

By: Senator(s) Simmons

To: Public Health and Welfare; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 3017

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI WORKS INITIATIVE; TO ENSURE
 2 THAT ALL AVAILABLE STATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES ARE USED TO HELP
 3 TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) RECIPIENTS AS WELL
 4 AS THOSE INDIVIDUALS AT RISK OF BECOMING DEPENDENT ON PUBLIC
 5 ASSISTANCE TO ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH WORKFORCE
 6 DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING; TO ESTABLISH THE MISSISSIPPI WORKS
 7 INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE TO OVERSEE THE COORDINATION AND DELIVERY OF
 8 WORKFORCE TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS AS WELL AS THOSE
 9 INDIVIDUALS AT RISK OF BECOMING DEPENDENT ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE; TO
 10 PROVIDE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI
 11 WORKS COMMISSION; TO ALLOCATE FEDERAL TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR
 12 NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) DOLLARS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; AND FOR
 13 RELATED PURPOSES.

14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

15 SECTION 1. This act may be cited as the "Mississippi Works
 16 Initiative."

17 SECTION 2. **Purpose and goal.**

18 (1) The purpose of the Mississippi Works Initiative is to
 19 insure coordinated delivery of services and training for targeted
 20 employment opportunities primarily for Temporary Assistance for
 21 Needy Families (TANF) recipients as well as those individuals at
 22 risk of becoming dependent on public assistance.

23 (2) The goal of the Mississippi Works Initiative is to help
 24 primarily TANF recipients as well as those individuals at risk of
 25 becoming dependent on public assistance receive education and
 26 training leading to a job which allows them to become and remain
 27 independent of financial assistance provided by the state.

28 SECTION 3. **Definitions.**

29 The following words and terms, when used in this chapter,
 30 shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly
 31 indicates otherwise:

32 (a) "Commission" means the Mississippi Works Initiative
33 Commission.

34 (b) "Community-Based Organization (CBO)" means a
35 private nonprofit organization that is representative of a
36 community or a significant segment of a community and that
37 provides education, vocational education or rehabilitation, job
38 training, or internship services or programs. The term includes a
39 neighborhood group or corporation, union-related organization,
40 employer-related organization, faith-based organization, tribal
41 government, or organization serving Native Americans. The CBO
42 must be certified as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the
43 IRS Code of 1986, as amended. A CBO providing services, which are
44 regulated by the state, must provide evidence of required
45 certification, license or registration.

46 (c) "Customized Job Training Project" means a project
47 designed by a prospective private partner or trade union in
48 partnership with a public community or technical college,
49 extension service, or community-based organization for the purpose
50 of providing specialized workforce training to prospective
51 employees of the prospective private partner or members of the
52 trade union with the intent of expanding the workforce.

53 (d) "Employment and Training Services" means any
54 services provided under the Mississippi Works Initiative that
55 assist a Mississippi Works participant to upgrade skills,
56 identify, or obtain employment leading to self-sufficiency.

57 (e) "Extension service" means a higher education agency
58 and service established by the Department of Higher Education.

59 (f) "Individual at risk of becoming dependent on public
60 assistance" means an individual who is a member of the food stamp
61 household or whose family income is at or below two hundred
62 percent (200%) of federal poverty guidelines.

63 (g) "Local Workforce Investment Board (board)" means a
64 local Workforce Investment Board as created under the Workforce

65 Investment Act of 1998 and certified by the Governor. In a local
66 workforce development area for which a board has not been
67 certified, the commission or an entity operating a career center
68 in that area may assume the responsibilities of a board under this
69 chapter.

70 (h) "Low-income individual" means any individual whose
71 household income is at or below two hundred percent (200%) of
72 federally established poverty guidelines.

73 (i) "Mississippi works participant" means any
74 low-income individual that receives employment and training
75 services in conjunction with the Mississippi Works Initiative.
76 This may also include individuals without a high school diploma or
77 GED who seek skills upgrades.

78 (j) "Prospective private partner" means a person, sole
79 proprietorship, partnership, corporation, association, consortium,
80 or private organization which submits a joint proposal for a
81 customized job training project in partnership with a public
82 community or technical college, a community-based organization, or
83 extension service.

84 (k) "Provider of services" means a public community
85 college, community-based organization, extension service, or
86 private entity which provides training

87 (l) "Public community college" means a state funded
88 two-year educational institution primarily serving its local
89 taxing district and service area in Mississippi and offering
90 vocational, technical and academic courses for certification or
91 associate degrees.

