

July 2024

# **Employment Outcomes of Mississippi Public High School Graduates**

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**Statewide**



**Prepared by Mississippi State University's NSPARC**

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## **ABOUT MISSISSIPPI'S SLDS**

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Mississippi's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) is one of the most comprehensive systems in the country and includes administrative records from more than 25 education, workforce, and human service agencies in the state. The SLDS allows for the alignment of multiple sources of de-identified administrative data over time to evaluate educational or workforce strategies in terms of real outcomes, such as entrance into employment, wages, and skill gains.

## **PREPARED BY MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY'S NSPARC**

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NSPARC, the National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center at Mississippi State University, is a trusted source for research addressing critical challenges faced by government, economic and workforce development professionals, educational institutions, nonprofits, and the private sector. Drawing on a team of social scientists, economists, data engineers, data analysts, and machine learning experts, NSPARC facilitates informed decision-making.

With over 20 years of experience, NSPARC excels at combining data from disparate sources to tackle complex issues. NSPARC scientists uncover trends and enable evidence-based research across areas ranging from workforce development, education, and economics to disaster resilience, and community development. NSPARC scientists' versatility allows them to easily translate knowledge from one domain to another and collaborate effectively with partners, ensuring research findings have real-world impact. This allows NSPARC to draw meaningful insights from data to address challenges faced by policymakers, employers, economic developers, and state agencies.

For more information, contact NSPARC at [nsparc@nsparc.msstate.edu](mailto:nsparc@nsparc.msstate.edu) or 662-325-9242.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This research brief, requested by AccelerateMS, provides summary information on the employment outcomes of Mississippi public high school graduates statewide. The following information is requested for graduates from academic years (AY) 2014 to 2019:

- The percentage of Mississippi public high school graduates who did not enroll in a college or university. Provide the percentage employed in Mississippi and median earnings in 2023.
- The percentage of Mississippi public high school graduates who enrolled in a college and/or university and did not earn a degree by 2023. Provide the percentage employed in Mississippi and median earnings in 2023.
- The percentage of Mississippi public high school graduates who enrolled in a college and/or university, graduated, and were employed in Mississippi by 2023. Provide the percentage employed and median earnings in 2023, by degree (broad categories).

The above information is requested in total and broken down by high school graduating cohort and county of high school graduation. Breakdowns are also requested for those employed in 2023 in (1) in their county of high school graduation or (2) a neighboring county.

The results of the study show:

- 18% of public high school graduates did not enroll in postsecondary education after graduation. Of these students, 58% were employed in Mississippi during 2023 and they earned an average of \$27,078 per year.
- 33% of public high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education after graduation but did not earn a degree before 2023 and were not enrolled in 2023. Of these students, 66% were employed in Mississippi during 2023 and they earned an average of \$25,505.
- 27% of public high school graduates enrolled and completed their postsecondary education by 2023. Of these students, 65% were employed in Mississippi during 2023 and they earned an average of \$39,103.

The remaining 22% (36,643 out of the 169,240 total graduates) were enrolled in a

postsecondary institution in 2023 and, therefore, were excluded from the employment analysis. Of the graduates who were employed in Mississippi, nearly 65% worked near home: 40% worked in their home county and about 25% worked in a neighboring county.

Of the graduates with a postsecondary degree, the following degree programs have the highest rates of employment in Mississippi: *Construction Trades* (78%), *Education* (77%) and *Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians* (76%). The highest earning degrees are *Engineering* (\$66,171), *Construction Trades* (\$53,246) and *Engineering Technologies and Engineering-Related Fields* (\$49,228).

## METHODOLOGY

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### DATA

Data for this study came from Mississippi's State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), which includes administrative records from more than 25 state agencies. Data from the following SLDS data contributors were used:

**Mississippi Department of Education** – Data from Mississippi's public schools are contributed to the SLDS by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). These data include information on enrollment, school, grade, course, and graduation.

**Mississippi Community Colleges** – Data on community college graduates are contributed to the SLDS by Mississippi's 15 community colleges and the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB). These data include information on enrollment, county of residence, academic major, and graduation.

**Mississippi Public Universities** – Data on 4-year public university graduates are contributed to the SLDS by Mississippi's eight public universities and the Institutions for Higher Learning (IHL). These data include information on enrollment, county of residence, academic major, and graduation.

