

Mississippi

Upon taking office in 2012, Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant stated that his first priority is “to make sure every Mississippian has a job.” Subsequently, he unveiled the Mississippi Works initiative designed to create a new strategy for economic growth, workforce development, and attracting investments from out of state. Mississippi Works is privately funded and overseen by a committee of over 100 business leaders from throughout the state. As a part of the program, the governor signed legislation that allows students at risk of dropping out of high school to participate in community college workforce training programs, receiving jobs-skills certification while still completing high school.

Recognizing the need to protect businesses with less than 100 employees, Mississippi enacted a Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Act in 2012. The act authorizes a regulatory review committee of twelve current and former small-business owners to review proposed and existing regulations and laws, and determine the impact to small businesses in the state and provide recommendations for mitigating impact. State agencies enacting new rules are also required to determine what impact their implementation will have on small businesses and are directed to identify ways to minimize the impact of regulation.

The state’s new Self-Employment Assistance Program, approved in 2012, will offer support services to unemployed individuals interested in starting new businesses. Participants receiving unemployment benefits will be eligible for free mentoring and training, offering out-of-work individuals an opportunity to explore potential self-employment, and potentially fostering the creation of new job-creating businesses.

Mississippi has identified healthcare as a target for job creation. The state’s new health care industry zone program is designed to attract pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical services firms near major medical facilities in the state. Firms who locate within designated zones would qualify for tax incentives and infrastructure support, provided they invest at least \$10 million and create at least 25 jobs. By enhancing medical facilities and attracting new health care-related manufacturing, research, and distribution facilities, the state hopes to stimulate other regional businesses, including hotels,

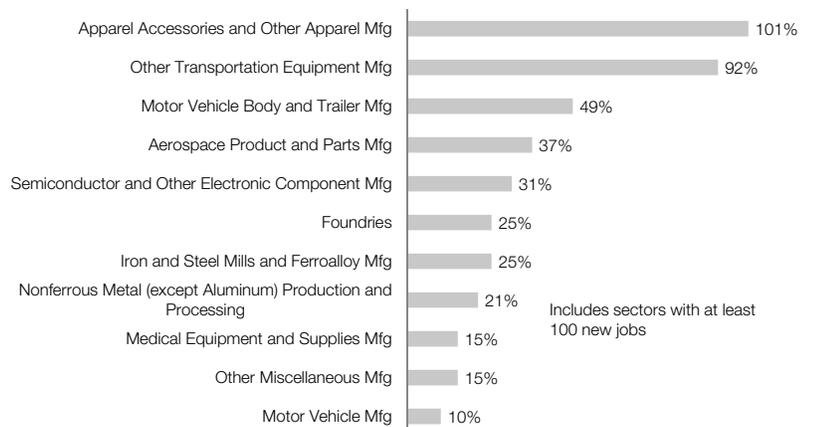
Mississippi’s Place in the Rankings

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|-----|-------------------------------------|
| #5 | Export Growth |
| #5 | Export Intensity Growth |
| #8 | Cost of Living |
| #9 | Growth in Share of National Exports |
| #11 | Higher-ed Efficiency |
| #12 | Small Business Survival Index |
| #14 | Per Capita Income Growth |
| #15 | Export Intensity |
| #15 | Productivity Growth |
| #16 | Business Closure Rate |
| #16 | STEM Job Growth |
| #17 | Academic R&D Intensity |
| #17 | Business Tax Climate |
| #20 | College Affordability |
| #21 | Tax Environment for New Firms |
| #25 | Bridge Quality |

retailers, and service industries.

While Mississippi has seen some manufacturing decline over the past two years in ship building, plastics, forest and wood products, other industries have added jobs. Notable growth occurred in the aerospace sector, some metals industries, and some motor vehicle sectors.

Manufacturing Job Growth in Mississippi 2009-2011



Source: EMSI Complete Employment 2012.1