92 (m) "Self-sufficiency" means employment with wages
93 reasonably calculated to make the employee independent of
94 financial assistance under state TANF guidelines.

95 (n) "TANF recipient" means a person who receives
96 financial assistance under the State Division of Economic
97 Assistance.

98 (o) "Training provider" means a public community or
99 technical college, community-based organization, extension
100 service, or private entity which provides training.

101 SECTION 4. Project administration.

102 (1) The objectives of the Mississippi Works Initiative are:

103 (a) To insure that all available state government
104 resources are used to help Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
105 (TANF) recipients as well as those individuals at risk of becoming
106 dependent on public assistance to achieve self-sufficiency through
107 workforce development and training;

108 (b) To the extent practicable to provide coordinated
109 employment and training services for low-income individuals in all
110 areas of the state;

111 (c) To assist the state in its efforts to meet TANF
112 statewide participation rates and assist individuals receiving
113 public assistance in entering the workforce; and

114 (d) To insure the coordinated delivery of additional
115 services including, but not limited to, child care assistance,
116 Child Health Insurance Program, transportation assistance that
117 support the entry and stability of low-income individuals in the
118 workforce.

119 (2) The following state agencies and organizations shall be
120 required to work with the Department of Human Services in
121 providing employment and training services:

122 (a) The Mississippi Employment Security Commission;

123 (b) The Mississippi Development Authority;

124 (c) The Department of Health;

125 (d) The Division of Medicaid;

126 (e) The Department of Higher Education including the
127 Institutions of Higher Learning including the eight universities,
128 the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges including the
129 fifteen community colleges;

130 (f) The Department of Education;

131 (g) The Mississippi Division of Finance and
132 Administration;

133 (h) The Department of Rehabilitative Services;

134 (i) The Division of Vital Statistics;

135 (j) The Mississippi State Highway and Transportation
136 Department;

137 (k) The Mississippi State Workforce Investment Board;
138 and

139 (l) Other state agencies as directed by the Governor or
140 as directed by the Legislature.

141 (3) The Mississippi Works Commission shall be administered
142 as follows:

143 (a) There is created a Mississippi Works Commission
144 which shall be composed of the following members:

145 (i) The Director of the Department of Human
146 Services;

147 (ii) The Director of the Mississippi Employment
148 Security Commission;

149 (iii) The Director of the Mississippi Development
150 Authority, Employment Training Division;

151 (iv) The Director of the Mississippi Department of
152 Rehabilitation Services;

153 (v) The Superintendent of Education;

154 (vi) The Director of the Community College Board;

155 (vii) The Commissioner of the Institutions of
156 Higher Learning;

157 (viii) One (1) representative of the Governor's
158 Office;

159 (ix) Three (3) members appointed by the Governor;

160 (x) Six (6) members from each of the six (6) local
161 Workforce Investment Boards;

162 (xi) One (1) member from the state Workforce
163 Investment Board.

164 (4) (a) (i) The appointed members of the Mississippi Works
165 Commission shall serve four-year staggered terms.

166 (ii) At least one (1) of the appointed members by
167 the Governor shall represent the private sector;

168 (iii) Initial appointed members of the Commission
169 shall draw lots to determine the length of their terms;

170 (iv) The Director of the Department of Human
171 Services shall call the first meeting of the Commission within
172 thirty (30) calendar days of their appointment and the Governor,
173 in consultation with the Senate and House chairs of the Public
174 Health and Welfare Committees shall select a chairperson from
175 among the appointed members.

176 (v) Ten (10) members of the commission shall
177 constitute a quorum.

178 (vi) No member may authorize a designee to vote on
179 his or her behalf.

180 (vii) The commission shall meet with the Governor
181 every six (6) months or as frequently as it deems necessary upon
182 request of the chairperson; and

183 (b) The Governor may remove an appointed member for
184 cause. An absence from three (3) consecutive meetings results in
185 automatic removal unless the member is excused by the chairperson.
186 Vacancies occurring on the Commission by reason of death or
187 resignation shall be filled in the same manner as a regular
188 appointment for the remainder of the unexpired term.

189 (c) The members of the Commission shall not be entitled
190 to compensation for their services but may receive expense
191 reimbursement in accordance with state guidelines.

192 (5) The Mississippi Works Commission shall:

193 (a) Review, recommend and approve Mississippi Works
194 regulations to be promulgated by the Department of Human services.

