

MINUTES

MISSISSIPPI POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BOARD



IHL Executive Offices
3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211

August 19, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

Teleconference: 1-888-822-7517, Access code: 2791682#

Zoom: <https://itsmsgov.zoom.us/j/82429705478?pwd=4cinm4Xbahey1tqaaauvapMoUsaL44.1>

MINUTES

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board held a regular meeting on Wednesday, August 19, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. Members of the Board participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom or teleconference. Members of the media and public were invited to attend the meeting in Room 218 of the Education and Research Center, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, Mississippi, 39211.

The following member(s) participated:

- Ben Burnett, MAICU institutional appointee (remote)
- Barney Daly, Lt. Governor's appointee (remote)
- Jason Dean, MAICU association appointee (remote)
- Jim Turcotte, Governor's appointee and Chairman (remote)
- Dianne Watson, MCCB Board appointee (remote)
- Advisory member Senator Nicole Boyd, Universities and Colleges Committee Chair (remote)

The following member(s) did not participate:

- Mark Keenum, IHL institutional appointee
- Dewayne Middleton, MCCB institutional appointee
- Sue Stedman, Governor's appointee
- Teresa Hubbard, IHL Board appointee
- Advisory member Representative Donnie Scoggin, Universities and Colleges Committee Chair

Also in attendance either in person or remotely were:

- Meg Harris, Assistant Director of Operations, Student Financial Aid (remote)
- Shirley Mitchell, Program Administrator, Student Financial Aid
- Jennifer Rogers, Executive Director, Student Financial Aid and Postsecondary Board
- Adele Russell, Program and Office Administrator, Student Financial Aid
- Apryll Washington, Deputy Director, Student Financial Aid

MINUTES

- Frances West, Program Administrator, Student Financial Aid
- Lori Ball, Mississippi State University (remote)
- Kari Dedwylder, Jones College (remote)
- Jaime Missimer, Pearl River Community College (remote)
- Nicole Patrick, Mississippi University for Women (remote)
- Tina Carter, Legislative Budget Office (remote)
- Candice Wilder, Mississippi Today
- Tiara Jackson, Mississippi Public Broadcasting
- Reporter, WJTV 12 News

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Chairman Turcotte.

MINUTES

On motion by Barney Daly and second by Ben Burnett, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the board meeting held on June 24, 2026, as originally drafted.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Item 1: Jennifer Rogers presented a request for the Board to approve APA Part 616 Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor Mississippi Grant (UPSKILL) Rules and Regulations. On motion by Dianne Watson and second by Barney Daly, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the UPSKILL Rules and Regulations, pending completion of the APA process.

1. Approve APA Part 616 Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor Mississippi Grant (UPSKILL) Rules and Regulations

Request

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid requests approval of APA Part 616 Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor Mississippi Grant (UPSKILL) Rules and Regulations.

Summary

During the 2026 Regular Session, the Mississippi Legislature passed House Bill 562, which created the UPSKILL Mississippi Grant. The program was created as a pilot to provide last-dollar tuition assistance to adult students enrolled in eligible community college certificate or associate degree programs that lead to jobs in Mississippi's priority occupation sectors as identified by Accelerate, the state's Office of Workforce Development. In addition to tuition, the program provides students with a stipend of \$500/year for books and materials. Institutions also bear responsibility for providing participating students with certain support services. The Legislature did not provide funding for the program for the 2026-27 academic year, but Accelerate identified funds from another source that they are making available for the pilot year.

The proposed Rules and Regulations are as follows:

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

MINUTES

Part 616: Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor Mississippi Grant Program (UPSKILL) Rules and Regulations

Chapter 1: Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor Mississippi Grant Program (UPSKILL) Rules and Regulations

Rule 1.1 Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor Mississippi Grant Program (UPSKILL) Rules and Regulations. These Rules and Regulations are subject to change by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board.

I. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

- A. The applicant must be a United States citizen or a lawful, permanent resident.
- B. The applicant must be a current legal resident of Mississippi and have been a resident for at least two (2) years prior to application. Resident status for purposes of receiving UPSKILL under this act shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections 37-103-1 through 37-103-29, of *Miss. Code Ann.*, with the exception of Section 37-103-17.
- C. The applicant must have a high school diploma, GED, or the equivalent.
- D. The applicant must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at least half-time in an eligible certificate or associate degree program at an eligible Mississippi community or junior college.
- E. The applicant must be at least 24 years of age.
- F. The applicant must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) and submit all required supporting documents by the established deadlines.
- G. The applicant must meet any other general requirements for admission and continuation at the student's eligible institution of choice.

