 from the Foundation for the Mid-South for workforce support services.

Looking Ahead



Governor Bryant's top priority for the state is job creation. He will continue to push workforce development, improvements in our educational system, intermodal transportation projects, and infrastructure projects that increase opportunities and the quality of life for every Mississippian.

Intermodal Transportation

- Gov. Bryant established the GoCoast2020 Commission to help define priorities for restoration of the coast in the aftermath of the Deep Water Horizon accident. Based on the committee's recommendations, he announced proposed infrastructure projects in November 2015. Although these projects are earmarked for the coast, they support any Mississippian doing business with, providing services to or shipping products from the area.
 - Stennis International Airport Hangar (\$2 million) – The proposed hangar facility will increase the capability of Stennis International Airport to provide aeronautical services to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.
 - Port Bienville Trans-Loading Dock Completion (\$8 million) – The proposed Port Bienville Trans-Loading Dock Completion Project would improve the terminal use for trans-loading, become functional for containers on barge operations, extend an existing rail line, and be used to support supply vessels in the offshore industry.

Workforce Development

Mississippi intends that the following GoCoast2020 Commission projects will serve as pilots for similar Delta Regional Authority funded workforce development projects.

- Recommendations from the GoCoast2020 Commission will provide training dollars for specific areas of workforce development training.
 - Work-Ready Community Program (\$4 million) – The proposed Mississippi Gulf Coast Work-Ready Community Program is designed to aid coastal citizens in the attainment of basic skills, employability skills, and specific industry skills that are needed in high-demand industry sectors. This project could be expanded to other parts of the state including DRA counties.
 - Support for William Carey University School of Pharmacy (\$1 million) – The proposed project will support William Carey University in establishing its School of Pharmacy on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.
- The governor supports a bill introduced in the 2016 legislature:
 - To divert \$50 million from the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund to community colleges to modernize equipment and move students into workforce training for middle-skill jobs. Mississippi consistently retains one of the most solvent UI Trust Funds in the nation at over \$500 million.

Education

- Governor Bryant is recommending changes in the Mississippi education system that will strengthen the accountability of school districts and give parents greater choice in their children's education. The two bills before the legislature would:
 - Call for the election of school boards that will appoint the superintendent.
 - Allow parents to choose what school to send their children regardless of district boundaries.

Infrastructure

- Mississippi will invest in infrastructure projects that improve the communities and the quality of life for the people who live in them.
 - Upgrade wastewater treatment systems in distressed and rural counties.
 - Increase access to low-cost high-speed internet that provides all citizens access to online benefits and learning programs.