

PROJECTED FASTEST GROWING HIGH-PAYING JOBS IN MISSISSIPPI, 2022-2032



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Each year the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) releases ten-year projections of national employment by occupation. These projections include 800 occupations, and the most recent projections are for the 2022 to 2032 period. The University Research Center adjusted these data to develop projections for Mississippi for the same period, which this publication discusses.

URC adjusted the growth rates of the national projections according to the share of total employment each occupation had in Mississippi as of 2022. Not all U.S. occupations are included in the state. URC developed a list of projections for selected occupations over the next decade based on two primary criteria for inclusion. First, the projected growth rate of the occupation must exceed 10.0 percent. Second, the 2022 median annual salary for the occupation in Mississippi, also obtained from BLS, must exceed \$40,000. The median annual salary for all occupations in the state in 2022 according to BLS was \$36,100. Setting these two criteria resulted in a list of twenty occupations out of a dataset for Mississippi of more than 700. Table I below lists these occupations by title, projected growth rate, median annual salary in 2022, and typical education requirements.

Table I. Projected increases in fastest growing high-paying occupations in Mississippi, 2022-2032.

Occupation	Projected growth	2022 median annual wage	Typical education
Nurse Practitioners	97.2%	\$108,920	Master's degree
Conservation Scientists	53.3%	\$72,820	Bachelor's degree
Physical Therapist Assistants	41.8%	\$61,600	Associate's degree
Medical and Health Services Managers	37.4%	\$80,950	Bachelor's degree
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	27.6%	\$52,930	High school diploma
Speech-Language Pathologists	23.9%	\$51,840	Master's degree
Respiratory Therapists	21.2%	\$51,840	Associate's degree
Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary	20.0%	\$63,620	Doctoral or professional degree
Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	16.7%	\$109,290	Doctoral or professional degree
Physical Therapists	16.2%	\$97,750	Doctoral or professional degree
Information Security Analysts	15.2%	\$81,140	Bachelor's degree
Veterinarians	15.0%	\$95,200	Doctoral or professional degree
First-Line Supervisors of Gambling Services Workers	14.4%	\$49,350	High school diploma
Occupational Therapists	13.9%	\$91,800	Master's degree
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	13.4%	\$66,170	Associate's degree
Substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors	13.3%	\$43,180	Bachelor's degree
Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	11.6%	\$69,990	Bachelor's degree
Financial Managers	10.7%	\$85,440	Bachelor's degree
Industrial Engineers	10.3%	\$81,760	Bachelor's degree
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	10.2%	\$45,730	Postsecondary nondegree award

Source: URC analysis of National Employment Matrix, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Several observations can be made about Table I. The 2022 median annual salary of all the jobs included exceeds the state's median annual salary of \$36,100 because of the criteria we set. However, the median annual salary of ten of the twenty occupations is more than double the median annual salary for Mississippi. Note that many of the salaries listed are mid-career salaries, not starting salaries, and therefore attaining these salaries may require a certain number of years of experience or reaching certain milestones. Next, a majority of the occupations in Table I are in the medical field or a closely related field. The outsized presence of medical and related occupations reflects national trends as well as an aging population. As more Baby Boomers move into retirement age, the demand for healthcare over the next decade likely will increase. Finally, 70.0 percent of the jobs in Table I typically require at least a bachelor's degree. Only three of the twenty jobs typically require less than an associate's degree. Given the predominance of occupations in the medical field in Table I, these requirements are not unexpected as most medical jobs require at least some post-secondary education. The remainder of this report briefly discusses each of the jobs in Table I and includes context for each job in Mississippi. For each occupation that typically requires a bachelor's degree or higher education, the corresponding programs offered at the eight public institutions of higher learning in Mississippi are listed in a supplemental table.¹ Likewise for each occupation that typically requires an associate's degree or higher education, the corresponding programs offered at the fifteen public community colleges in the state are listed in a supplemental table. We note that the degrees and majors listed represent *typical* pathways to the associated occupations; other pathways involving different degrees, majors, or other training and experience likely exist for many of the occupations discussed in this report.

URC uses the *CIP SOC Crosswalk* created jointly by BLS and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to link the educational programs from Mississippi's public postsecondary institutions. BLS maintains the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes, which it and other federal agencies and many international agencies use to group occupations in a manner that simplifies collecting, calculating, and disseminating data regarding occupations. NCES maintains the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes. Postsecondary institutions nationwide use these codes to label the programs they offer in a way that makes programs comparable across institutions. The *CIP SOC Crosswalk* maps SOC codes from BLS to the programs that typically lead to those occupations by CIP code. URC collected the CIP codes from IHL for the eight public universities and the CIP codes for the fifteen public community colleges from the Mississippi Community College Board.

