

VISIT MISSISSIPPI



Implementation Plan 2025-2030

A Guide for Using this Plan

This Implementation Plan serves as a practical road map to help Visit Mississippi activate its 2025–2028 Strategic Plan with confidence, clarity, and coordination. It was developed to ensure the Strategic Plan becomes a working tool—guiding day-to-day decisions, clarifying responsibilities, and tracking progress over time.

This Implementation Plan represents the recommendations and expertise of Coraggio Group as Visit Mississippi’s strategic planning partner. Strategic plan implementation is intended to be disciplined yet flexible. Visit Mississippi should evaluate these recommendations and adjust to account for current and changing conditions.

Purpose

The Implementation Plan translates the strategic intent of the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan into structured, time-bound, and actionable work. It breaks down each of the strategic initiatives into a clear sequence of actions, identifies roles and responsibilities, and defines how success will be measured.

Note: This is a living document, designed for regular reference, review, and revision. Whether you’re leading a statewide program, reporting to stakeholders, managing internal priorities, or convening industry partners, this resource is your operational guide.

Who Should Use This Plan

This Implementation Plan is intended to be a unifying tool across the Visit Mississippi team. While it provides clarity and structure for those leading execution, it also builds shared understanding for the broader staff and strategic partners. Each team member—

whether leading an initiative or supporting one—can use this resource to stay aligned with the organization’s direction and understand how their work contributes to statewide tourism impact.



Intended users include:

- Visit Mississippi Leadership – to manage progress, prioritize work, assign resources, and coordinate cross-functional efforts.
- Departmental Staff – to understand their roles in implementation, plan and track their contributions, and align work with strategic priorities.
- Director and Deputy Director – to report progress, engage stakeholders, and adapt the plan as conditions evolve.
- Tourism Advisory Group – to understand the broader scope of the organization’s direction and focus their recommendations on areas of greatest strategic importance.

How the Plan Is Organized

This plan is structured to mirror the three-year timeline of the Strategic Plan while also allowing flexibility to evolve with time. Each section is designed to help Visit Mississippi move from intention to execution, equipping the team with planning tools, staffing guidance, and key performance indicators to track progress. The layout ensures that even as priorities shift, the organization can remain aligned and on course.

This Implementation Plan includes the following sections:

- **Initiative Phasing:** Introduces the three-year phased approach for implementation and outlines the rationale for sequencing the initiatives across Phases 1–3.
- **Phase 1 Action Plan:** Translates the initiatives scheduled for Year 1 into starting action steps. Includes specific responsibilities, action steps, and performance indicators to guide execution.
- **Phase 2 and 3 Templates:** Blank versions of the Phase 1 Action Plan to support future planning. These templates mirror the format of Phase 1 and will be completed by Visit Mississippi initiative teams at the appropriate time.
- **Staffing Recommendations:** Provides an initial list of current staff roles that may best suit the work of each initiative along with recommended external partners to provide expertise and extend Visit Mississippi’s capacity. The Implementation Plan also identifies key capabilities and skill sets needed to succeed in implementation.

- **Guide to Plan Management & Future Action Planning:** A step-by-step facilitation guide for ensuring initiative teams maintain momentum during Phase 1 and are prepared to plan for Phases 2 and 3. This guide empowers the leadership team to lead inclusive, strategic, and outcome-driven implementation sessions.
- **Tourism Advisory Group Framework:** Outlines the structure, charter, and operational approach for the activation of a statewide Tourism Advisory Group and its subcommittees modeled after the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board.

Using This Plan Over Time

This Implementation Plan is not a static document. It is designed to support dynamic use over the full three years of the Strategic Plan and beyond. As Visit Mississippi grows, adapts, and responds to opportunities, this tool should remain a source of alignment and accountability. Teams should actively use this resource in strategic check-ins, staff briefings, annual planning retreats, and progress reporting.

Recommended practices for long-term use include:

- Reviewing the plan quarterly as a leadership team
- Using it to support staff meetings and internal check-ins
- Referencing it during legislative or executive briefings
- Revising it regularly based on implementation insights

Initiative Phasing

Introduction

The Strategic Plan, developed with in-depth engagement and input from the Mississippi tourism community in all five regions, will guide and focus Visit Mississippi's work to fulfill its mission:

"As our state's storytellers, Visit Mississippi promotes and enhances the state through global marketing, creative collaboration, and leadership that inspires visitors, impacts businesses, and enriches communities."