II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. First-time applicants must:
 - 1. Complete the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) online at www.msfinancialaid.org on or before September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.
 - 2. By the document deadline of October 15 of the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance:
 - a) Submit two forms of documentation of legal Mississippi residency for two (2) years. Acceptable forms of residency documentation are listed in the General Administration Rules and Regulations and published online at www.msfinancialaid.org.

MINUTES

- b) Fully complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) including the verification process if the student is selected for verification and accept all available federal grant aid.
 - c) Submit any additional documents requested for the purpose of resolving conflicting information.
 - 3. Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at least half-time in an eligible program at an eligible Mississippi community or junior college. Evidence of enrollment will be automatically provided to the Board by the attending institution.
 - 4. Be 24 years of age as of January 1 of the second year of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance. For example, a student seeking assistance for the 2026-27 aid year must have been born on or before January 1, 2003.
- B. Renewal Applicants Must:
- 1. Complete a renewal Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) online at www.msfinancialaid.org on or before September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.
 - 2. By the document deadline of October 15 of the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance:
 - a) Fully complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) including the verification process if the student is selected for verification and accept all available federal grant aid.
 - b) Submit any additional documents requested for the purpose of resolving conflicting information.
 - 3. Make satisfactory academic progress toward a certificate or degree as certified by the registrar of the attending institution at the end of each semester or term during which the applicant received state funds.

III. LENGTH AND AMOUNT OF AWARD

- A. The annual award amount for the UPSKILL Grant will be equal to the student's total cost of tuition and required fees less all other grant aid plus a stipend of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) for books and materials. For students enrolled less than full-time, the annual stipend will be prorated based on the student's enrollment intensity as reported by the attending institution.
- B. A maximum cumulative award amount is not established; however, a recipient may only receive the UPSKILL Grant for the time required to complete one (1) certificate or one (1) associate degree.

MINUTES

- C. The UPSKILL Grant can be combined with grant aid from federal, institutional, private, or other sources. No other grant aid should be reduced or supplanted by the UPSKILL Grant. However, in no case shall the UPSKILL Grant be combined with other grant aid to exceed the student's allowable Cost of Attendance. If an overaward occurs, the UPSKILL Grant will be reduced.
- D. All awards are dependent upon the availability of funds. Selection of recipients shall be based on a first-come, first-served basis of all eligible applicants; however, priority consideration shall be given to persons previously receiving awards under the UPSKILL Grant program.
- E. Payment of UPSKILL Grants shall be disbursed directly to the attending institution.
- F. If a recipient transfers from one eligible Mississippi institution to another, the award will be transferable, provided the student remains in an eligible program and meets all continuing eligibility requirements.

IV. LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY

- A. Failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the UPSKILL Grant.
- B. Failure to maintain at least half-time enrollment in an eligible program will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the UPSKILL Grant. However, the student may file an appeal for reconsideration with the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid and may be granted an exception for cause.

V. ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS

- A. Accelerate Mississippi shall annually provide a list of eligible programs based on priority sectors and occupations to the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid which shall use the list to determine the eligibility of applicants.
- B. Students receiving the UPSKILL Grant may continue to receive the grant through program completion even if the program no longer qualifies as an eligible program if the student remains continuously enrolled and maintains satisfactory academic progress.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

- A. To qualify as an eligible institution for the UPSKILL Grant program, Mississippi community and junior colleges must sign an annual participation agreement and commit to providing the following support services to UPSKILL Grant recipients:
 - 1. Assign an advisor or success coach to contact each grant recipient a minimum of three (3) times per term to assist with enrollment, financial aid, career planning, or other topics as needed to support program continuation and completion.
 - 2. Enroll each recipient in Mississippi Works.

MINUTES

3. Provide career integration by creating program maps aligning eligible programs with careers and connect grant recipients to paid practicums or apprenticeships where possible.
 4. Identify alternative funding sources, such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds, to connect UPSKILL participants with up to Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) per term per grant recipient in emergency aid, childcare stipends or transportation assistance (bus vouchers or gas cards).
 5. When possible, offer flexible program delivery, such as evening, weekend, and online program participation.
 6. Utilize data and early alert systems to support recipients.
- B. To assist with the determination of award amounts, program evaluation, and required reporting, participating eligible institutions must report to the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid each term:
1. Student cost of attendance;
 2. Federal grants received;
 3. Institutional grants received;
 4. Other grants received;
 5. Loans received;
 6. Work Study received;
 7. Degree/credential earned; and
 8. Program Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code
- C. Eligible participating institutions agree to participate in an annual program review to be conducted by the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid.