**Mississippi Department of Employment Security** – Employer wage records are contributed to the SLDS by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES). Employer wage records are collected from Mississippi employers that participate in the state's covered employment system. Data fields include information on quarterly earnings, company of employment, industry of employment, and county location of employer.

## INDICATORS

Using this data, the following indicators were constructed:

**Mississippi Public High School Graduates** – The number of high school graduates who obtained a traditional diploma from the Mississippi public K-12 system between AY2013-2014 and AY2018-2019 from statewide school districts.

**Postsecondary Enrollment** – The number and percentage of Mississippi public high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution (i.e., any 2-year or 4-year public or private institution inside or outside of Mississippi) by 2023.

Postsecondary enrollment status was identified using National Student Clearinghouse data, administrative records from Mississippi's community colleges, and administrative records from Mississippi's public universities.

**Postsecondary Graduation** – The number and percentage of Mississippi public high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution (i.e., any 2-year or 4-year public or private institution inside or outside of Mississippi) and earned a postsecondary degree prior to 2023.

Postsecondary graduation status was identified using National Student Clearinghouse data, administrative records from Mississippi's community colleges, and administrative records from Mississippi's public universities.

Postsecondary degree majors are categorized into 2-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes, the national standard of academic program titles developed by the U.S. Department of Education. If a graduate earned several degrees, the last degree earned is utilized.

**Employment** – For those that did not enroll in a postsecondary institution, or were no longer enrolled in a postsecondary institution in 2023, the number and percent who were employed by a covered Mississippi employer in 2023.

**Median Annualized Earnings** – The median annualized earnings for those employed in 2023.

**Employed in Home County** – For those employed in 2023, the number and percentage working in their county of high school graduation.

**Employed in Neighboring County** – For those employed in 2023, the number and percentage working in a county directly adjacent to their county of high school graduation.

**Employed in Other County** – For those employed in 2023, the number and percentage working in a Mississippi other than their home county or adjacent county.

All indicators are reported in total, for each academic year cohort.

## DATA SUPPRESSION

In accordance with SLDS Rules and Regulations, numeric values less than 10 are suppressed along with the accompanying percentages. These suppressed values are replaced with the “<10” symbol, and the accompanying percent is replaced with the “---” symbol. Additionally, information calculated using MDE data is suppressed if the percentage is either less than 5% or greater than 95%. Suppressed values are replaced with the “<5.00” and “>95.00” symbols, respectively, and the accompanying numeric values are replaced with the “--” symbol.

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The results of this study are presented in three sections: (1) employment outcomes, where the results are tabulated by cohort; (2) employment outcomes by location of employment, where all counties in the study window are combined due to cell sizes and the results are tabulated by cohort; and (3) employment outcomes by degree major, where all counties statewide and all cohorts in the study window are combined due to cell sizes and the results are tabulated by degree major.

## RESULTS SECTION 1

### EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

**TABLE 1. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO DID NOT ENROLL IN A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY BY 2023**

Graduating Year	Number of High School Graduates	Number Not Enrolling in Postsecondary		Employed in MS in 2023		
		N	%	N	%	Median Annualized Earnings
Statewide Total						
2014	26,321	3,736	14.2	1,987	53.2	\$31,867
2015	27,802	4,343	15.6	2,365	54.5	\$29,070
2016	28,505	4,701	16.5	2,716	57.8	\$29,418
2017	28,497	5,126	18.0	3,037	59.2	\$27,576
2018	29,249	5,724	19.6	3,469	60.6	\$25,115
2019	28,866	6,521	22.6	3,988	61.2	\$23,665
Total	169,240	30,151	17.8	17,562	58.2	\$27,078

*Note: The “<10” symbol indicates that the outcome in numbers is suppressed because the number of observations is less than 10, and the “---” symbol indicates that the value is suppressed because an associated number is less than 10.*

**TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES  
WHO ENROLLED IN A POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION BUT DID NOT EARN A  
POSTSECONDARY DEGREE**

Cohort	Number of High School Graduates	Number Enrolling in Postsecondary but No Degree <sup>1</sup>		Employed in MS in 2023		
		N	%	N	%	Median Annualized Earnings
Statewide Total						
2014	26,321	9,730	37.0	5,746	59.1	\$29,014
2015	27,802	9,689	34.9	6,019	62.1	\$28,378
2016	28,505	9,879	34.7	6,339	64.2	\$26,816
2017	28,497	9,640	33.8	6,418	66.6	\$25,001
2018	29,249	9,295	31.8	6,490	69.8	\$23,631
2019	28,866	8,149	28.2	5,971	73.3	\$21,831
Total	169,240	56,382	33.3	36,983	65.6	\$25,505

<sup>1</sup>Includes public high school graduates that enrolled in a college or university but did not graduate by 2023 and were not enrolled in 2023.

