

## ADVOCACY TIPS

**When advocating for more state financial aid to support Mississippi's workforce, just remember M.T.A.G. during your conversations.**

### **M** **MAKE CONTACT**

Reach out to people you know to share who you are and what you do. Show that you care about state financial aid and workforce development by using the key points from the MTAG one-pager. Send an email to introduce yourself—or meet in person if you can.

### **T** **TALK ABOUT THE ISSUE**

Share why MTAG matters to you and why it needs attention. Use the MTAG Works info sheet, along with pictures and videos, to educate your network. Spread the word on social media, by phone, or through personal stories

### **A** **ADDRESS NEEDS**

Talk about Mississippians who are left out of MTAG, like adults, part-time students, and those with the greatest financial need. Share how MTAG Works can help with workforce development. Be specific about these needs and what changes you want to see

### **G** **GIVE UPDATES**

Stay connected and share updates about the need to improve state financial aid. Keep the conversation going by sharing news about Ascent to 55%, state funding, and workforce development. Ask questions to keep others engaged.

**It's time to make MTAG work for more Mississippians in 2025.**

- Support the state educational attainment goal.
- Include adult learners and part-time students.
- Introduce three income-based award levels.
- Include max Pell Grant students.
- See a significant value with a 2:1 ROI.
- Increase enrollment and graduation rates.

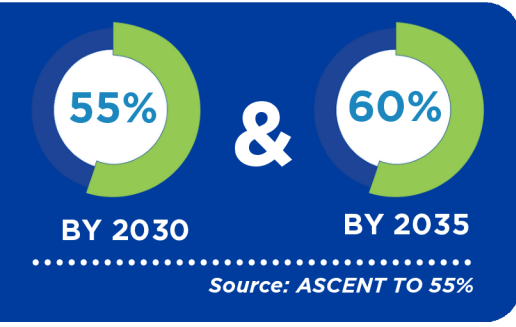
There are not enough Mississippians prepared for the workforce.

BY 2031 **63%** OF ALL JOBS IN MISSISSIPPI WILL REQUIRE SOME TRAINING BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL.


 Career Certificate  
Associate Degree  
Four-Year Degree  
.....  
*Source: GEORGETOWN REPORT*


The State's current postsecondary attainment rate is **47.6%**  
*Source: LUMINA FOUNDATION*


MISSISSIPPI'S EDUCATION ATTAINMENT GOALS ARE:



MTAG exclusions are limiting student options, and our workforce is suffering.

 **1 in 4 are Adults**  
Almost 18% of community college students and 23% of IHL students are adult learners.

 **1 in 3 are Part Time**  
About 36% of community college students and 21% of IHL students are enrolled part-time.

 **Max Pell Students**  
Approximately 34% of all state aid (20,149 of 59,142) applicants qualified for maximum Pell Grant.

 No part-time and no max Pell students are eligible for MTAG.  
*Source: MCCB AND IHL ENROLLMENT REPORTS; OSFA*

MTAG has not kept up with the needs of students.

Awards were set in 1995 and have stayed the same for the past **30 years.**

**87%** of Mississippi employers indicate their workforce needs additional education and training.  
.....  
*Source: ACCELERATEMS*



MTAG has lost buying power.

The junior award amount in 1996 covered **14%** of the average IHL university cost of attendance.  
In 2024, the same award covers less than **4%**.

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## 2025 State Financial Aid Priority

*Mississippi doesn't have enough people ready for the workforce<sup>1</sup>. By updating the Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grant (MTAG) to include max Pell eligible, part-time, and adult learners, the state can make college more affordable, build a stronger workforce, and help more working-age adults earn college degrees in support of the Ascent to 55% initiative with an **expected 2:1 return** on investment.*

### WHY MTAG NEEDS TO CHANGE

MTAG was created in 1995 to help middle-class families, but the program hasn't changed to meet today's needs. As Mississippi's workforce needs have evolved, MTAG's requirements have stayed the same, making it harder for many students to get the help they need.

#### Adult Students are Left Out:

Almost 18% of community college and 23% of IHL are adult learners, but many do not qualify for MTAG.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Greatest Need Students are Left Out:

Students who qualify for the maximum Pell Grant are not eligible for MTAG.<sup>3</sup>

#### Part-Time Students are Left Out:

About 36% of community college and 21% of IHL are part-time, and they do not qualify for MTAG.<sup>2</sup>

#### MTAG Has Lost Significant Buying Power:

When created in 1995, MTAG covered roughly 14% of the average IHL four-year, in-state tuition, room and board for junior students. In 2024, MTAG covered less than 4%.<sup>4</sup>

### PROPOSED SOLUTION: MTAG WORKS

By 2031, 63% of all jobs in Mississippi will require education beyond high school.<sup>1</sup> To build a strong workforce and ensure that more Mississippians earn college credentials, MTAG must be more accessible to make college more affordable. Updating MTAG will:

#### Increase Education and Job Opportunities:

More Mississippians will get a postsecondary credential, certificate, or college degree of value leading to better jobs and a stronger workforce.

#### Increase Enrollment and Graduation Rates:

Research shows that MTAG Works will increase enrollment rates by 6% and graduation rates by 14%. This update could result in about 1,200 more students graduating in the first group of grant recipients.<sup>5</sup>

#### Support the Economy:

Higher education levels mean more people will contribute to Mississippi's economy, bringing greater benefits to everyone.

#### Provide Great Value for the State:

With an expected 2:1 ROI, Mississippi could see a \$63 million benefit from a \$31.5 million investment.

### PROPOSED SOLUTION: MTAG WORKS

1. Allow Max Pell Grant Recipients to Qualify: Include students who receive the maximum Pell Grant.
2. Include Part-Time and Adult Students: Prorate awards for part-time students and prepare adult students for the workforce.
3. Introduce Three Levels of Aid: Create a tiered system that provides support based on income levels.
4. Remove Initial High School GPA and ACT® Requirements: Eliminate access barriers.
5. No Income Cap: Continue to provide aid without restricting it based on income limits so no one loses MTAG eligibility.

#### Citations

- <sup>1</sup> *After everything: Projections of jobs, education, and training requirements through 2031*. CEW Georgetown. (2024, July 2).
- <sup>2</sup> Mississippi Community College Board, Enrollment Data for Fall 2022; Institutions of Higher Learning Office of Strategic Research, Enrollment Data for Fall 2023
- <sup>3</sup> MS Code § 37-106-29
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Fall Enrollment" and "Institutional Characteristics" surveys.
- <sup>5</sup> Mississippi Office of State Financial Aid, Fall 2022 Enrollment Data; MTAG Works ROI Analysis and Calculations, 2024