



MEC 2024 Legislative Priorities

Workforce Funding/Expansion of Career Coaches

- MEC supports the continued funding of the Office of Workforce Development, Accelerate Mississippi. Proper funding is vital to ensure the office has the administrative structure in place to improve Mississippi's workforce and focus on training in-demand career fields to strengthen the number of skilled Mississippians and meet the needs of the state's business sector.
- The Mississippi K-12 Career Coach program is providing measurable successes and can provide long-term benefits to the state. However, to reach its full potential, it is essential that funding be available to provide a career coach for every high school in the state that wants to participate in the program. MEC supports appropriate funding of the program to allow all Mississippi high school students to have the necessary guidance to help them find a career pathway that matches their interests and abilities and provide well-paying jobs in Mississippi.

Healthcare

- Providing access to healthcare is a crucial economic issue for a healthy workforce in Mississippi. It is also vital that Mississippi's healthcare system is financially stable. MEC is committed to working with legislative leaders to find workable solutions and help shape a plan to increase access to healthcare for working Mississippians that explores all available options, including the use of additional federal funding.
- The cost of health insurance continues to be a concern, and ensuring these costs remain manageable for Mississippi businesses is vitally important. One issue that remains a concern is proposed changes around Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM). Any legislation concerning PBM must ensure no unnecessary burdens are put on companies that provide benefits to their employees through self-insured plans or group policies.

K-12 Education Issues

- With its AIM initiatives, MEC is focused on creating a student-centered K-12 accountability model that balances academic and career pathways that prepare students for success after high school. While the goal is for the Department of Education to handle most adjustments to the model, several issues may require legislative action, including changes to the A-F grading system.

Student Financial Aid

- Making college affordable is extremely important for ensuring all Mississippi students succeed. MEC supports a proposal from a taskforce convened by the Woodward Hines Educational Foundation that increases state financial aid for students that need additional assistance while not impacting anyone currently receiving assistance.