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Governor Reeves Launches Workforce Training Initiative to Aid Mississippi Workers and Employers Burdened by COVID-19

JACKSON — Today, Governor Tate Reeves announced launch of the ReSkill Mississippi initiative (ReSkillMS) to help ease the economic burden and uncertainty this pandemic has created for our state's workforce.

Mississippians who lost their jobs or had severe cutbacks and went on unemployment due to COVID-19 now have the opportunity to receive skills training at Mississippi community colleges to change jobs into high demand careers. Of the $1.25 billion in federal relief funds sent to Mississippi under the CARES Act, the Mississippi legislature appropriated $55 million to support our state's workers and employers, which enabled the Governor and a coalition of the state's workforce leaders to create an innovative new program to train individuals for good-paying jobs most needed right now and into the future.

“While we are in the midst of a public health crisis, we are also fighting this disease on an economic front. Hundreds of thousands of Mississippians have been laid off during this

Mississippians back to work, but to get them skills training that will help them work in even better jobs than they may have had before COVID-19."

ReSkillMS was created as a result of the Governor's Commission on Economic Recovery's recommendation that significant dollars from the CARES Act recovery funds be used for workforce training to help lift the economic burden on our workforce from COVID-19. The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), and Mississippi's four local workforce areas collaborated to develop the program to allow Mississippians out-of-work or those working reduced hours to "re-skill" in order to fill high-demand, high-paying jobs across our state.

"This program can have a major difference in the lives of Mississippians and in building a stronger economy in our state for the demands of tomorrow's world," said SWIB Chairman Patrick Sullivan. "Skilled jobs were in demand before COVID-19, and they will be in demand long after the pandemic is over. Getting more Mississippians the skills for higher paying jobs is going to be key if we are to see sustained economic growth."

The Governor made the announcement at today's press briefing with SWIB Chairman Sullivan, which you can view on our Facebook page here.

The direct beneficiaries of ReSkillMS will be Mississippians furloughed, laid off, or otherwise having economic damages and who received unemployment benefits from MDES, as well as Mississippi employers seeking to hire Mississippians immediately and train them on the job. Employers willing to hire and train individuals in the workplace are eligible to be reimbursed for up to 75% of the individual's wages during the training period. The program requires a minimum fair wage threshold of $15-per-hour for employers to be eligible for reimbursements.

Individuals and employers interested in the program should go online to ReSkillMS.com to complete the appropriate survey. An official from Mississippi's workforce offices nearby will reach out to the individual to guide them through the application process. If individuals have not heard from anyone within seven days of submitting an application, they can email ReSkillMS@mdes.ms.gov to follow up.

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