Nurse Practitioners

According to BLS, nurse practitioners “diagnose and treat acute, episodic, or chronic illness, independently or as part of a healthcare team.” Nurse practitioners can “order, perform, or interpret diagnostic tests such as lab work and x-rays,” as well as prescribe medication. A nurse practitioner must be a registered nurse with graduate education. Nurse practitioner is projected to be the fastest growing occupation in Mississippi over the next decade and the second fastest growing in the U.S. The largest employer of nurse practitioners is physicians' offices, followed by general hospitals. BLS attributes the expected growth in nurse practitioners to occupational substitution: the “growing demand for healthcare services will not . . . be met by expected growth in physicians and surgeons,” which “will encourage the adoption of team-based healthcare provision models which increasingly utilize physician assistants and nurse practitioners.” Notably, BLS reported Mississippi had the second highest

¹ ASU = Alcorn State University; DSU = Delta State University; JSU = Jackson State University; MSU = Mississippi State University; MUW = Mississippi University for Women; MVSU = Mississippi Valley State University; UM/UMMC = University of Mississippi and University of Mississippi Medical Center; and USM = University of Southern Mississippi

concentration of nurse practitioners among all states in 2022 after Tennessee, with 3.54 individuals employed in the occupation per 1,000 workers. Among U.S. metropolitan areas, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and Jackson, Mississippi, had the fifth and eighth highest concentrations of nurse practitioners, respectively. The mean salary of nurse practitioners in Mississippi in 2022 was \$117,260, less than the U.S. mean salary of \$124,680. However, this salary was more than the mean annual salaries in Alabama, Arkansas, and Tennessee and about the same as the mean annual salary in Louisiana. An associate’s degree with a major in Nursing/Registered Nurse is offered by Copiah-Lincoln, Delta, East Central, Gulf Coast, Hinds, Itawamba, Northeast, and Pearl River Community Colleges.

Table 2. Degrees and majors related to Nurse Practitioner.

	ASU	DSU	MUW	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor’s	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing
Master’s/Specialist	Nursing	Nursing	Family Nurse Clinician	Nursing of Adults	Nursing
Doctoral/Professional	Nursing Practice	Nursing Practice	Nursing Practice	Nursing	Nursing

Physical Therapist Assistants

As the title implies, BLS reports physical therapist assistants “assist physical therapists in providing physical therapy treatments and procedures.” The duties can include developing treatment plans for patients and monitoring the progress of treatment. Some type of formal training beyond high school is usually required, typically consisting of at least an associate’s degree. Physical therapist assistant is projected to be one of the fastest growing occupations in Mississippi and the U.S. over the next decade. The projected increase in the number of physical therapist assistants according to BLS stems from an increase in demand as “facilities increasingly attempt to leverage their physical therapy workforce” and as “physical therapy services are increasingly . . . needed to help patients rehabilitate injuries and manage chronic pain without the use of pharmaceuticals.” The total number of physical therapist assistants in Mississippi is in the bottom half of all states. However, Mississippi is in the top 25.0 percent of states in terms of the number of physical therapist assistants employed per 1,000 workers. In addition, Northeast Mississippi ranked fifth among all nonmetropolitan areas in the U.S. for number of physical therapist assistants employed with 250. The annual mean wage for physical therapist assistants in Mississippi in 2022 of \$61,270 was slightly less than the U.S. annual mean wage of \$64,510. However, the average salary was about the same as in Tennessee and greater than the average salaries in Alabama and Louisiana. An associate’s degree with a Physical Therapist Assistant major is available at Delta, Gulf Coast, Hinds, Holmes, Itawamba, Meridian, and Pearl River Community Colleges.

Conservation Scientists

Conservation Scientists “manage, improve, and protect natural resources to maximize their use without damaging the environment,” according to BLS. Their duties can include conducting soil surveys and teaching farmers and landowners practices such as crop rotation and terracing to prevent erosion and loss of water. While conservation scientist is projected to be the second fastest growing occupation in Mississippi over the next decade, the projected growth rate for the U.S. as a whole is much lower. The expected growth in the number of conservation scientists according to BLS is due to an increase in demand, “as social advocacy for environmental protection and conservation is expected to increase.” BLS reported in 2022 Mississippi ranked fourth among all states in the total number of conservation scientists with 1,010 and in the concentration of conservation scientists with 0.89 individuals employed per 1,000 workers. Among all U.S. metropolitan areas, Jackson, Mississippi, had the largest number of

conservation scientists employed in 2022 at 650, and the second highest concentration of conservation scientists with 2.63 individuals employed per 1,000 workers. The annual mean salary for conservation scientists in Mississippi in 2022 of \$55,940 was less than the U.S. mean salary of \$69,810. The annual mean salary in Mississippi was also considerably less compared to the annual mean salaries in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee.

Table 3. Degrees and majors related to Conservation Scientist.