195 (b) Oversee the operation of the Mississippi Works
196 program and progress toward the Mississippi Works outcomes,

197 including activities coordinated with local workforce investment
198 boards and all state agencies involved in the Mississippi works
199 program.

200 (c) Coordinate the activities of all state agencies
201 involved in the Mississippi Works program, including moderating
202 disagreements among those state agencies about their respective
203 responsibilities in the Mississippi Works Initiative and
204 facilitating their active collaboration.

205 (d) Employ necessary staff to assist with the range and
206 diversity of its charge.

207 (e) Review, recommend and approve annually updates of
208 the state's Mississippi works plan by December 1 of each year, for
209 the next year, and report on the updated plan to the governor and
210 the House and Senate Committees on Public Health, Welfare and
211 Labor.

212 (f) Review, recommend and approve charters, re-charters
213 or dissolutions of local Mississippi Works service providers
214 recommended by the department;

215 (g) Review, recommend and approve department guidelines
216 to local Mississippi works service providers regarding annual plan
217 development;

218 (h) Review, recommend and approve guidelines for the
219 funding of local Mississippi Works service providers utilizing
220 state TANF funds;

221 (i) Review, recommend and approve all requests for
222 proposals using Mississippi Works program monies and
223 state-controlled welfare-to-work monies;

224 (j) Initiate activities to foster multi-county
225 collaboration, including establishing incentives for local service
226 providers with small caseloads to combine and become multi-county
227 service providers;

228 (k) Respond to and report on citizens' concerns about
229 the implementation and administration of the Mississippi works
230 program;

231 (l) Review, recommend and approve standards of
232 eligibility for assistance developed by the department;

233 (m) Review the department's plan for bonus awards and
234 employee incentives focused on achieving Mississippi works
235 outcomes;

236 (n) Submit biannual reports to the House and Senate
237 Committees on Public Health, Welfare and Labor and to the
238 Governor;

239 (o) Require that, prior to approval, each local service
240 provider's implementation plan describe a method by which the
241 corresponding regional Workforce Investment Board will support the
242 Mississippi works implementation plan;

243 (p) Contract for an independent evaluation of the
244 Mississippi Works program;

245 (q) Review, recommend and approve a plan developed by
246 the department to provide services and information to former
247 Mississippi works participants to help them stay employed and
248 achieve progressively higher wages and earnings; and

249 (r) Review, recommend and approve a plan developed by
250 the department for pilot projects to provide employment training,
251 job search services and parenting education to non-custodial
252 parents of children in Mississippi Works families that cannot pay
253 child support because of unemployment or low earnings.

254 (6) All agencies of the state and local governments
255 providing employment and training services to TANF recipients and
256 low-income families shall work cooperatively with and provide any
257 necessary assistance to the Mississippi Works Commission and shall
258 furnish, in a timely manner, complete and accurate information
259 regarding the Mississippi Works Initiative to legislative
260 committees and the Commission upon request.

261 SECTION 5. **Project implementation and accountability.**

262 (1) The Legislature shall assess the status of the
263 Mississippi Works program and shall determine whether the
264 responsibility for administering the program should be transferred
265 to another state agency or board.

266 (2) There shall be no liability on the part of and no cause
267 of action of any nature shall arise against any member of the
268 board or its agents or employees, the association or its agents or
269 employees, for any action or omission by them in the performance
270 of their powers and duties under this chapter.

271 (3) The Mississippi Works Commission is designed to be an
272 agent of change and challenge to the existing federal, state and
273 local agency service delivery mechanisms. The challenge shall be
274 to insure that low-income individuals are getting the assistance,
275 the information and the services needed to help them become
276 self-sufficient.

277 (4) The administration of the Mississippi Works program
278 shall focus on promoting the following outcomes for TANF
279 recipients and poor families in Mississippi:

280 (a) Increase the percentage of needy families that
281 receive workforce assistance;

282 (b) Decrease the number of families who need cash
283 assistance;

284 (c) Decrease spending on TANF cash assistance;

285 (d) Increase the percentage of families receiving TANF
286 cash assistance who participate in work activities for the
287 required number of hours;

288 (e) Increase the percentage of TANF recipients and
289 low-income individuals who receive services necessary for them to
290 participate in work activities, including education and training,
291 and to move toward self-sufficiency;

292 (f) Increase the percentage of TANF recipients and
293 low-income individuals facing barriers of substance abuse,

294 domestic violence, physical or mental disabilities or limited
295 education and work experience who receive services necessary for
296 them to participate in work activities and to move toward self
297 sufficiency;

298 (g) Increase the number of families who leave TANF for
299 work;

300 (h) Increase the hourly wages and monthly earnings of
301 families that leave TANF for work;

302 (i) Decrease the number of families who leave TANF and
303 face hardship or deprivation;

304 (j) Increase the percentage of families who leave TANF
305 for work who stay employed;

306 (k) Increase the percentage of families who leave TANF
307 for work who achieve progressively higher wages and earnings; and

308 (l) Increase the percentage of families who leave TANF
309 cash assistance who move out of poverty.