This Implementation Plan is intended to guide Visit Mississippi in the execution of the Strategic Plan, utilizing best practices and creating pathways to effectively leverage existing resources, track and communicate progress, ensure alignment among teams, and determine additional resource needs.

Initiative Phasing (Three-Year Framework)

To bring structure and clarity to the implementation of the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan, Visit Mississippi will execute the plan's initiatives through a three-phase sequence aligned with the calendar years of the plan. Phasing allows the team to manage its resources strategically, build foundational capacity, and ensure the thoughtful sequencing of internal efforts and external partnerships. Each phase includes a targeted subset of the strategic initiatives that reflect both organizational readiness and the evolving needs of Mississippi's tourism industry.

Phasing Rationale and Strategy

Initiative phasing was determined based on a combination of factors, including the foundational nature of the work, the availability of resources and personnel, anticipated timing of partner readiness, and the opportunity to build momentum through early success. While quick wins are spread across all three years, Phase 1 will prioritize foundational and capacity-building efforts that enable the organization to execute more complex or externally dependent initiatives in subsequent years.

Internal Capacity Consideration

The sequencing reflects the current and projected capacity of Visit Mississippi's team, including leadership bandwidth, anticipated staffing levels, and the need to build new internal systems and processes. Phase 1 is designed to be achievable within the team's existing structure, while Phases 2 and 3 will build upon that base with added infrastructure and role clarity. It should be noted that strategic plan implementation work must be accounted for as part of staff members' daily work. Leadership will need to assess if other work should be deprioritized to make room for strategic initiatives.

Each initiative will require certain skills and expertise to execute. An initial list of skills and potential roles are outlined in this plan and the Scoping and Action Planning Sheet. Not every initiative will require retaining new talent or staff positions. Based on budgets and goals, Visit Mississippi has several options to obtain the skills needed:

Build: Visit Mississippi hires and trains its internal staff to execute and evolve programs and initiatives. This approach is best suited to core work that will justify the long-term investment.

Borrow: There may be opportunities to effectively utilize skills and/or cooperative resources from other parts of state government. This may include finance, HR, IT or other state services. Visit Mississippi may find value in cultivating relationships with the state revenue department for data analysis or utilizing internal data from airport and transportation authorities. State resources may exist to evaluate and improve the accessibility of Visit Mississippi's website.

Visit Mississippi can also activate its external network to expand its operational capacity. Close relationships with DMOs, attractions, local government agencies, and others can assist Visit Mississippi in gathering and creating new content, advocating for needed infrastructure improvements, and guiding destination management priorities.

Buy: Often it is not practical to build or borrow specific skills. In which case, hiring vendors with needed expertise can allow Visit Mississippi to concentrate on the work it does best, hire vendors with the most relevant skills, and limit investment to exactly what is needed, when it is needed. This includes specific research projects, retaining an agency of record, and more.

Do not hesitate to include vendors as part of initiative teams. In many cases, a state tourism office's agency of record should be a strong ally and bring ideas for how to execute initiatives. At minimum, all Visit Mississippi vendors and partners should be well versed in the Strategic Plan, understand how their work directly furthers the imperatives and initiatives, and is your partner in solving challenges and reporting successes.

External Partnerships and Readiness

Phasing also considers the time needed to build trust and alignment with external partners, including DMOs, regional collaboratives, and industry associations. Initiatives requiring cross-sector collaboration or third-party delivery are placed in later phases to allow for the necessary groundwork and relationship development.

Guidance on Flexibility

While this phased framework is designed to promote focus and accountability, it should also be treated as a guide, not a rigid prescription. Visit Mississippi should remain responsive to changing conditions, new opportunities, and lessons learned. That said, it is strongly recommended that Phase 1 initiatives be completed on schedule in order to maintain momentum and ensure the organization is well-positioned for success in Phases 2 and 3.