	ASU	DSU	JSU	MSU	MUW	MVSU	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor's	Biology	Biology; Environmental Science	Biology	Biological Sciences; General Science; Animal Science; Sustainable Bioproducts; Environmental Economics and Sustainability; Microbiology; Landscape Architecture; Agricultural Science; Environmental Science in Agricultural Systems; Forestry; Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture	Biology	Biology	Biological Science	Biological Sciences; Sustainability Studies; Marine Biology; Sustainability Sciences (Coastal System Dynamics)
Master's/ Specialist	Biology	Natural Sciences	Biology	Biological Sciences; Landscape Architecture; Agriculture; Forestry; Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture			Biological Science	Biological Sciences; Coastal Sciences
Doctoral/ Professional			Environmental Science	Biological Sciences; Agricultural Sciences; Forest Resources			Biological Science	Biological Sciences; Coastal Sciences

Industrial Machinery Mechanics

Industrial machinery mechanics “repair, install, adjust, or maintain industrial production and processing machinery or refinery and pipeline distribution systems,” according to BLS. They may also move or install machinery and heavy equipment. The occupation is projected to be one of the fastest growing in Mississippi over the next decade; it is also expected to grow nationwide but at a somewhat slower rate. Projected increases in the number of industrial machinery mechanics over the next decade are due to an increase in demand according to BLS. Firms in the mining sector are expected to continue adopting new machinery, which will require more mechanics, and firms in multiple sectors are expected to increase automation, which will increase the demand for mechanics to maintain and repair equipment. The number of industrial machinery mechanics in Mississippi is among the upper half of all states, and Mississippi is in the top fifteen states in terms of the number of individuals employed per 1,000 workers. Notably, the Gulfport-Biloxi-Pascagoula, Mississippi, metropolitan area was one of the top four highest paying metropolitan areas in the U.S. for industrial machinery mechanics in 2022 with an annual mean wage of \$82,280. An associate’s degree with a major in Industrial Mechanics is offered at Coahoma, Delta, East Mississippi, Holmes, Itawamba, Meridian, and Northeast Mississippi Community Colleges.

Medical and Health Services Managers

According to BLS, medical and health services managers “plan, direct, or coordinate medical and health services in hospitals, clinics, managed care organizations, public health agencies, or similar organizations.” The occupation is expected to be among the fastest growing in the state and nation over the next ten years. BLS attributes the expected increase in the number of medical and health services managers to an increase in demand “as healthcare providers utilize broader team structures which will require increased use of specialized management.” While Mississippi was in the bottom half of all states in the total number of medical and health services managers in 2022, Mississippi was among the top ten states in terms of the number of medical and health services managers employed per 1,000 workers. In addition, Northeast Mississippi ranked fourth among all nonmetropolitan areas in the U.S. in the number of medical and health services managers employed with 940. The average annual mean wage in Mississippi of \$92,890 is considerably lower than the U.S. average annual mean wage of \$127,980. The average salary is also lower than those of surrounding states, but only slightly below the average salaries in Alabama and Arkansas.

Table 4. Degrees and majors related to Medical and Health Services Managers.

	ASU	DSU	JSU	MSU	MUW	MVSU	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor's	Biology; Business Administration; Accounting	Biology; Business Administration; Management; General Business; Accountancy; Healthcare Administration; Nursing Practice	Biology; Business Administration; Management; Accounting; Health Care Administration; Public Health	Biological Sciences; Business Administration; Management; Accounting; Biochemistry; Microbiology; Healthcare Administration	Biology; Business Administration; Accounting	Biology; Business Administration; Accounting	Biological Science; Management; General Business; Accountancy; Biochemistry; Health Systems Administration; Health Informatics and Information Management	Biological Sciences; Business Administration; Management; Accounting; Organizational Leadership; Public Health; Applied Technology
Master's/ Specialist	Biology; General Business Administration	Business Administration; Accountancy	Biology; Business Administration; Accounting; Public Health	Biological Sciences; Business Administration; Accounting; Public Health	Business Administration; Public Health	Business Administration	Health Systems Administration; Health Informatics and Information Management; Population Health Management; Biological Science; Business Administration; Accountancy; Public Health	Biological Sciences; Business Administration; Accounting; Public Health
Doctoral/ Professional	Nursing Practice	Nursing Practice	Business Administration; Public Health	Biological Sciences; Business Administration	Nursing Practice		Biological Science; Business Administration; Accountancy; Pharmacy; Cell and Molecular Biology; Health Administration; Population Health Science; Nursing	Biological Sciences; Nursing

Respiratory Therapists

According to BLS, respiratory therapists “assess, treat, and care for patients with breathing disorders.” They also supervise technicians and operate and maintain equipment. General hospitals are among the largest employers of respiratory therapists. Respiratory therapists are projected to grow at a higher rate in Mississippi over the next decade compared to the U.S. The projected growth in the number of respiratory therapists over the next decade will result from an increase in demand according to BLS, as “Respiratory therapists will be increasingly needed across hospital and non-hospital settings to treat a

wide variety of conditions and patients.” Mississippi ranks in the upper half of all states in total number of respiratory therapists. The state ranks third overall in the number of respiratory therapists employed per 1,000 workers, just ahead of Louisiana and Alabama. The Northeast Mississippi nonmetropolitan area was tied with the South-Central Kentucky and South Georgia nonmetropolitan areas for third among all such areas in the country in 2022 in the number of respiratory therapists employed with 290. The mean annual wage for respiratory therapists in Mississippi was \$56,870 in 2022, considerably less than the national annual mean wage of \$74,310. This wage was similar to the annual mean wage in Alabama and less than the wages in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee. An associate’s degree with a major in Respiratory Care Therapy is offered by Coahoma, Copiah-Lincoln, Gulf Coast, Hinds, Itawamba, Meridian, Northeast Mississippi, Northwest Mississippi, and Pear River Community Colleges.