310 (5) To implement Mississippi Works statewide, the
311 Mississippi Works Commission shall:

312 (a) Review, recommend and approve a statewide
313 implementation plan for ensuring the cooperation of state agencies
314 and local agencies and encouraging the cooperation of private
315 entities, especially those receiving state funds, in the
316 coordination and implementation of Mississippi Works; and

317 (b) Ensure that Mississippi Works participants
318 throughout the state including those in rural areas have
319 comparable access to Mississippi Works benefits.

320 (c) At a minimum the Mississippi Works implementation
321 plan shall include:

322 (i) Performance standards and measurement criteria
323 for state and county offices of the Department of Human Services
324 and all service providers under Mississippi Works;

325 (ii) Contract guidelines for contract service
326 providers under the Mississippi works Initiative;

327 (iii) Guidelines for training Mississippi Works
328 service providers, whether state employees or contract providers;

329 (iv) Functions to be performed by each state
330 agency in helping recipients make the transition from welfare to
331 work;

332 (v) Guidelines for clarifying, or if necessary,
333 modifying the rules of the state agencies charged with
334 implementing the Mississippi works Initiative so that all
335 unnecessary duplication is eliminated;

336 (vi) Guidelines for establishing joint Mississippi
337 Works benefit and employment offices in every county of the state,
338 which shall function as common service centers for the delivery of
339 Mississippi Works program services to applicants and recipients of
340 food stamps and Mississippi Works benefits;

341 (vii) Guidelines for modifying compensation and
342 incentive programs for state employees in order to achieve the
343 performance outcomes necessary for successful implementation of
344 the Mississippi Works Initiative;

345 (viii) Guidelines for timely assessments for each
346 participant that leads to an individual personal responsibility
347 agreement that identifies the strengths of the participant and the
348 barriers faced in obtaining a job and reaching self-sufficiency,
349 and the services to be provided to assist the participant to find
350 and keep work and to move toward self-sufficiency;

351 (ix) Guidelines for timely provision of needed
352 support services as specified in the individual personal
353 responsibility agreement. These guidelines shall include
354 procedures for evaluating the quality and value of assessments and
355 the provision of support services;

356 (x) Guidelines governing job search requirements
357 for Mississippi Works applicants;

358 (xi) Guidelines governing the provision of support
359 services to Mississippi Works participants and former Mississippi

360 Works participants to assist them in retaining employment and
361 earning higher wages and career advancement.

362 (xii) Guidelines governing the combining of work
363 with education and training;

364 (xiii) Guidelines for the independent evaluation
365 of all cases closed due to sanctions or time limits;

366 (xiv) A micro-lending program and an individual
367 development trust account (IDA) demonstration project for
368 Mississippi Works participants;

369 (xv) One (1) or more employment opportunity
370 districts and job development, child care, and transportation
371 strategies for each district;

372 (xvi) Application guidelines and requirements for
373 chartering local Workforce Investment Boards to plan and
374 coordinate the delivery of services under the Mississippi Works
375 Initiative at the local level;

376 (xvii) Criteria for relocation of Mississippi
377 Works participants, which take into account factors, including but
378 not limited to, job availability, availability of support
379 services, and proximity of relocation area to current residence;

380 (xviii) Criteria for the approval of the
381 implementation plans submitted by local Workforce Investment
382 Boards coalitions;

383 (xix) Criteria for allocating Mississippi Works
384 Initiative resources to local Workforce Investment Boards;

385 (xx) Criteria for prioritizing work activities of
386 Mississippi Works participants in the event that funds are
387 projected to be insufficient to support full-time work activities
388 of Mississippi Works participants. The criteria may include, but
389 not be limited to, priorities based on the following:

390 1. At least one (1) adult in each two-parent
391 family shall be assigned priority for full-time work activities;