Note: The "<10" symbol indicates that the outcome in numbers is suppressed because the number of observations is less than 10, and the "---" symbol indicates that the value is suppressed because an associated number is less than 10.

**TABLE 3. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO ENROLLED IN A POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION AND EARNED A POSTSECONDARY DEGREE**

Cohort	Number of High School Graduates	Number Enrolling in Postsecondary and Earning a Degree <sup>1</sup>		Employed in MS in 2023		
		N	%	N	%	Median Annualized Earnings
Statewide Total						
2014	26,321	11,059	42.0	6,466	58.5	\$43,439
2015	27,802	9,618	34.6	5,968	62.1	\$41,798
2016	28,505	9,050	31.7	5,874	64.9	\$40,018
2017	28,497	7,650	26.8	5,195	67.9	\$37,290
2018	29,249	5,818	19.9	4,226	72.6	\$34,025
2019	28,866	2,869	9.9	2,208	77.0	\$30,456
Total	169,240	46,064	27.2	29,937	65.0	\$39,103

<sup>1</sup>Includes public high school graduates that enrolled in a college or university, graduated with a degree by 2023, and were not enrolled in 2023.

Note: The "<10" symbol indicates that the outcome in numbers is suppressed because the number of observations is less than 10, and the "---" symbol indicates that the value is suppressed because an associated number is less than 10.



## RESULTS SECTION 2

### EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY EMPLOYMENT LOCATION

**TABLE 4. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN 2014-2019 WHO DID NOT ENROLL IN A POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION, BY LOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>**

Cohort	Employed in 2023	Working in Home County		Working in Neighboring County		Working in Other MS County	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
2014	1,987	782	39.4	536	27.0	669	33.7
2015	2,365	961	40.6	595	25.2	809	34.2
2016	2,716	1,090	40.1	702	25.8	924	34.0
2017	3,037	1,298	42.7	758	25.0	981	32.3
2018	3,469	1,462	42.1	877	25.3	1,130	32.6
2019	3,988	1,751	43.9	1,007	25.3	1,230	30.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,562</b>	<b>7,344</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>4,475</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>5,743</b>	<b>32.7</b>

Note: The "<10" symbol indicates that the outcome in numbers is suppressed because the number of observations is less than 10, and the "---" symbol indicates that the value is suppressed because an associated number is less than 10.

**TABLE 5. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN 2014-2019 WHO ENROLLED IN A POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION BUT DID NOT EARN A POSTSECONDARY DEGREE, BY LOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>**

Cohort	Employed in 2023	Working in Home County		Working in Neighboring County		Working in Other MS County	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
2014	5,746	2,243	39.0	1,478	25.7	2,025	35.2
2015	6,019	2,357	39.2	1,535	25.5	2,127	35.3
2016	6,339	2,580	40.7	1,571	24.8	2,188	34.5
2017	6,418	2,667	41.6	1,531	23.9	2,220	34.6
2018	6,490	2,688	41.4	1,651	25.4	2,151	33.1
2019	5,971	2,584	43.3	1,405	23.5	1,982	33.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,983</b>	<b>15,119</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>9,171</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>12,693</b>	<b>34.3</b>

Note: The "<10" symbol indicates that the outcome in numbers is suppressed because the number of observations is less than 10, and the "---" symbol indicates that the value is suppressed because an associated number is less than 10.