Initiative Phasing

	Amplify Mississippi Stories	Enhance the Visitor Experience	Destination Development	Educate, Empower, & Support	Organizational Excellence
Phase 1	Create new and engaging content for all platforms Optimize and expand marketing strategies and tactics Increase and expand overall communication and public relations efforts	Amplify Welcome Center visibility and visitor engagement Enhance and optimize on-the-ground resources and visitor communications	Elevate Visit Mississippi programs and communication tools to enhance accessibility	Educate stakeholders on the value of tourism Provide data, resources, and toolkits to empower stakeholders' strategy and marketing	Strengthen internal communication, collaboration, and engagement to enhance organizational cohesion and impact Track, analyze, and communicate the ROI and key performance indicators to drive strategic growth and accountability
Phase 2		Broaden, inspire, and elevate visitor exploration	Conduct a statewide comprehensive destination development review to identify key development focus areas	Collaborate and co-op with DMOs, attractions, and events to advance mutual goals	Refine and maximize the utilization of all program
Phase 3			Assess Visit Mississippi's capacity for destination development		

The section on the following page outlines Coraggio Group’s recommendations for initiative team members, key performance indicators, and recommended action steps for each initiative.

Once assembled, the final Initiative Teams should hold their Kickoff Meeting to refine the action steps. Guidance for facilitating the Kickoff Meeting is in the How to Action Plan section of this document. Coraggio Group has provided a Scoping and Action Planning sheet in Excel to facilitate action planning and updates for the Initiative Teams.

Phase One: Recommended Initiative Teams, KPIs, and Action Steps

Imperative #1: Amplify Mississippi Stories

Optimize and expand marketing strategies and tactics

This initiative focuses on refining media placements, messaging frameworks, and digital marketing strategies. The goal is to better engage diverse audiences and increase the efficiency and performance of all marketing efforts.

Outcome: Increased engagement rates and campaign ROI across consumer segments

Proposed Staff Roles: Director of Marketing and Communications, Marketing Manager, Digital Content Manager

Proposed External Partners: Media buying agencies, digital consultants, content partners

Action Steps:

- Review performance of current marketing tactics
- Address SEO Audit items identified in Technical SEO Audit* to optimize webpage headings, improve alt text, optimize meta descriptions, and improve broken links*
- Develop updated audience personas
- Coordinate with media buyer to adjust placements
- Adapt marketing strategies to invest further in CTV to allow better measurement, protect the brand, and increase the ability to specifically target campaigns**
- Reallocate a majority of marketing budget from print to digital to increase ROI measurability (recommended 80/20 mix between digital and print)*
- Coordinate with media buyer to adjust placements
- Update brand messaging guide
- Launch refreshed campaigns

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase campaign reach
- Decrease cost per view/click
- Increase engagement rate
- Increase click-thru rates

*Recommendation from Visit Mississippi Marketing Program Evaluation & Considerations. Visit Mississippi Technical SEO Audit (Miles Partnership), p. 19

**Recommendation from Visit Mississippi Marketing Program Evaluation & Considerations (Miles Partnership), pp. 9-14

Increase and expand overall communication and public relations efforts

Visit Mississippi will grow its public relations capacity through proactive media outreach, refreshed press materials, and FAM tours. This will result in stronger earned media presence and deeper media relationships.

Outcome: A stronger voice in national and regional tourism media and a more positive brand perception.

Proposed Staff Roles: Director – Office of Marketing & Communications, Director – Office of International Sales, Staff Team – Office of Domestic Sales

Proposed External Partners: Travel journalists, Mississippi Tourism Association, PR firms, brand perception research vendor, regional partners

Proposed External Partners:

- Refresh press contact list and media kit
- Draft core PR pitch calendar for seasonal stories
- Solicit itinerary and pitch content from regional partners
- Hire PR firm or assign internal point person for pitching
- Conduct a brand health and perception study*
- Coordinate media FAM tour logistics
- Track media hits and prepare impact report

Proposed External Partners:

- Increase domestic brand health
- Increase positive stories in national publications
- Increase media pitches

*Recommendation from Mississippi Destination Assessment to address and remediate negative perceptions, p. 76.

Phase One: Recommended Initiative Teams, KPIs, and Action Steps

Imperative #1: Amplify Mississippi Stories (continued)

Create new and engaging content for all platforms

Visit Mississippi will produce fresh, multimedia storytelling—including written, visual, and video formats—for its website, social media, and partner channels. This initiative will bring Mississippi’s unique destinations and voices to life, expanding the reach and richness of the state’s tourism identity.