Speech-Language Pathologists

Speech-language pathologists “assess and treat persons with speech, language, voice, and fluency disorders,” per BLS. This occupation is expected to grow at similar rates in Mississippi and the U.S. in the next ten years. Elementary and secondary schools tend to be one of the leading employers of speech-language pathologists. BLS attributes the projected increase to higher demand “as an aging population, higher autism-spectrum and special needs, and expanded service provision at schools increases demand for speech-language pathologists.” Mississippi is in the bottom half of all states in the total number of speech-language pathologists, and in the middle of all states in terms of the number of speech-language pathologists employed per 1,000 workers. However, in 2022 Northeast Mississippi ranked fourth among all nonmetropolitan areas in the U.S. in the number of speech-language pathologists with 310. The annual mean wage for speech-language pathologists in Mississippi in 2022 was \$74,740, which was less than the national mean annual wage of \$89,460. The average annual wage in Mississippi was higher than in Alabama and Louisiana, but less than in Arkansas and Tennessee. An associate’s degree with a major in Communication Disorders is offered by Holmes Community College.

Table 5. Degrees and majors related to Speech-Language Pathologists.

	DSU	JSU	MUW	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor’s	Speech and Hearing Sciences	Communicative Disorders	Speech Pathology	Communication Sciences and Disorders	Speech Pathology and Audiology
Master’s/Specialist		Communicative Disorders	Speech-Language Pathology	Communication Sciences and Disorders	Speech and Hearing Sciences
Doctoral/Professional					Audiology

Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary

Postsecondary health specialties teachers teach courses in specific fields including dentistry, pharmacy, public health, and laboratory technology. BLS notes these teachers are distinct from nursing instructors, discussed later, and biological science teachers. Universities and colleges, and to a lesser extent junior/community colleges, are the major employers of postsecondary health specialties teachers. In Mississippi, the number of post-secondary health specialties teachers is expected to grow at a rate similar to the U.S. over the next decade. The demand for health specialty degrees is expected to increase over the next ten years according to BLS, leading to an increase in the number of postsecondary health specialties teachers. Mississippi falls in the lower half of all states in the total number of postsecondary health specialties teachers employed and is near the middle of all states in terms of number of employees per 1,000 workers. According to BLS, Mississippi was the top paying state for postsecondary health specialties teachers in 2022 with a mean annual salary of \$157,160, slightly higher than the mean annual salary in Texas and well above the national mean annual salary of \$127,640. In addition, Jackson, Mississippi, ranked tenth among all metropolitan areas in the U.S in 2022

in terms of the number of postsecondary health specialties teachers employed per 1,000 workers. Jackson, Mississippi, also ranked second among all metropolitan areas in terms of pay in 2022 for postsecondary health specialties teachers with an average annual salary of \$206,980. The Northeast Mississippi nonmetropolitan area was tied for third with the Piedmont North Carolina nonmetropolitan area for the number of postsecondary health specialties teachers employed among all such areas with 240. Many degrees with majors related to postsecondary health specialties teachers are offered by public universities and community colleges in Mississippi.

Table 6. Degrees and majors related to Postsecondary Health Specialties Teachers.

	ASU	DSU	JSU	MSU	MUW	MVSU	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor's	Applied Science; Biology; Psychology	Biology; Psychology; Speech and Hearing Sciences	Biology; Psychology; Communicative Disorders; Public Health	Biological Sciences; Psychology; Biochemistry; Medical Technology; Microbiology; Psychology	Biology; Psychology; Speech Pathology; Public Health; Education	Biology; Environmental Health	Biological Science; Psychology; Biochemistry; Medical Technology; Public Health and Health Science; Applied Gerontology; Biological Science; Communication Sciences and Disorders; Dietetics and Nutrition; Pharmaceutical Sciences; Dental Hygiene; Health Sciences; Histotechnology; Radiologic Sciences; Medical Laboratory Science	Biological Sciences; Psychology; Speech; Pathology and Audiology; Public Health; Medical Laboratory Science; Nutrition and Dietetics; Health Sciences; Kinesiotherapy; Recreational Therapy
Master's/ Specialist	Biology; Applied Science and Technology		Biology; Communicative Disorders; Public Health; Counseling, Rehabilitation and Psychometric Services	Biological Sciences; Psychology; Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences; Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion; Physician Assistant Studies; Public Health	Speech-Language Pathology; Public Health	Environmental Health	Biological Science; Psychology; Communication Sciences and Disorders; Athletic Training; Dietary Supplement and Medical Cannabis; Pharmaceutical Sciences; Public Health; Biostatistics and Data Science; Dental Residents; Nuclear Medicine Technology; Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Population Health Management; Occupational Therapy; Physical Therapy Residents	Biological Sciences; Psychology; Epidemiology and Biostatistics; Speech and Hearing Sciences; Physician Assistant Studies; Athletic Training; Medical Laboratory Science; Public Health
Doctoral/ Professional	Nursing Practice	Nursing Practice	Public Health	Biological Sciences; Applied Psychology; Veterinary Medicine DVM; Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences; Environmental Toxicology; Food Science and Nutrition	Nursing Practice		Biological Science; Psychology; Pharmacy; Pharmaceutical Sciences; Cell and Molecular Biology; Nursing; Clinical Anatomy; Biostatistics and Data Science; Audiology; Dentistry, DMD; Experimental Therapeutics and Pharmacology; Population Health Science; Occupational Therapy; Physical Therapy	Biological Sciences; Psychology; Nursing Audiology

Table 7. Associate's degree majors related to Postsecondary Health Specialties Teachers at public community colleges in Mississippi.

