

Empower Mississippi Releases New Research to Help Determine Why More Mississippians aren't in the Workforce

Despite significant economic activity, state "labor force participation rate" lowest in U.S.

RIDGELAND, MISSISSIPPI, UNITED STATES, August 13, 2024

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Empower Mississippi, a local research and advocacy organization, released a new report today analyzing Mississippi's labor force participation rate.

Mississippi is consistently ranked as having one of the lowest labor force participation rates in the United States. This new report looks at several factors to determine who is participating in the workforce in Mississippi and why more people aren't taking advantage of increasing job opportunities in our state.



“Over the past five years, Mississippi has experienced significant economic growth, with historically low unemployment rates, record levels of capital investment, and wide job availability; yet, our state continues to struggle with a lagging labor force participation rate,” said Grant Callen, CEO of Empower Mississippi. “At a rate of 53.9%, Mississippi sits at the bottom of U.S. rankings. Empower commissioned this analysis of our state’s labor force to establish a baseline of findings and identify opportunities for improvement with a single goal in mind: help more Mississippians experience the life-changing benefits of work.”

“

Increasing Mississippi's labor force participation is crucial for our economic future. Work provides dignity and purpose.”

Grant Callen, Empower Mississippi CEO

The labor force participation rate is what the federal government uses to measure how many

people are currently working or actively looking for work. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Mississippi's labor force participation rate has been among the nation's lowest for many years. To determine why, Empower Mississippi commissioned the National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center (NSPARC) at Mississippi State University to provide data insights into the state's labor market challenges through a baseline study. The report titled "Why Aren't More Mississippians Working?" analyzes factors impacting the labor force, including age, education level, race, and gender. It also includes data on workforce turnover rates, comparisons of high and low performing counties in surrounding states, and other measures related to workforce issues. The report compiles data from 2010-2023 and factors in recent economic trends and events such as the aftermath of the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the findings include:

- Age: The population most likely to be in the labor force are in the 25-44 (78.9%) and 45- 64 (61.7%) age groups, with the lowest being in the 65+ group (13.5%). All age groups have seen a decline in labor force participation since 2010.
- Education: The most critical indicator of labor force participation is the level of education attainment. This study shows that Mississippians with postsecondary education participated in the labor force at greater rates than those with lower educational attainment, with the highest rates observed by those with an associate's degree (68.3%) followed by those with a bachelor's degree (66.7%). The least likely to be recorded as being in the labor force are those who do not have a high school diploma.
- Race: Average monthly labor force participation rates were similar for non-Hispanic Black and White populations (54% and 53%, respectively), while Hispanic individuals had a higher-than-average rate (61.8%).
- Gender: Males participated at higher rates than females (59.8% compared to 48.5%) but experienced similar levels of decline.

In addition to NSPARC's research, Empower Mississippi conducted interviews with economists, elected officials, economic developers, public policy professionals, nonprofit organizations, university professors, state agencies, and trade associations to better understand local perspectives surrounding labor force participation. These stakeholder interviews were designed to provide context and guide future labor force research.

"Increasing Mississippi's labor force participation is crucial for our economic future," said Callen. "And we recognize that work is good for everyone and essential to the human experience. Work provides dignity and purpose, and we want everyone to experience the benefits that come from using one's God-given gifts to provide for themselves and their families. We appreciate state leaders for prioritizing this goal. We hope this initial report will be a helpful resource, and we look forward to sharing additional findings in the future."

This report is part of an ongoing project to identify the causes and possible solutions to improving Mississippi's labor force. This first report provides baseline data to inform policymakers and others who are interested in improving Mississippi's economy and the lives of her citizens. Future reports will include more in-depth research along with policy

recommendations.

Empower Mississippi is inviting the public to provide feedback on the report and recommend ways to increase the state's labor force participation or suggest areas for further research. Citizens can send feedback or comments to research@empowerms.org.

The full report can be accessed here: <https://empowerms.org/labor-force-participation-in-ms/>

About Empower Mississippi

Founded in 2014, Empower Mississippi is a solutions center, working with stakeholders to tackle Mississippi's biggest challenges. We believe every Mississippian can rise, so our work focuses on removing barriers to opportunity so that people in the Magnolia State can earn success, contribute to their families and communities, and live meaningful lives.

Kienna Horn

Empower Mississippi

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

[Instagram](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/735233965>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.