

## Southeastern Mississippi



Momentum Mississippi was launched in 2005 with the mission to develop and oversee the state's long range economic development plan. Momentum WIRED will implement Momentum's goal to transform the current workforce system. This project will foster the region's Advanced Manufacturing sectors with emphasis on metal related industries, including construction, in 18 counties in Southeastern Mississippi, the area hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina.

Momentum WIRED will partner state and local workforce investment boards, community/junior colleges and related businesses to plan, implement and oversee necessary system changes. The partnership will transform the region by ensuring that talent development is business driven.

Momentum WIRED will identify fundamental/core skills that cut across advanced manufacturing in order to equip unskilled and under-skilled workers to fill entry-level demand jobs. Momentum WIRED operates out of the state's one-stop system of WIN Job Centers and works with businesses and community/junior colleges to operate Momentum Centers for Excellence where workers receive training and career credentialing.

Momentum Centers for Excellence at Jones County Junior College and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College are models to be replicated throughout the state; anticipating that in three years, these centers will provide training, retraining and skills upgrades for 5,000 to 7,000 individuals using WIRED and leveraged resources. Once the Momentum WIRED training is fully developed, the state will propose a portion of the First Generation WIRED grant for Western Alabama and East Mississippi be directed to fund similar Momentum Centers for Excellence at East Mississippi Community College operated under the Momentum WIRED umbrella.

Momentum WIRED and the partnership will follow the Momentum Mississippi model to enlist business, education and civic leaders' advice and to analyze business and economic issues. The momentum Mississippi Task Force has already tackled tax and economic development incentives and investment.

Momentum WIRED will develop the workforce infrastructure to accommodate economic growth by managing talent development. Momentum WIRED will be a focused and accountable model, employing the State Workforce Investment Board's Integrated Workforce Performance System to measure outcomes and return on investment.

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A critical part of this effort is to assist the MS Department for Education in the implementation of MS career clusters and Pathways curricula to begin talent development in the K-12 education system. Momentum WIRED will be the catalyst between the Department of Education, local high schools and business leaders to install applied career academies that foster talent development and feed training programs in the Momentum Centers for Excellence.

The Mississippi Manufacturer's Association (MMA), a key partner in Momentum WIRED, is in the process of researching, evaluating and identifying components to include in a pilot to inform and change perceptions of careers in manufacturing. This effort will complement Momentum WIRED and the Department of Education's larger effort to redesign grade 7-12 education to better prepare students for the workplace.

Using existing Momentum Mississippi strategies to fully engage the state's universities in related research and development, Momentum WIRED will include universities in all aspects of related research and development, implementation and evaluation. This project will leverage Momentum Mississippi's incentives to new and existing industry growth through investments in new technology.

MMA is also working with one of the state's research universities to determine constructs for a pilot effort designed to identify, mobilize and promote technical and training expertise of that institution which could be deployed to enhance manufacturing and economic growth in Mississippi. Momentum WIRED will use that model to form similar alliances with other State Universities.