Coahoma	Copiah-Lincoln	East Central	East Mississippi	Hinds	Holmes	Itawamba	Jones	Meridian	Delta	Gulf Coast	Northeast Mississippi	Northwest Mississippi	Pearl River
Biology; Emergency Medical Technology; Respiratory Care Therapy; Rehabilitation and Therapeutic Professions	Biology; Respiratory Care Therapy;	Surgical Technology	Biology; Emergency Medical Technology; Surgical Technology	Technician and Veterinary Assistant; Dental Assisting; Emergency Medical Technology; Respiratory Care Therapy; Surgical Technology; Diagnostic Medical Sonography; Radiologic Technology	Communication Disorders; Occupational Therapist Assistant; Emergency Medical Technology; Surgical Technology; Massage Therapy	Biology; Occupational Therapist Assistant; Emergency Medical Technology; Respiratory Care Therapy; Surgical Technology; Radiologic Technology; Public Health; Rehabilitation and Therapeutic Professions	Biology; Pharmacy Technician; Emergency Medical Technology; Radiologic Rehabilitation and Therapeutic Professions	Dental Assisting; Dental Hygiene; Medical/ Clinical Assistant; Emergency Medical Technology; Respiratory Care Therapy; Surgical Technology; Radiologic Technology; Medical Laboratory Technician	Biology; Dental Hygiene; Radiologic Technology; Medical Laboratory Technic	Emergency Medical Technology; Respiratory Care Therapy; Surgical Technology; Radiologic Technology; Medical Laboratory Technic; Massage Therapy	Dental Hygiene; Clinical Assistant; Respiratory Care Therapy; Radiologic Technology; Medical Laboratory Technic	Biology; Cardiovascular Technology; Emergency Medical Technology; Respiratory Care Therapy; Surgical Technology	Dental Assisting; Dental Hygiene; Occupational Therapist Assistant; Respiratory Care Therapy; Surgical Technology; Radiologic Technology; Medical Laboratory Technician

Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary

These teachers instruct students on patient care in both classroom and clinical settings, and include individuals engaged in primarily teaching as well as teaching and research. Postsecondary nursing instructors and teachers are mainly employed by colleges and universities, and a smaller number are employed by junior/community colleges. Employment of postsecondary nursing instructors and teachers in Mississippi is expected to grow at a similar rate as the U.S. over the next ten years. Mississippi is near the middle of all states in terms of total number of postsecondary nursing instructors and teachers employed, and in the number employed per 1,000 workers. The Northwest Mississippi nonmetropolitan area is tied for fourth among all nonmetropolitan areas in the number of postsecondary nursing instructors and teachers employed per 1,000 workers. The mean annual wage for postsecondary nursing instructors and teachers in Mississippi in 2022 was \$68,380, well below the national mean annual wage of \$84,180. The mean annual wage in Mississippi was similar to the mean annual wage in Arkansas, but was considerably less than in Alabama, Louisiana, and Tennessee. As noted previously in the discussion of Nurse Practitioners, an associate’s degree with a major in Nursing/Registered Nurse is offered by Copiah-Lincoln, Delta, East Central, Gulf Coast, Hinds, Itawamba, Northeast, and Pearl River Community Colleges.

Table 8. Degrees and majors related to Postsecondary Nursing Instructor.

	ASU	DSU	JSU	MSU	MUW	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor’s	Nursing	Healthcare Administration; Nursing	Healthcare Administration	Healthcare Administration; Applied Technology	Nursing	Health Systems Administration; Nursing	Nursing
Master’s/ Specialist	Nursing	Nursing			Family Nurse Clinician	Health Systems Administration; Nursing of Adults	Nursing
Doctoral/ Professional	Nursing Practice	Nursing Practice			Nursing Practice	Health Administration; Nursing	Nursing

Physical Therapists

According to BLS, physical therapists “assess, plan, organize, and participate in rehabilitative programs that improve mobility, relieve pain, increase strength, and improve or correct disabling conditions resulting from disease or injury.” Physical therapists are employed by multiple industries including health practitioners, general hospitals, and home health care services. Employment of physical therapists in Mississippi is expected to grow at a similar rate as the U.S. over the next ten years. Like physical therapist assistants, the number of physical therapists is expected to rise as “physical therapy services are increasingly needed to help patients rehabilitate injuries and manage chronic pain without the use of pharmaceuticals,” according to BLS. Mississippi is in the bottom half of all states in the total number of physical therapists employed. In terms of the number of employees per 1,000 workers Mississippi is similar to most states. The mean annual salary for physical therapists in Mississippi in 2022 was \$96,520, slightly less than the national mean annual salary of \$97,960. The mean annual salary in Mississippi was similar to the salaries in Alabama and Louisiana and greater than the salaries in Arkansas and Tennessee.

