

**The Mississippi Partnership  
Workforce Development Area**

**MISSISSIPPI APPRENTICESHIP  
ACCELERATOR (MAA) PROGRAM POLICY**

Revised October 30, 2024



**THE MISSISSIPPI PARTNERSHIP**  
**MISSISSIPPI APPRENTICESHIP ACCELERATOR (MAA) PROGRAM POLICY**

**I. Scope and Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the requirements for the Mississippi Apprenticeship Accelerator (MAA) Program in the Mississippi Partnership Local Workforce Development Area (MPWDA). To assist companies and the Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP) with expanding RA in Mississippi, AccelerateMS, MAP, and MDES created the Mississippi Apprenticeship Accelerator (MAA) program. The MAA aims to provide critical funding to support Registered Apprenticeship (RA) expansion necessary to reduce critical skill gaps in priority sectors and occupations while expanding training to increase capacity and opportunities for Mississippians. MAA has a critical focus on high-demand, high-wage occupations, which AccelerateMS identified as being of critical importance due to talent demand and supply gaps.

**II. Program Overview**

Participating businesses may be reimbursed an amount equal to 50% of the apprentice's hourly wage up to a maximum of \$3,000 from MS Works Funds. The MPWDA may leverage other available funds to increase the impact of this program as industry demands justify if such funding is available.

The wage reimbursement will be based on the actual work time (this includes time spent in paid training) but will not include overtime, shift differential, premium pay and other non-regular wages paid by the business. Reimbursement shall not be claimed for time which the apprentice is absent due to illness, holiday, plant downtime, or other events during which no work or paid training occurs.

**III. Eligibility**

**A. Employers**

1. Any public, private non-profit, or private sector business may participate in the MAA Program with the following exceptions:
  - a. Businesses with unresolved violations of local, state (including Unemployment Insurance), or federal labor laws, or those experiencing abnormal labor conditions such as strikes or lockouts, are ineligible.
  - b. If a business is suspended or barred from participating in any Federal Government Procurement programs, it may not apply. Additionally, if a suspension or disbarment occurs during an agreement, the business must promptly notify the MAP and MPWDA representatives.
  - c. Retaining MAA apprentices is a factor in determining eligibility. Businesses that show a pattern of failing to provide long-term employment for MAA apprentices will be ineligible to add new apprentices for at least 12 months. "Pattern of failing to provide long-term employment" is defined as having at least 75% of apprentices reimbursed by the business in the past 12 months still employed by the business, with the 12-month retention period beginning at the apprentice's completion date.
  - d. Businesses that have relocated within the past 120 days and caused an increase in unemployment in their previous area of operation cannot utilize MAA until they have been operational at the new location for at least 120 days.
  - e. State agencies, temporary employment agencies, employee leasing firms, staffing agencies, churches, or any facility used for religious worship are ineligible.
  - f. Businesses with representatives on the Local Workforce Development Board are prohibited from applying during the representative's term and for one year after the term ends. This restriction does not apply to representatives of public or government entities.

- g. MAA cannot be used to employ immediate family members (spouse, child, grandchild, sibling, or sibling's spouse) of the business's owners, partners, board of directors, or the apprentice's direct supervisor.
2. Businesses in the targeted sectors of construction, advanced manufacturing, or information technology, as well as those hiring the priority occupations as provided by AccelerateMS and implementing an RA program, are eligible to participate.
3. Employers must agree to and execute an MAA Worksite Agreement. This agreement will define the reimbursement conditions, the maximum reimbursement amount per business based on available funds, and the duration of hours allowable for apprentices.

#### B. Apprentices

1. Apprentices must be eligible for WIOA to be enrolled into the MAA Program.
2. Apprentices may not be concurrently enrolled in the MS Partnership Industry Recognized Program and the MAA Program. However, an apprentice may be enrolled into the MAA Program upon completion of the MS Partnership Industry Recognized Program.
3. Apprentices will be employees of the partnering Apprenticeship Employer and must adhere to all employer policies.

#### C. Occupations

The MAA Program may not be utilized for any of the following:

1. Occupations with a wage rate below the minimum starting rate of pay of \$12.00 an hour.
2. Occupations dependent on commission; tips/gratuities; or draw as a primary source of income
3. Contract workers
4. Intermittent seasonal or temporary occupations
5. Regular part-time occupations—defined as less than 35 hours per week (an apprentice may be in paid part-time on-the-job training while also attending an educational/training program, but the planned end result is full-time employment).
6. If, within the past 120 days, the employer has had any layoff, work stoppage, or strike that included the same or substantially equivalent position.
7. A situation where the same or substantially equivalent position as the one requested for a RA, is unfilled due to a hiring freeze.
8. Any position where the employer has separated a regular employee with the intention of filling the vacancy with an RA.
9. A situation where an RA would infringe upon the promotion of or displacement of any current employee or a reduction of work hours for any other employee.
10. To train individuals under the age of 16.
11. Any companies in or related to the cannabis industry. This shall include, but not be limited to, cultivation facilities, research facilities, testing facilities, and dispensing facilities.
12. Any occupation that is involved in religious, anti-religious or political activity of any kind.

#### IV. Monitoring of MAA Program

The WIOA Service Provider, in coordination with Three Rivers Planning & Development District, will make at least one onsite visit each program year to the employer worksites to review the MAA Program.

#### V. Effective Date

This policy is effective October 30, 2024.