**TABLE 6. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN 2014-2019 WHO ENROLLED IN A POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION AND EARNED A POSTSECONDARY DEGREE, BY LOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>**

Cohort	Employed in 2023	Working in Home County		Working in Neighboring County		Working in Other MS County	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
2014	6,466	2,384	36.9	1,600	24.7	2,482	38.4
2015	5,968	2,227	37.3	1,525	25.6	2,216	37.1
2016	5,874	2,169	36.9	1,501	25.6	2,204	37.5
2017	5,195	1,943	37.4	1,362	26.2	1,890	36.4
2018	4,226	1,659	39.3	1,090	25.8	1,477	35.0
2019	2,208	935	42.3	552	25.0	721	32.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,937</b>	<b>11,317</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>7,630</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>10,990</b>	<b>36.7</b>

Note: The "<10" symbol indicates that the outcome in numbers is suppressed because the number of observations is less than 10, and the "---" symbol indicates that the value is suppressed because an associated number is less than 10.

## RESULTS SECTION 3

### EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY DEGREE

**TABLE 7. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN 2014-2019 WHO ENROLLED IN A POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION AND EARNED A DEGREE, BY MAJOR<sup>1</sup>**

Major	Number of Postsecondary Graduates	Employed in MS in 2023		
		N	%	Median Annualized Earnings
Agriculture, Agriculture Operations, and Related Sciences	491	304	61.9	\$42,341
Natural Resources and Conservation	235	144	61.3	\$40,983
Architecture and Related Services	148	58	39.2	\$46,131
Area, Ethnic, Cultural, Gender, and Group Studies	36	20	55.6	\$28,741
Communication, Journalism, and Related Programs	975	486	49.8	\$35,840
Communications Tech. and Support Services	57	41	71.9	\$29,788
Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	968	592	61.2	\$38,970
Personal and Culinary Services	1,079	650	60.2	\$24,303
Education	2,810	2,171	77.3	\$44,056
Engineering	1,763	818	46.4	\$66,171

*Table 7 Continued on Next Page*

**Table 7 Continued**

Engineering Technologies and Engineering-Related Fields	1,402	1,017	72.5	\$49,228
Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics	126	63	50.0	\$34,087
Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences	700	487	69.6	\$27,514
Technology Education/Industrial Arts	<10	<10	---	---
Legal Professions and Studies	285	173	60.7	\$34,709
English Language and Literature/Letters	353	195	55.2	\$34,571
Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies, Humanities	6,687	4,514	67.5	\$30,161
Library Science	22	13	59.1	\$37,731
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	1,501	822	54.8	\$30,392
Mathematics and Statistics	131	63	48.1	\$45,906
Military Technologies and Applied Sciences	27	12	44.4	\$43,150
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	619	385	62.2	\$36,950
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies	1,030	622	60.4	\$35,996
Basic Skills and Developmental/Remedial Education	<10	<10	---	---
Leisure and Recreational Activities	35	<10	---	---
Philosophy and Religious Studies	77	40	51.9	\$29,294
Theology and Religious Vocations	34	<10	---	---
Physical Sciences	270	122	45.2	\$35,702
Science Technologies/Technicians	11	<10	---	---
Psychology	1,240	742	59.8	\$28,411
Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting	938	595	63.4	\$36,011
Public Administration and Social Service Professions	646	461	71.4	\$33,757
Social Sciences	710	328	46.2	\$33,880
Construction Trades	1,073	840	78.3	\$53,246
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians	1,946	1,468	75.4	\$44,317

**Table 7 Continued on Next Page**

**Table 7 Continued**

Precision Production	1,617	1,155	71.4	\$43,297
Transportation and Materials Moving	733	494	67.4	\$39,807
Visual and Performing Arts	1,192	682	57.2	\$29,108
Health Professions and Related Programs	7,606	5,653	74.3	\$46,527
Business, Management, Marketing	5,321	3,140	59.0	\$40,045
High School/Secondary Diplomas and Certificates	34	16	47.1	\$34,654
History	270	163	60.4	\$37,432
Residency Programs	13	<10	---	---
No Reported Major	840	353	42.0	\$35,404
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,064</b>	<b>29,937</b>	<b>65.0</b>	<b>\$39,103</b>

<sup>1</sup>The 2014-2019 cohorts of statewide public high school graduates are combined for this analysis.

Note: The "<10" symbol indicates that the outcome in numbers is suppressed because the number of observations is less than 10, and the "---" symbol indicates that the value is suppressed because an associated number is less than 10.