Table 9. Degrees and majors related to Physical Therapist.

	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor’s		Kinesiotherapy
Master’s/Specialist	Physical Therapy Residents	
Doctoral/Professional	Physical Therapy	

Information Security Analysts

Information Security Analysts “plan, implement, upgrade, or monitor security measures for the protection of computer networks and information” according to BLS. They may also determine if systems are vulnerable to attacks and may respond to security breaches. The number of information security analysts in Mississippi is projected to grow at half the rate for the U.S. in the next ten years, although the occupation is expected to be one of the fastest growing in both locations. BLS projects the number of analysts will increase over the next ten years “as firms increase their IT security staffs and capabilities as a response to increasing threats of cyberattacks aimed at sensitive or financial data.” However, BLS also notes an increase in productivity may slightly offset this growth because of “increased use of automated and AI technologies to improve security measures.” Mississippi ranks relatively low among all states in terms of the total number of information security analysts employed as well as number of employees per 1,000 workers. However, Northeast Mississippi ranks fourth among all nonmetropolitan areas in the U.S. in number of information security analysts employed with 80. The mean annual wages for information security analysts in Mississippi in 2022 of \$85,460 is relatively low compared to the national mean annual wages of \$119,860. The mean annual wage for the state is also less than those of surrounding states. An associate’s degree with a major in Computer Systems Networking is offered at Copiah-Lincoln, East Central, East Mississippi, Gulf Coast, Hinds, Holmes, Itawamba, Jones, Northwest Mississippi, Pearl River, and Southwest Mississippi Community Colleges. An associate’s degree with a major in Computer and Information Systems is offered at Copiah-Lincoln, East Central, East Mississippi, Gulf Coast, Hinds, and Meridian Community Colleges. Delta Community College offers an associate’s degree with a major in Computer Science.

Table 10. Degrees and majors related to Information Security Analyst.

	ASU	JSU	MSU	MVSU	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor’s	Computer Science; Computer Networking and Information Technology	Computer Science	Computer Science; Cybersecurity	Computer Science	Computer Science	Computer Science; Information Technology; Cybersecurity
Master’s/ Specialist	Computer and Information Science	Computer Science	Computer Science; Cybersecurity and Operations			Computer Science
Doctoral/ Professional		Computational and Data-Enabled Science and Engineering	Computer Science			

Veterinarians

Per BLS, veterinarians “diagnose, treat, or research diseases and injuries of animals” and may also conduct research and development. Employment of veterinarians in Mississippi is expected to grow at a similar rate as the U.S. over the next ten years. Mississippi falls in the bottom half of all states in terms of total number of veterinarians employed and has a relatively low number of veterinarians per 1,000 workers compared to most states. Many of the U.S. metropolitan areas with the highest concentrations of veterinarians are home to land grant universities. The mean annual salary for veterinarians in Mississippi in 2022 was \$108,190, which was less than the national mean annual salary of \$129,110. The mean annual salary for veterinarians in Mississippi in 2022 was greater than in Arkansas, nearly the same as in Louisiana, and less than in Alabama and Tennessee.

Table 11. Degrees and majors related to Veterinarian.

	ASU	MSU
Bachelor's	Agricultural Science	Animal Science; Veterinary Medical Technology
Master's/Specialist	General Agriculture	Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences
Doctoral/Professional		Veterinary Medicine DVM; Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences

Occupational Therapists

According to BLS, occupational therapists “assess, plan, and organize rehabilitative programs that help build or restore vocational, homemaking, and daily living skills, as well as general independence, to persons with disabilities or developmental delays.” The number of occupational therapists in Mississippi and the U.S. is projected to grow at similar rates over the next decade. The expected increase in the number of occupational therapists over the next decade will result from an increase in demand “to help patients rehabilitate injuries and adapt daily activities that allow them to maintain their independence” according to BLS. Health practitioners, general hospitals, and elementary and secondary schools are among the largest employers of occupational therapists. Mississippi ranks near the middle of all states in terms of the total number of occupational therapists employed and in the number employed per 1,000 workers. Notably, Northeast Mississippi ranked third among all nonmetropolitan areas in the nation in terms of the number of occupational therapists employed in 2022 with 260. The mean annual salary for occupational therapists in Mississippi in 2022 of \$85,590 was less than the U.S. mean annual salary of \$92,800. The mean annual salary in the state was greater than in Alabama and Arkansas but slightly less than in Louisiana and Tennessee.

Table 12. Degrees and majors related to Occupational Therapist.

