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WOODWARD HINES EDUCATION FOUNDATION

MISSISSIPPI JOBS EXPLORER

Using Mississippi Labor Market Information in Career Conversations

A conversation guide for early career exploration with middle and high school students.

About This Guide

The Mississippi Top Jobs Explorer tool on the Get2College website can help you and your students explore career options using information about wages, job openings, employment growth, education requirements, and career fields across Mississippi.

This guide is designed to be used alongside the Mississippi Top Jobs Explorer online tool during one-on-one career conversations. It is not intended to identify the "best" career for a student. Instead, use it to help students explore options, compare occupations, and consider how different careers fit their interests and plans after high school.

How to Use This Guide

1. **Start with the student.** Talk about their interests, strengths, education goals, and what matters to them in a future career.
2. **Explore the Jobs Explorer together.** Use filters such as career cluster, industry, education level, geographic region, and family-sustaining wage threshold to narrow the options.
3. **Compare occupations.** Use the career cluster pages in this guide to quickly compare example occupations by wage, projected growth, annual openings, and typical education. Talk through what stands out to the student and what tradeoffs they notice.
4. **Keep exploring.** Use the Mississippi Top Jobs Explorer Tool to look beyond the examples in this guide and find other occupations that fit the student's interests and goals.

Understanding the Numbers

Average Annual Wage

Estimated average annual earnings for workers in an occupation. Actual earnings vary by experience, location, employer, and other factors.

Projected Growth

Expected percentage change in employment from 2022 to 2032.

Annual Job Openings

Estimated positions becoming available each year, including both new jobs and openings created as workers leave an occupation.

Typical Education

Education level most commonly associated with an occupation. Actual requirements can vary by employer and position.

Questions to Explore with Students

As you explore careers together, consider:

- What subjects or activities do you enjoy most?
- What kinds of problems do you enjoy solving?
- How much education or training are you interested in pursuing?
- Do you prefer working with people, technology, or your hands?
- What matters most to you in a future career?

High-Opportunity Career Clusters in Mississippi

The pages that follow highlight four career clusters and selected occupations that perform strongly on Mississippi's in-demand measure, which considers average annual wages, projected employment growth, and annual job openings. The featured occupations are examples, not a complete list of career options. Use them as starting points for conversation and encourage students to explore other occupations in the Mississippi Top Jobs Explorer Tool that fit their interests and goals.

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Digital Technology

Digital technology careers include software development, cybersecurity, data science, information systems, and other technology-focused fields. These occupations are found across a range of Mississippi industries, including professional and technical services, finance, information, healthcare, manufacturing, and government. Many of the high-opportunity occupations in this cluster require a bachelor's degree and involve skills related to programming, data analysis, cybersecurity, and cloud computing.

Software Developers

Design and develop software and digital systems based on user needs.

$87,990	43.3%	295
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Bachelor's degree**

Common industries: Professional and technical services; Information; Finance and insurance

Example technology skills: Python, JavaScript, SQL, AWS, Azure, Git/GitHub

Information Security Analysts

Protect computer networks and information by identifying security risks and implementing safeguards.

$89,910	47.7%	68
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Bachelor's degree**

Common industries: Professional and technical services; Finance and insurance; Management of companies and enterprises

Example technology skills: AWS, Azure, Linux, Python, Splunk, Microsoft PowerShell, firewall software

Computer and Information Research Scientists

Research computing problems and develop new or improved computer technologies and systems.

$111,360	23.2%	31
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Bachelor's degree**

Common industries: Professional and technical services; Government; Information

Example technology skills: Python, TensorFlow, PyTorch, R, AWS, Hadoop, Spark, Scikit-learn

Computer Systems Analysts

Analyze an organization's computer systems and recommend ways to improve how technology supports its work.

$84,670	10.5%	128
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Associate's degree**

Common industries: Professional and technical services; Finance and insurance; Management of companies and enterprises

Example technology skills: Python, SQL, SAP, Power BI, ServiceNow, Microsoft SharePoint

CAREER CLUSTER 2 OF 4

Healthcare & Human Services

Healthcare and human services careers include nursing, rehabilitation, respiratory care, behavioral health, and other roles that support people's health and well-being. These occupations span a wide range of education and training requirements, from associate degrees and certificates to advanced graduate degrees. Many high-opportunity occupations in this cluster combine strong demand with opportunities to work directly with patients and communities.

Nurse Practitioners

Diagnose and treat illnesses, develop treatment plans, prescribe medications, and provide preventive care.

$122,930	42.5%	396
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Master's degree**

Common industries: Health care and social assistance

Registered Nurses

Assess patients' health needs, provide nursing care and treatments, and monitor patients' conditions.

$79,470	6.4%	1,856
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Bachelor's degree**

Common industries: Health care and social assistance

Physical Therapists

Help patients improve mobility, relieve pain, restore physical function, and recover from injuries or illness.

