

# Great City Foundation and RAND Partner to Establish a Research Hub in Jackson

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, UNITED STATES, January 30, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Great City Foundation, comprised of local business and community leaders dedicated to seeing Jackson thrive, announces its partnership with RAND to develop a strategic roadmap to establish a research lab in Jackson. This lab will focus on computational science, including applied research



The Great City Foundation is committed to advancing Jackson, Mississippi's position on the global stage of innovation, and this research lab is an integral part of that."

*Taylor Nicholas, Great City Foundation*

supporting the development of Artificial Intelligence and other forms of computer aided automation. In addition, this state-of-the-art lab will serve as a hub for technology transfer as well as civilian and government employee workforce training.

Mississippi's four research universities will be engaged in the planning process through the Mississippi Research Consortium, which consists of Jackson State University, the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, and the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Kelly Lucas, Vice President of Research at the University of Southern

Mississippi and Chair of the Mississippi Research Consortium said, "Exploring the idea of creating a lab in Jackson is aligned with the state's innovation plan's goals. Providing the infrastructure and resources to support the commercialization of research will be critical in positioning the state for the future, while attracting and retaining a skilled workforce."

This collaboration is timely, as it comes on the heels of Mississippi's recent announcement that Amazon Web Services would be building two hyper-scale data centers in the metro-Jackson area. Adding to rationale for this research center, Jackson sits at the intersection of major high capacity dark fiber networks and is home to one of the nation's leading Historically Black Colleges and Universities, a major academic research hospital, and other research capabilities.

Dr. Julie Jordan, Vice President of Research at Mississippi State University said, "This lab has the potential to transform the landscape of scientific research and technology advancement within the state. By establishing this lab, we will firmly be seen as a hub for cutting-edge innovation and scientific discovery. The initiative underscores the commitment of Mississippi to foster progress and drive economic growth in the region and state."

Computational science, at the intersection of computer science, mathematics, and scientific

disciplines, has seen exponential growth in recent years, offering insights and solutions across a wide range of industries, from healthcare and energy to finance and engineering. The strategic roadmap developed through this partnership will provide a comprehensive blueprint for the research lab's establishment and operations.

Key objectives of the collaboration include:

- Identifying private sector companies interested in partnering with the state on this initiative
- Infrastructure and workforce needs
- Existing incentives
- Public policy implications
- How this lab would fill a gap in the need for applied computational science research

Taylor Nicholas, Executive Director of the Great City Foundation, expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration, stating, "The Great City Foundation is committed to advancing our city's position on the global stage of innovation. By seeking advice from RAND, we are confident that we can create a research lab that will not only drive scientific discovery but also serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development in our region."

RAND, with its vast experience in providing evidence-based solutions and strategic insights, is uniquely positioned to advise the Great City Foundation. Their expertise will be instrumental in shaping the vision and execution of the computational science research lab.

Vanessa Parks, principal investigator of this work at RAND, is looking forward to working with the Great City Foundation; "Mississippi's existing research infrastructure presents an opportunity to meet a growing need for education, workforce development, and leadership in the areas of computational science and Artificial Intelligence. RAND will identify opportunities for a research lab in Jackson that can meet these growing needs and fit into Mississippi's existing landscape."

Joe Stradinger, CEO of EdgeTheory, said, "As an AI-powered narrative intelligence company, we're energized about what this research lab can do for the Jackson area and Mississippi as a whole. We would love to support it through our company, and through our EdgeTheory lab at Ole Miss, which is demonstrating to the community and to the state the benefits of artificial technology when it's applied to problem sets in national security and global business."

This partnership is possible in part by a grant made to the Great City Foundation by the Phil Hardin Foundation. It represents a significant milestone for both organizations and for the entire Jackson, Mississippi community. As the Great City Foundation and RAND work hand in hand to chart the course for this groundbreaking research lab, the prospects for scientific discovery, economic growth, and regional prosperity provide a hopeful, optimistic pathway to the future.

About Great City Foundation

The Great City Foundation is a leading organization dedicated to fostering innovation, education,

and research in Jackson, Mississippi. Committed to advancing the city's standing on the global stage, the foundation supports initiatives that drive economic growth and community development through innovation and education. For more information, visit [greatcityms.org](https://greatcityms.org).

#### About RAND

RAND is a global institution that helps improve policy and decision making through research and analysis. With a commitment to the public interest, RAND provides rigorous, objective research and analysis that informs public policy discussions and advances the greater good. For more information, visit [rand.org](https://rand.org).

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