



Improve College Affordability in Mississippi

Redesign Mississippi’s Resident Tuition Assistance Grant (MTAG) and Reform the Higher Education Legislative Plan for Needy Students (HELP)

IMPROVE COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY TO STRENGTHEN MISSISSIPPI’S WORKFORCE PIPELINE

Education is the cornerstone of economic mobility in Mississippi. More Mississippians need access to affordable education and training to prepare for in-demand jobs and to expand economic development opportunities in the state. Jobs requiring postsecondary education will continue to grow, yet there is a shortfall in the production of those credentials. Fewer high school students are going directly to college and nearly 200,000 working-aged adults would benefit from earning a credential. Improving college affordability supports the goals of Ascent to 55% and Accelerate MS to increase attainment and transform the state’s workforce.

Investing in state financial aid will spark economic development with a prepared workforce.

Mississippi’s financial aid programs have served students for over 25 years and have largely remained unchanged. Investing an additional \$21 million will address key design issues to ensure MTAG keeps pace with the needs of the workforce.

	Support Workforce Programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incent high-value pathways • Reach more adult learners • Permit part-time in MTAG
	Serve More Mississippians
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double students served in MTAG • Represent the overall population
	Expand Affordability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve both low- & middle-income • Double MTAG award amounts

- 1. Redesign MTAG:** Expand workforce preparation by removing application and eligibility barriers and serving more students, including adults, in high value pathways.
- 2. Reform HELP:** Reward progression by providing the same award amount to underclassmen in each sector and higher awards to juniors/seniors. Direct savings to MTAG Works!
- 3. Maintain MESG:** Maintain MESG to reward high achieving students. Maintain MESG requirements and award amounts.



Improve College Affordability in Mississippi

PROGRAM DETAILS

Revised MTAG Works! Eligibility	New MTAG Works! Award Amounts									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS resident • Admitted to eligible institution • Enroll at least half-time • 2.5 renewal college GPA • 4 years of award • Bonus award for eligible high-value pathways • Have a family income equal to or less than the state’s median (~\$90,000 family of four) 	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Freshmen/Sophomores</td> <td></td> <td>\$1,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Juniors/Seniors</td> <td></td> <td>\$2,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High-value Pathway Bonus</td> <td></td> <td>\$500</td> </tr> </table>	Freshmen/Sophomores		\$1,000	Juniors/Seniors		\$2,000	High-value Pathway Bonus		\$500
Freshmen/Sophomores		\$1,000								
Juniors/Seniors		\$2,000								
High-value Pathway Bonus		\$500								
Maintain HELP Eligibility	Revised HELP Award Amount for Underclassmen 2023-24									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS resident • Enroll full-time • 2.5 high school GPA • 20 ACT • 2.5 renewal college GPA • 4 years of award • Enroll within 2 years of high school • Meet income limitations (\$42,500+) 	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Freshmen/Sophomores</td> <td></td> <td>\$3,300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Juniors/Seniors</td> <td></td> <td>\$8,900</td> </tr> </table> <p>Note: Amounts based on average public tuition by sector.</p>	Freshmen/Sophomores		\$3,300	Juniors/Seniors		\$8,900			
Freshmen/Sophomores		\$3,300								
Juniors/Seniors		\$8,900								
Maintain MESHG Eligibility	Maintain MESHG Award Amounts									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS resident • Enroll full-time • 3.5 high school GPA • 29 ACT • 3.5 renewal college GPA • 4 years of award • Enroll within 3 years of high school 	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>All Recipients</td> <td></td> <td>\$2,500</td> </tr> </table>	All Recipients		\$2,500						
All Recipients		\$2,500								



Improve College Affordability in Mississippi

MISSISSIPPI STATE FINANCIAL AID TASK FORCE

The [Woodward Hines Education Foundation](#) convened a nonpartisan task force in 2022 of 16 education and workforce leaders in Mississippi. The group explored how Mississippi's student financial aid investments can be best leveraged to meet the economic development needs of the state. They reviewed state and national data exploring the impact of Mississippi's current student financial aid investments, current and future workforce needs, postsecondary attainment levels, needs of adult and part-time students, and high-growth and in-demand jobs.

- Dr. Jay Allen, President, Itawamba Community College; Chair, Education Achievement Council
- Dr. Philip Bonfanti, Executive Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
- Dr. Jason Dean, Executive Director, Mississippi Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- Ann Hendrick, Director of the Get2College Program, Woodward Hines Education Foundation (retired)
- Thomas Hudson, President, Jackson State University
- Dr. Tyrone Jackson, President, Mississippi Delta Community College
- Dr. Paul McKinney, Director of Financial Aid, Mississippi State University
- Ryan Miller, Executive Director, Office of Workforce Development (Accelerate MS)
- Amber Palmer, Complete2Compete Project Manager, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
- Dr. Casey Prestwood, Associate Commissioner for Academic and Student Affairs, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
- Dr. Jennifer Rogers, Director, Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid
- Kell Smith, Acting Executive Director, Mississippi Community College Board
- Dr. James Turcotte, Board Chair, Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board
- Scott Waller, President, Mississippi Economic Council
- Apryll Washington, Assistant Director of Policy and Planning, Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid
- Dr. Earl Watkins, Superintendent, Mississippi Achievement School District

The nonpartisan task force was supported by [Lumina Foundation's Strategy Labs](#) with [HCM Strategists](#) providing subject-matter expertise and meeting facilitation support from Dr. Jimmy Clarke, Dr. Nate Johnson, and Dr. Rachelle Sharpe, with analysis support from Dr. Kimberly Hanauer of [UnlockED](#).