$95,090	14.2%	106
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Doctoral degree**

Common industries: Health care and social assistance

Respiratory Therapists

Assess and treat patients with breathing disorders, provide respiratory treatments, and operate specialized equipment.

$70,410	14.4%	104
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Associate's degree**

Common industries: Health care and social assistance

Advanced Manufacturing

Advanced manufacturing careers include engineering, production, industrial maintenance, and skilled trades involved in designing, producing, maintaining, and improving products and production systems. These occupations span a wide range of education and training requirements, from high school diplomas and industry certifications to bachelor's degrees. While many are concentrated in manufacturing, these careers can also be found in construction, transportation, utilities, government, and professional and technical services.

Industrial Engineers

Design and improve production systems to increase efficiency, control costs, and maintain quality.

$96,060	27.3%	179
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Bachelor's degree**

Common industries: Manufacturing; Professional and technical services

Example technology skills: AutoCAD, SAP, SQL, Microsoft Excel

Industrial Machinery Mechanics

Install, maintain, troubleshoot, and repair machinery used in manufacturing and other industrial settings.

$60,860	23.0%	576
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Post-secondary certificate**

Common industries: Manufacturing; Wholesale trade; Other services

Mechanical Engineers

Design, develop, test, and improve machines, equipment, and mechanical systems.

$96,510	18.8%	94
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Bachelor's degree**

Common industries: Manufacturing; Professional and technical services

Example technology skills: AutoCAD, Revit, SolidWorks, Creo, Python

Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers

Use specialized equipment to join, repair, and fabricate metal components and products.

$51,360	12.7%	724
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **High school diploma**

Common industries: Manufacturing; Construction

CAREER CLUSTER 4 OF 4

Management & Entrepreneurship

Management and entrepreneurship careers involve planning, coordinating, analyzing, and improving how organizations operate. These occupations span areas such as financial management, business analysis, project management, human resources, and organizational operations and can be found across many industries. Many high-opportunity occupations in this cluster typically require a bachelor's degree.

Financial Managers

Oversee financial activities such as budgeting, financial reporting, investments, and other financial operations.

$123,590	21.2%	369
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Bachelor's degree**

Common industries: Finance and insurance; Professional and technical services; Management of companies and enterprises

Example technology skills: Microsoft Excel, SAP, Microsoft Office

Management Analysts

Analyze business operations and recommend ways to solve problems and improve organizational performance.

$88,590	15.5%	419
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Bachelor's degree**

Common industries: Professional and technical services; Government; Finance and insurance

Example technology skills: Power BI, Tableau, SQL, Salesforce, Python, Microsoft Excel

Project Management Specialists

Coordinate project schedules, budgets, staffing, and other requirements to help projects stay on track.

$85,410	13.9%	215
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Not specified**

Common industries: Professional and technical services; Construction

Example technology skills: Microsoft Project, project management software, Microsoft Excel

Operations Research Analysts

Use data, mathematical models, and statistical methods to help organizations solve problems and make decisions.

$86,390	34.3%	18
Average annual wage	Projected growth	Annual openings

TYPICAL EDUCATION **Master's degree**

Common industries: Finance and insurance; Professional and technical services; Government

Example technology skills: Power BI, Tableau, Python, SQL, Salesforce, Microsoft Excel

STUDENT WORKSHEET

Explore Your Career Options

Name _____

Use the Mississippi Top Jobs Explorer Tool to find two or three careers that catch your attention. You don't need to find the "right" career today. The goal is to identify a few possibilities that you want to learn more about.

1 Find a Few Careers That Interest You

	CAREER 1	CAREER 2	CAREER 3
Occupation			
What caught my attention?			
Something I want to know more about			

2 Think About What You Found

Which of these careers are you most interested in learning more about? Why?

_____

_____

_____

Did anything surprise you or change how you were thinking about your options?

_____

_____

_____

3 Take the Next Step

The Mississippi Top Jobs Explorer Tool is a starting point. Once you find a career that interests you, take additional steps to understand what pursuing it could look like. **Choose one or more next steps:**

- ☐ Learn more about the education, training, licenses, or certifications typically required
- ☐ Talk with someone who works in this career about what the job is actually like
- ☐ Look for opportunities to gain experience through a class, internship, job shadow, volunteer opportunity, or other hands-on experience
- ☐ Find Mississippi colleges, training programs, or other pathways that could prepare you for this career
- ☐ Explore related occupations that might offer another path into this field
- ☐ Other: _____

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We believe in you, and we're here to help you take the next step.

About Get2College

Get2College is a program of the Woodward Hines Education Foundation that provides free, practical support to help Mississippians plan, prepare, and pay for college. With three centers, a mobile center, and a statewide virtual reach, it offers one-on-one counseling, workshops, and resources that meet students and families where they are and help them take the next step toward education beyond high school. In addition to supporting students directly, Get2College builds capacity in schools and districts by equipping educators with the tools, training, and data they need to improve college access outcomes.

Serving You Across Mississippi

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