	UM/UMMC
Bachelor's	
Master's/Specialist	Occupational Therapy
Doctoral/Professional	Occupational Therapy

First-Line Supervisors of Gambling Services Workers

First-line supervisors of gambling services workers “directly supervise and coordinate activities of workers in assigned gambling areas,” according to BLS. They may also ensure that gaming stations are covered by workers, and they may repair gaming equipment. As one might expect, casinos and casino hotels are among the largest employers of these workers. The number of first line supervisors is projected to grow at a much higher rate in Mississippi compared to the U.S. over the next decade. However, one caveat to this projection is the growth in Mississippi may be much less if the number of gaming locations in other states expands, creating more competition for sites in the state. Mississippi ranked third among all states in 2022 in the number of first-line supervisors of gambling services workers employed. The state was also second among all states in the number of employees per 1,000 workers. The Gulfport-Biloxi-Pascagoula, Mississippi, metropolitan area ranked sixth among all metropolitan areas nationally in employment of first-line supervisors of gambling services and third in number of employees per 1,000 workers. The mean annual wage of \$51,730 in Mississippi in 2022 was less than the national mean annual wage of \$56,400, but very similar to the mean annual wages in Alabama and Louisiana.

Diagnostic Medical Sonographers

BLS defines diagnostic medical sonographers as workers who “produce ultrasonic recordings of internal organs for use by physicians.” Diagnostic medical sonographers are projected to grow at similar rates in Mississippi and the U.S. over the next decade. General hospitals and physicians are the primary employers of these workers. BLS reports demand for sonographers will increase as physicians and hospitals seek to save on the costs of non-invasive imaging by utilizing ultrasound imaging. Mississippi falls in the bottom half of states in the total number of diagnostic medical sonographers employed and near the middle of all states in the number of employees per 1,000 workers. The mean annual wage for diagnostic medical sonographers in Mississippi in 2022 was \$66,430, well below the national mean annual wage of \$84,410. The mean annual wage in Mississippi was greater than in Alabama and Louisiana, but less than in Arkansas and Tennessee. Hinds Community College offers an associate’s degree with a major in Diagnostic Medical Sonography.

Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors

“Substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors advise people on a range of issues, such as those relating to alcoholism, addictions, or depression,” according to BLS. The number of counselors in Mississippi is projected to grow at a slower rate than in the U.S. over the next ten years, but both the state and nation expect considerably faster growth compared to the average for all occupations. BLS predicts the demand for counselors will increase over the next decade “as demand rises for treatment of patients with mental and behavioral issues, including opioid addiction.” Several different types of facilities employ these counselors, including outpatient clinics, health practitioners, residential facilities for patients, and local governments. Mississippi falls in the bottom half of all states in terms of the total number of counselors employed as well as the number of employees per 1,000 workers. The mean annual wage for substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors in Mississippi in 2022 was \$45,770, below the national mean annual wage of \$56,230. The mean annual wage was higher than in Louisiana, about the same as in Alabama and Tennessee, and considerably below the mean annual wage in Arkansas of \$63,250.

Table 13. Degrees and majors related to Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors.

	ASU	DSU	JSU	MSU	MVSU	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor’s	Social Work	Social Work	Social Work	Social Work	Social Work	Social Work	Social Work
Master’s/ Specialist		Counseling	Clinical Mental Health; Social Work; Counseling, Rehabilitation and Psychometric Services	Counselor Education	Social Work	Social Work; Counselor Education	Marriage and Family Therapy; School Counseling; Social Work; Counseling Psychology
Doctoral/ Professional			Social Work	Counselor Education/Student Counseling & Guidance Services; Counselor Education		Counselor Education; Social Welfare	

Occupational Health and Safety Specialists

According to BLS, occupational health and safety specialists “review, evaluate, and analyze work environments and design programs and procedures to control, eliminate, and prevent disease or injury caused by chemical, physical, and biological agents or ergonomic factors.” The number of these specialists in Mississippi and the U.S. is expected to grow over the next decade at around the same rate. The number of specialists is projected to grow due to an increase in demand according to BLS, “as employers increasingly prioritize worker health and safety.” The primary employers of occupational health and safety specialists are consulting services and federal, state, and local governments. Many of these specialists work in the mining and oil and gas extraction sector. Mississippi falls in the lower half of all states in the total number of occupational health and safety specialists employed and near the middle in the number of employees per 1,000 workers. The mean average wage in Mississippi of \$73,960 in 2022 was less than the national average wage of \$82,110. This wage was greater than in Arkansas, about the same as in Alabama, and less than in Louisiana and Tennessee.

Table 14. Degrees and majors related to Occupational Health and Safety Specialist.