Source: Regular Session 2026 HB 562; *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-XX.

Recommendation

Board staff recommends approval, pending completion of the APA Process.

Item 2: Jennifer Rogers presented a request for the Board to approve technical amendments to APA Part 601 Authority and Responsibilities. On motion by Barney Daly and second by Jason Dean, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the changes to the Authority and Responsibilities Rules and Regulations.

2. Approve Updates to APA Part 601 Authority and Responsibilities

MINUTES

Request

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid requests approval of updates to Chapters 1 and 3 of APA Part 601 Authority and Responsibilities to add programs to the list of authorized programs and to update the formatting of the lists.

Summary

APA Part 601, Chapter 1 defines the programs that fall under the authority of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. Only formatting and technical changes are being proposed.

APA Part 601, Chapter 3 defines the programs that fall under the authority of the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board. Changes are proposed to add the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) part numbers for all programs, to add programs to the list, and to update the formatting. APA part numbers have been added for all programs. Multiple inactive or repealed programs have been added to the list, because Rules and Regulations are still in place for the programs in the Administrative Bulletin and in the Policies and Procedures Manual. The State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) program and the Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor (UPSKILL) program are both being added to the list.

The proposed changes are as follows:

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 601: Authority and Responsibilities

Part 601 Chapter 1: Authority of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning

Rule 1.1 Authority of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, hereafter referred to as the Agency, is granted authority by the State of Mississippi for oversight of the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid and for administration of various state-supported student financial assistance programs. Authority is granted by the legal statutes authorizing such programs, as follows:

<u>Part</u>	Program Name	Authorizing Code/ <u>Source</u> Section <u>Miss. Code</u> <u>Ann.</u>
Undergraduate Grant and Scholarship Programs		
<u>691</u>	GEAR UP Mississippi Scholarship – Cohort 1 (GUMS)	Federal Matching Grant
<u>693</u>	GEAR UP Mississippi Scholarship – Cohort 2 (GUMS)	Federal Matching Grant
<u>695</u>	Summer Development Program Grant (SUMD)	Miss. Code Ann. § 27-103-203

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-9 and *Miss. Code Ann.* § 27-103-203

MINUTES

...

Part 601 Chapter 3: Authority of the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board

Rule 3.1 Authority of the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board. The Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board is granted authority by the State of Mississippi for administration of various state student financial assistance programs. Authority is granted by the legal statutes authorizing such programs as follows:

<u>Part</u>	Program Name	Authorizing Code/<u>Source Section</u> <u>Miss. Code Ann.</u>
Undergraduate Grant and Scholarship Programs (Parts 610-619)		
<u>611</u>	Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant (MTAG)	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-29
<u>613</u>	Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (MESG)	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-31
<u>615</u>	Higher Education Legislative Plan for Needy Students (HELP)	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-75
<u>616</u>	<u>Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor Mississippi Grant (UPSKILL)</u>	<u>HB 562, 2026 Regular Session</u>
<u>617</u>	Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters Scholarship Program (LAW)	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-39
<u>619</u>	Southwest Asia Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Scholarship Program (POW) – <i>Inactive/Unfunded</i>	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-41
<u>621</u>	Nissan Scholarship (NISS)	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-11
<u>622</u>	<u>Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund Summer Grant (GEER) - Inactive</u>	<u>Federal/State Grant</u>
<u>623</u>	<u>State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH)</u>	<u>§ 37-106-81-83</u>
Graduate Grant and Scholarship Programs (Parts 620-629)		
<u>625</u>	Mississippi Public Management Graduate Intern Program (PMGT) – <i>Unfunded</i>	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-43
Undergraduate Forgivable Loan Programs (Parts 630-649)		
<u>631</u>	<u>Critical Needs Alternate Route Teacher Forgivable Loan (CNAR) – Repealed</u>	<u>§ 37-106-55</u>
<u>633</u>	<u>Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan (CNTF) – Repealed</u>	<u>§ 37-106-55</u>
<u>635</u>	<u>Teacher Education Scholars (TES) – Repealed</u>	<u>§ 37-106-77</u>
<u>637</u>	<u>William Winter Alternate Route Forgivable Loan (WWAR) – Repealed</u>	<u>§ 37-106-57</u>
<u>639</u>	<u>William Winter Teacher Forgivable Loan (WWTS) – Repealed</u>	<u>§ 37-106-57</u>
Undergraduate and Graduate Forgivable Loan Programs (Parts 650-659)		
<u>651</u>	Health Care Professions Forgivable Loan (HCP) – <i>Unfunded</i>	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-67