392 2. Among single-parent families, a family
393 that has older preschool children or school-age children shall be
394 assigned priority for work activities;

395 3. A recipient who has access to
396 nonsubsidized child care may be assigned priority for work
397 activities;

398 4. Priority may be assigned based on the
399 amount of time remaining until the recipient reaches the
400 applicable time limit for receipt of TANF benefits or may be based
401 on requirements of a personal responsibility agreement; and

402 5. The development of a performance-based
403 payment structure to be used for all Mississippi Works program
404 services, which takes into account the degree of difficulty
405 associated with placing a Mississippi Works participant in a job,
406 the quality of placement with regard to salary, benefits, and
407 opportunities for advancement, and the recipient's retention of
408 the placement. The payment structure should, if appropriate,
409 provide bonus payments to providers that experience notable
410 success in achieving long-term job retention with Mississippi
411 Works participants.

412 (d) The department shall prepare an annual Mississippi
413 Works implementation plan. The plan shall be subject to review,
414 recommendation and approval by the board. The board shall submit
415 quarterly progress reports to the Governor and the House and
416 Senate Committees on Public Health and Welfare and House and
417 Senate Committees on Labor. The annual updated plan shall contain
418 proposals for measuring and making progress toward the Mississippi
419 Works outcomes during the succeeding three-year period. The
420 quarterly progress reports to the Governor and the House and
421 Senate Committees on Public Health and Welfare and House and
422 Senate Committees on Labor shall include all information which the
423 commission deems necessary for determining progress in achieving
424 the Mississippi Works outcomes. Information shall be provided for

425 the state, each employment opportunity district and each county.
426 The report shall also include all information requested by
427 resolution of the Public Health, Welfare and Labor committees of
428 the House and Senate. The report shall include the following:

- 429 (i) Total number of cases;
- 430 (ii) Number of Mississippi Works participants who
431 signed the personal responsibility agreement;
- 432 (iii) Number of persons getting a diversion from
433 assistance;
- 434 (iv) Number of Mississippi Works program dropouts,
435 and to the extent possible, the reason they have dropped out,
436 where they are living, if they are working, and any other
437 pertinent information;
- 438 (v) The number of persons who reapplied for and
439 received TANF benefits after having dropped out;
- 440 (vi) The types of assistance and support services
441 utilized by Mississippi Works participants;
- 442 (vii) Number of births to Mississippi Works
443 participants;
- 444 (viii) Percentage of Mississippi Works children
445 complying with compulsory school attendance;
- 446 (ix) Percentage of Mississippi Works children
447 immunized;
- 448 (x) Number of cases of reported child abuse and
449 neglect cases among Mississippi Works participants and dropouts;
- 450 (xi) Number of cases deferred from TANF work
451 requirements and time limitations and the number and reasons for
452 all exemptions and deferrals;
- 453 (xii) Types and percentages of child care
454 placements;
- 455 (xiii) Percentage of Mississippi Works
456 participants in allowable work activities;

457 (xiv) Number of Mississippi Works participants in
458 each allowable work activity;

459 (xv) Length of time Mississippi Works participants
460 have spent in each allowable work activity;

461 (xvi) Number of Mississippi Works participants
462 employed by state agencies and contract service providers compared
463 to the ten percent (10%) target goals;

464 (xvii) Occupation types of Mississippi Works
465 participants;

466 (xviii) Estimated earnings for employed
467 Mississippi Works participants;

468 (xix) Number of hours worked by Mississippi Works
469 participants;

470 (xx) Percent of Mississippi Works-employed persons
471 with continued employment continuing into the next quarter;

472 (xxi) The number of Mississippi works case
473 closures, by reasons for case closure;

474 (xxii) The number of Mississippi Works
475 applications, the number denied and the reasons for applications
476 denial;

477 (xxiii) The amount of state and federal funds
478 budgeted for Mississippi Works-related activities, by purpose or
479 activity type and actual Mississippi Works expenditures, by
480 purpose or activity type;

481 (xxiv) Education levels of families, including
482 highest grade completed and educational credentials, functional
483 math and reading levels, buy number of participants;

484 (xxv) Work-related skills levels of families, by
485 type of skill and number of participants;

486 (xxvi) Work experience levels, by number of
487 participants and type of work experience;

488 (xxvii) Health and disability levels of families,
489 by type and number of participants;

490 (xxviii) Transportation needs and availability, by
491 number of participants and by type;

492 (xxix) Child care needs and availability, by
493 number of participants and by type;

494 (xxx) Other barriers to work and self-sufficiency,
495 including domestic violence, inadequate housing, substance abuse,
496 parental skills and budgeting and home management;

497 (xxxii) Participants' characteristics, by age, race
498 and sex;

499 (xxxiii) Number of families diverted from
500 Mississippi Works who receive food stamps and Medicaid;

501 (xxxiiii) Number of closed Mississippi Works cases
502 which continue to receive food stamps and Medicaid; and

503 (xxxv) Any other data agreed to by the
504 department, the board and the house and Senate Committees on
505 Public Health and Welfare and House and Senate Committees on
506 Labor.