Outcome: A richer, more representative content library that drives brand recognition and visitor curiosity

Proposed Staff Roles: Director – Office of Marketing & Communications, Marketing Manager – Office of Marketing & Communications, Cultural Programs Manager – Office of Domestic Sales, Digital Content Manager – Office of Marketing & Communications

Proposed External Partners: Creative agency partners, regional DMOs, tourism businesses, Tourism Advisory Group members

Action Steps:

- Conduct internal audit of existing photo and video content
- Repurpose Mississippi Tour Guide content for the VisitMississippi.org site*
- Develop content calendar aligned with seasonal campaigns
- Invest in native content creation and tactics with an external content creation contractor to increase long-form article content*
- Host regular meetings with DMOs to gather story and content ideas**
- Coordinate with contractor for regional site visits and shoots
- Create “city” landing pages with “things to do” and “places to stay” to improve SEO rank*
- Publish and distribute content across web and social platforms

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase website visitation
- Increase social media engagement
- Increase Tour Guide click-thru and requests
- Increase time spent on site by visitors

*Recommendation from Visit Mississippi Marketing Program Evaluation & Considerations (Miles Partnership), p. 17

**Recommendation from Mississippi Destination Assessment to increase opportunities for connected and unique experiences, p. 76.

Imperative #2: Enhance the Visitor Experience

Amplify Welcome Center visibility and visitor engagement

Welcome Centers will be refreshed with updated signage, displays, and a stronger online presence. These improvements will enhance first impressions and encourage travelers to explore more of Mississippi.

Outcome: A more interactive, informed, and welcoming first impression for travelers

Proposed Staff Roles: Director – Office of Visitor Services, Program Manager – Office of Visitor Services, Welcome Center staff and volunteers

Proposed External Partners: Welcome Center staff, Mississippi Development Authority, Mississippi Department of Transportation, regional partners

Action Steps:

- Inventory current signage and displays
- Design updated display concepts and wayfinding
- Evaluate and own the online presence for each Welcome Center on Google Maps, Tripadvisor and other travel sites to improve visibility, credibility, and information quality
- Procure materials and signage
- Train Welcome Center staff on new engagement protocols and maintaining online presence
- Launch updated visitor experience

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase in visitors to Welcome Centers

Phase One: Recommended Initiative Teams, KPIs, and Action Steps

Imperative #2: Enhance the Visitor Experience (continued)

Enhance and optimize on-the-ground resources and visitor communications

This initiative aims to update and align printed guides, signage, and mobile communication tools at major tourism touchpoints. Visitors will experience more consistent messaging and improved access to real-time information.

Outcome: Improved visitor satisfaction and consistency between promotion and real-world experience
Proposed Visit Mississippi Staff Roles: Director – Office of Visitor Services, Program Manager – Office of Visitor Services, Director – Office of International Sales, Director – Office of Sports & Outdoor Adventure, Assistant Manager – Office of Sports & Outdoor Adventure, Inquiry & Fulfillment Specialist – Office of Visitor Services
Proposed Key External Partners: Regional tourism offices, cultural attractions, vendors

- Action Steps:**
- Audit all existing on-site materials statewide
 - Track current use and distribution of all Visit Mississippi fulfillment materials
 - Identify out-of-date or off-brand collateral and create a plan to update materials
 - Coordinate stakeholder input on communication gaps
 - Activate regional Tourism Working Group members to test and suggest content and usability improvements to the Visit Mississippi app
 - Develop unified messaging templates and QR resource strategy
 - Distribute updated printed and digital assets
 - Evaluate visitor usage and revise quarterly

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increased collateral distribution

Imperative #3: Destination Development

Elevate Visit Mississippi programs and communication tools to enhance accessibility

Visit Mississippi will assess and improve the accessibility of its programs, communications, and digital spaces. This ensures the tourism experience is more inclusive and welcoming to all travelers.

Outcome: Expanded reach to underserved and disabled traveler segments
Proposed Visit Mississippi Staff Roles: Marketing Manager – Office of Marketing & Communications, Digital Content Manager – Office of Marketing & Communications, Program Manager – Office of Visitor Services, Cultural Programs Manager – Office of Domestic Sales
Proposed Key External Partners: Accessibility consultants, advocacy organizations, Mississippi Department of Transportation

- Action Steps:**
- Research internal state resources for website accessibility improvements
 - Address findings in Visit Mississippi Accessibility Analysis to improve homepage accessibility*
 - Conduct accessibility audit of all webpages, programs and materials
 - Host listening sessions with disability advocates to improve Visit Mississippi's communication resources
 - Develop accessibility improvement roadmap
 - Train staff on inclusive communication
 - Implement top-priority updates