MINUTES

<u>653</u>	<u>Nursing Education Forgivable Loan (NELB/NELR/NELM/NERM/NELP) – Repealed</u>	<u>§ 37-106-59</u>
<u>654</u>	<u>Nursing and Respiratory Therapy Incentive Forgivable Loan Program for LPN, ADN/ASN, BSN, RN to BSN, MSN, RN to MSN, PhD/DNP, and RT – Repealed</u>	<u>§ 37-106-60</u>
<u>655</u>	Family Protection Specialist Social Worker Forgivable Loan (SWOR) – <i>Unfunded</i>	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-69</i>
Graduate Forgivable Loan Programs (Parts 660-679)		
<u>661</u>	Counselor and School Administrator Forgivable Loan (CSA) – <i>Inactive</i>	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-47</i>
<u>663</u>	Graduate Teacher Forgivable Loan (GTS) – <i>Inactive</i>	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-47</i>
<u>665</u>	Southern Region Education Board Doctoral Scholars Forgivable Loan (SDSP) – <i>Inactive</i>	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-47</i>
<u>667</u>	Critical Needs Dyslexia Therapy Teacher Forgivable Loan (CNDT)	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-71</i>
<u>669</u>	<u>Nursing Teacher Stipend Forgivable Loan (NTSP) – Repealed</u>	<u>§ 37-106-59</u>
<u>671</u>	State Dental Education Forgivable Loan (DENT) – <i>Unfunded</i>	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-63</i>
<u>673</u>	State Medical Education Forgivable Loan (MED) – <i>Unfunded</i>	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-61</i>
<u>674</u>	Southern Regional Education Board Regional Contract Forgivable Loan (SREB)	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-47</i>
<u>675</u>	Graduate and Professional Degree Forgivable Loan (STSC) – <i>Unfunded</i>	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-65</i>
<u>677</u>	Veterinary Medicine Minority Forgivable Loan (VMMP) – <i>Inactive</i>	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-47</i>
<u>679</u>	Speech-Language Pathologists Forgivable Loan (SLPL)	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-73</i>
Loan Repayment and Other Programs (Parts 680-689)		
<u>681</u>	<u>Mississippi Teacher Loan Repayment (MTLR) – Repealed</u>	<u>§ 37-106-57</u>
<u>683</u>	<u>Teacher Education Scholars Alternate Route Certification Forgivable Loan (TESA) – Repealed</u>	<u>§ 37-106-79</u>
<u>685</u>	Winter-Reed Teacher Loan Repayment Program (WRTR)	<i>Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-36</i>
<u>687</u>	Skilled Nursing Home and Hospital Nurses Retention Loan Repayment Program (NULR)	<u>§ 37-106-64</u> <i>Regular Session 2023, SB 2373</i>
Other Programs (Parts 690-699)		
<u>691</u>	<u>Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship (DEDC) – Unfunded</u>	<u>§ 37-106-85-93</u>

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-11; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-29; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-31; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-36; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-39; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-41; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-43; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-47; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-55; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-57; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-59; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-60; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-61; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-63; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-64; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-65; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-67; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-69; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-71; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-*

MINUTES

106-73; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-75; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-77; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-79; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-81-83.

Recommendation

Board staff recommends approval, pending completion of the APA Process.

Item 3: Jennifer Rogers presented updates and announcements. The Board took no action.

Rogers will send a scheduling poll out by the end of the week to determine a date for the next meeting, which should be held before October 1. The meeting will be held in person for the Board to discuss strategic plans related to the budget and upcoming legislative session.

3. Updates and Announcements

September/October Meeting

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS IF NECESSARY

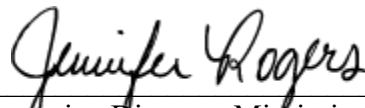
The Board did not consider any additional agenda items.

EXECUTIVE SESSION IF DETERMINED NECESSARY

The Board did not determine the need for an Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Turcotte entertained a motion by Ben Burnett and second by Barney Daly to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 a.m.



Executive Director, Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board