507 (6) Independent evaluator:

508 (a) By January 1, 2002, the Mississippi Works
509 Commission shall contract with a professional consultant for an
510 ongoing independent evaluation of the Mississippi works initiative
511 and program development. The independent evaluator shall submit
512 biannual reports to the Governor and the House and Senate
513 Committees on Public Health and Welfare and House and Senate
514 Committees on Labor, which assess:

515 (i) How effective the Mississippi Works Initiative
516 is in addressing the Mississippi Works outcomes and any measures
517 that might be taken to improve its performance;

518 (ii) How effectively performance standards and
519 measurement criteria in the statewide implementation plan are
520 being met;

521 (iii) How effectively state agencies are
522 cooperating in the implementation of the Mississippi Works
523 Initiative;

524 (iv) How effectively various funding sources are
525 being integrated into the support of the Mississippi Works
526 Initiative;

527 (v) How effectively local workforce Investment
528 Boards are serving the needs of their local Mississippi works
529 population;

530 (vi) The effects of the Mississippi Works
531 Initiative on participants and their children; to include at least
532 the following:

- 533 1. Changes in family income and child
534 poverty;
- 535 2. Impact on child welfare;
- 536 3. Impact on child hunger;
- 537 4. Impact on housing conditions, family
538 living arrangements and homelessness;
- 539 5. Impact on health care coverage and health
540 status of children;
- 541 6. Changes in family expenditure patterns;
- 542 7. Births to unwed parents, teen pregnancies
543 and changes in family structure;
- 544 8. Impact on child care patterns and youth
545 supervision;
- 546 9. The work history and employment patterns
547 of adults, including whether they are working, the types of
548 employment held, job retention and their wages or earnings;
- 549 10. Impact on substance abuse and substance
550 abuse treatment;
- 551 11. Educational and skill attainment;
- 552 12. Effectiveness of training received by
553 Mississippi Works participants;

554 13. Effectiveness of incentives designed to
555 promote business participation in the Mississippi Works
556 initiative;

557 14. How effectively Mississippi Works
558 supportive services are being delivered and the extent to which
559 they meet client needs in making the transition from welfare to
560 work and achieving long-term economic self-sufficiency;

561 15. Mississippi works participant usage of
562 other forms of public assistance, including at least, food stamps,
563 Medicaid and CHIP and usage of non-governmental forms of community
564 services; and

565 16. Any other information deemed by the
566 independent evaluator or the Mississippi Works Commission to be
567 helpful in assisting the Governor and the Legislature in
568 evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the Mississippi Works
569 program.

570 (b) All agencies of the state and local government
571 providing Mississippi works program services shall work
572 cooperatively with and provide any necessary assistance to the
573 independent evaluator and shall furnish in a timely manner,
574 complete and accurate information to the independent evaluator
575 upon request.

576 (c) The independent evaluation shall include a survey
577 of families that have left the Mississippi Works program to
578 examine their work experience, their sources of financial support,
579 the barriers that affect their ability to work, the well-being of
580 families and children, including whether adults face hardships in
581 providing food, shelter or other basic necessities for their
582 families, and their perceptions of the Mississippi Works program
583 and their life after welfare.

584 (d) The study shall utilize professionally recognized
585 techniques for research on families leaving welfare, including

586 statistical sampling and telephone and in-person surveys with
587 rigorous follow-up to insure adequate response rates.

588 SECTION 6. **Program funding.**

589 (1) The state shall set aside a no less than fifteen percent
590 (15%) of its annual TANF block grant allocation to support the
591 Mississippi Works Initiative.

592 (2) In accordance with the activities of the Commission,
593 additional funds may be raised from the Workforce Investment Act
594 and Department budgets to support the Mississippi Works
595 Initiative.

596 SECTION 7. This act shall take effect and be in force from
597 and after its passage.