	ASU	DSU	JSU	MSU	MUW	MVSU	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor's	Biology	Biology	Biology; Public Health	Biological Sciences; Medical Technology	Biology; Public Health; Education	Biology; Environmental Health	Biological Science; Public Health and Health Science; Medical Technology Medical Laboratory Science	Biological Sciences; Medical Laboratory Science; Public Health
Master's/ Specialist	Biology		Biology; Public Health	Biological Sciences; Public Health	Public Health		Biological Sciences; Public Health	Biological Sciences; Medical Laboratory Science; Public Health
Doctoral/ Professional			Public Health	Biological Sciences			Biological Science	Biological Sciences

Financial Managers

Financial managers “plan, direct, or coordinate accounting, investing, banking, insurance, securities, and other financial activities of a branch, office, or department of an establishment,” according to BLS. The number of financial managers is expected to grow at a higher rate for the U.S. than for Mississippi in the next ten years, but both the state and nation expect considerably faster growth compared to the average for all occupations. BLS projects the demand for financial managers will increase over the next decade due to “a greater emphasis on risk management and increases in demand for managing investments [sic] funds.” Firms that perform credit intermediation are among the largest employers of financial managers and firms in the securities and financial investment sector are among the highest paying. The number of financial managers and the number employed per 1,000 workers in Mississippi are both in the lower half of all states. The annual average salary of a financial manager in Mississippi in 2022 was \$105,700, well below the national annual average salary of \$166,050. This average annual salary was also considerably lower than those in surrounding states. An associate’s degree with a major in Business Administration and Management is offered at Copiah-Lincoln, Delta, East Central, Hinds, Holmes, Northeast Mississippi, Northwest Mississippi, Pearl River, and Southwest Mississippi Community Colleges. Hinds Community College also offers an associate’s degree in Logistics and Materials Management.

Table 15. Degrees and majors related to Financial Manager.

	ASU	DSU	JSU	MSU	MUW	MVSU	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor's	Business Administration; Accounting	General Business; Business Administration; Management; Accounting; Finance	Business Administration; Management; Accounting; Supply Chain Management; Economics; Entrepreneurship; Finance	Business Administration; Management; Accounting; Supply Chain Logistics; Economics; Banking and Finance	Business Administration; Accounting	Business Administration; Accounting	General Business; Management; Accounting; Economics; Entrepreneurship; Risk Management and Insurance; Finance; Banking and Finance	Business Administration; Management; Accounting; International Business; Finance
Master's/ Specialist	General Business Administration	Business Administration; Accounting	Business Administration; Accounting	Business Administration; Accounting	Business Administration	Business Administration	Business Administration; Accounting	Business Administration; Accounting; Economic Development
Doctoral/ Professional			Business Administration	Business Administration			Business Administration; Accounting	

Industrial Engineers

According to BLS, industrial engineers “design, develop, test, and evaluate integrated systems for managing industrial production processes, including human work factors, quality control, inventory control, logistics and material flow, cost analysis, and production coordination.” The number of industrial engineers is projected to grow at similar rates in Mississippi and the U.S. over the next decade. The number of industrial engineers is expected to increase over the next ten years according to BLS because firms will drive demand for employees to design and develop “increasingly complex manufacturing processes, logistics, and supply chains.” The aerospace manufacturing industry is one of the largest employers of industrial engineers, and the oil and gas extraction sector is one of the highest paying sectors for industrial engineers. The total number of industrial engineers employed in Mississippi was near the middle of all states in 2022, as was the number employed per 1,000 workers. The average annual salary of industrial engineers in Mississippi in 2022 was \$88,190, less than the national average annual salary of \$98,560. This salary was approximately the same as in Arkansas, slightly less than in Alabama and Tennessee, and considerably below the average annual salary in Louisiana. Holmes Community College offers an associate’s degree with a major in Industrial Technology/Technician.

Table 16. Degrees and majors related to Industrial Engineer.

	JSU	MSU	MVSU	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor's	Industrial Technology	Industrial Technology; Industrial Engineering	Engineering Technology	Engineering	Industrial Engineering Technology
Master's/ Specialist	Engineering	Engineering; Industrial and Systems Engineering			
Doctoral/ Professional	Engineering	Engineering; Industrial and Systems Engineering			

Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses

Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses “care for ill, injured, or convalescing patients or persons with disabilities in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, private homes, group homes, and similar institutions,” according to BLS. They may be supervised by registered nurses. The number of licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses in Mississippi is projected to grow at nearly double the rate for the U.S. over the next ten years. Nursing homes and similar facilities are among the primary employers of practical and vocational nurses, along with general hospitals and home health care services. Mississippi was in the upper half of all states for employment of practical and vocational nurses in 2022. In addition,

Mississippi ranked fourth among all states in the number of practical and vocational nurses employed per 1,000 workers, behind Louisiana, West Virginia, and Arkansas. Northeast Mississippi ranked fourth among all nonmetropolitan areas in the U.S. in 2022 for employment of practical and vocational nurses with 2,000. The average annual salary for practical and vocational nurses in Mississippi was \$45,020 in 2022, less than the U.S. average annual salary of \$55,860. This salary was similar to those of surrounding states, however. An associate’s degree with a major in Licensed Practical/Vocational Nursing is offered at all fifteen community colleges in Mississippi. As noted previously, an associate’s degree with a major in Nursing/Registered Nurse is offered by Copiah-Lincoln, Delta, East Central, Gulf Coast, Hinds, Itawamba, Northeast, and Pearl River Community Colleges.

Table 17. Degrees and majors related to Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurse.

	ASU	DSU	MSU	UM/UMMC	USM
Bachelor’s	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing

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