**TABLE 8. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN 2014-2019 WHO ENROLLED IN A POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION AND EARNED A DEGREE, BY MAJOR AND LOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>**

Major	Empl oyed in 2023	Working in Home County		Working in Neighboring County		Working in Other MS County	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Agriculture, Agriculture Operations, and Related Sciences	304	98	32.2	69	22.7	137	45.1
Natural Resources and Conservation	144	30	20.8	44	30.6	70	48.6
Architecture and Related Services	58	10	17.2	14	24.1	34	58.6
Area, Ethnic, Cultural, Gender, and Group Studies	20	<10	---	<10	---	<10	---
Communication, Journalism, and Related Programs	486	172	35.4	100	20.6	214	44.0
Communications Tech. and Support Services	41	20	48.8	12	29.3	<10	---
Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	592	206	34.8	146	24.7	240	40.5
Personal and Culinary Services	650	248	38.2	172	26.5	230	35.4
Education	2,171	1,067	49.1	444	20.5	660	30.4
Engineering	818	215	26.3	198	24.2	405	49.5
Engineering Technologies and Engineering-Related Fields	1,017	340	33.4	301	29.6	376	37.0
Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics	63	20	31.7	13	20.6	30	47.6
Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences	487	219	45.0	103	21.1	165	33.9

*Table 8 Continued on Next Page*

**Table 8 Continued**

Technology Education/Industrial Arts	<10	<10	---	<10	---	<10	---
Legal Professions and Studies	173	51	29.5	45	26.0	77	44.5
English Language and Literature/Letters	195	73	37.4	42	21.5	80	41.0
Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies, Humanities	4,514	1,878	41.6	1,103	24.4	1,533	34.0
Library Science	13	<10	---	<10	---	<10	---
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	822	314	38.2	184	22.4	324	39.4
Mathematics and Statistics	63	29	46.0	10	15.9	24	38.1
Military Technologies and Applied Sciences	12	<10	---	<10	---	<10	---
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	385	156	40.5	67	17.4	162	42.1
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies	622	223	35.9	151	24.3	248	39.9
Basic Skills and Developmental/Remedial Education	<10	<10	---	<10	---	<10	---
Leisure and Recreational Activities	<10	<10	---	<10	---	<10	---
Philosophy and Religious Studies	40	12	30.0	12	30.0	16	40.0
Theology and Religious Vocations	<10	<10	---	<10	---	<10	---
Physical Sciences	122	50	41.0	26	21.3	46	37.7
Science Technologies/Technicians	<10	<10	---	<10	---	<10	---
Psychology	742	246	33.2	173	23.3	323	43.5
Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting	595	211	35.5	127	21.3	257	43.2
Public Administration and Social Service Professions	461	149	32.3	105	22.8	207	44.9
Social Sciences	328	105	32.0	68	20.7	155	47.3
Construction Trades	840	312	37.1	233	27.7	295	35.1
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians	1,468	555	37.8	434	29.6	479	32.6

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**Table 8 Continued**

Precision Production	1,155	432	37.4	350	30.3	373	32.3
Transportation and Materials Moving	494	150	30.4	106	21.5	238	48.2
Visual and Performing Arts	682	252	37.0	139	20.4	291	42.7
Health Professions and Related Programs	5,653	2,118	37.5	1,792	31.7	1,743	30.8
Business, Management, Marketing	3,140	1,110	35.4	715	22.8	1,315	41.9
High School/Secondary Diplomas and Certificates	16	<10	---	<10	---	<10	---
History	163	64	39.3	35	21.5	64	39.3
Residency Programs	<10	<10	---	<10	---	<10	---
No Reported Major	353	145	41.1	76	21.5	132	37.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,937</b>	<b>11,317</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>7,630</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>10,990</b>	<b>36.7</b>

<sup>1</sup>The 2014-2019 cohorts of statewide public high school graduates are combined for this analysis.

Note: The "<10" symbol indicates that the outcome in numbers is suppressed because the number of observations is less than 10, and the "---" symbol indicates that the value is suppressed because an associated number is less than 10.





# SLDS

**Statewide Longitudinal  
Data System**

**Prepared by Mississippi State University's NSPARC**



**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™**  
NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING  
& ANALYSIS RESEARCH CENTER