Key Performance Indicators:

- Decrease WCAG violations on VisitMississippi.org

*Visit Mississippi Marketing Program Evaluation & Considerations. Visit Mississippi Homepage Accessibility Report (Miles Partnership), p. 20

Phase One: Recommended Initiative Teams, KPIs, and Action Steps

Imperative #4: Educate, Empower, & Support

Educate stakeholders on the value of tourism

Through this initiative, Visit Mississippi will develop materials and messaging that communicate tourism’s economic and cultural value. These tools will help stakeholders advocate more effectively for the industry.

Outcome: Greater public support and alignment around tourism goals

Proposed Visit Mississippi Staff Roles: Director – Office of Marketing and Communications, Domestic Sales & Industry Relations – Office of Domestic Sales, Director – Office of Sports & Outdoor Adventure, Special Projects Manager – Office of Domestic Sales

Proposed Key External Partners: Research vendor(s), Chambers of commerce, local governments, Mississippi Tourism Association

Action Steps:

- Gather updated economic impact data
- Design visual storytelling toolkit
- Develop and post downloadable PowerPoint decks and talking points for partners
- Present materials at regional briefings and meetings and provide links to toolkit
- Establish annual update cadence

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase partner engagement with toolkit

Provide data, resources, and toolkits to empower stakeholders’ strategy and marketing

Visit Mississippi will develop a suite of resources to support local DMOs and partners in their planning and promotion efforts. These include marketing toolkits, grants templates, and data dashboards.

Outcome: Better alignment and effectiveness between Visit Mississippi and local marketing efforts.

Proposed Visit Mississippi Staff Roles: Director – Office of Marketing & Communications, Marketing Manager – Office of Marketing & Communications, Assistant Manager – Office of Sports & Outdoor Adventure, Domestic Sales & Industry Relations – Office of Domestic Sales

Proposed Key External Partners: Research vendor(s), Tourism Advisory Group members focused on tourism marketing

Action Steps:

- Assess toolkit and resources that Visit Mississippi can realistically provide to stakeholders
- Survey partners to identify for most-needed resources
- Create toolkit templates (grant writing, marketing plans)
- Research existing workforce and business development programs and grants outside of Visit Mississippi and promote to destinations
- Enhance partner resource page
- Develop and share data dashboards
- Host partner training and information webinars and in-person meetings

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase effectiveness rating for “Provide relevant travel & tourism research and data”
- Increase in website visitation to partner page

Phase One: Recommended Initiative Teams, KPIs, and Action Steps

Imperative #5: Organizational Excellence

Strengthen internal communication, collaboration, and engagement to enhance organizational cohesion and impact

This internal initiative focuses on enhancing team collaboration through improved communication systems and routines. The result will be a more aligned and agile Visit Mississippi team.

Outcome: A more connected and efficient Visit Mississippi team

Proposed Visit Mississippi Staff Roles: Director – Visit Mississippi, Deputy Director – Visit Mississippi, Director – Office of International Sales, Special Project Manager – Office of Domestic Sales, Director – Office of Marketing & Communications, Director – Office of Sports & Outdoor Adventure, Director – Office of Visitor Services

Proposed Key External Partners: N/A (internal focus)

Action Steps:

- Survey staff about current pain points in communication
- Implement shared project tracking tool
- Establish bi-weekly team syncs and monthly leadership check-ins
- Define staff responsibilities under Strategic Plan
- Host quarterly team development sessions

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase employee survey score for communication flow

Track, analyze, and communicate the ROI and key performance indicators to drive strategic growth and accountability

Visit Mississippi will establish consistent systems for measuring and communicating its impact. Regular tracking and reporting will ensure accountability and data-driven strategy refinement.

Outcome: Better decision-making and transparency in plan implementation

Proposed Visit Mississippi Staff Roles: All Visit Mississippi Staff

Proposed Key External Partners: Agency partners, research vendors, state-level accountability offices

Action Steps:

- Confirm KPIs for each strategic initiative
- Create reporting dashboard
- Train all staff on tracking protocols
- Draft quarterly review templates
- Publish annual impact report
- Create media talking points for Governor, Director, and other elected officials

Key Performance Indicators:

- 100% of staff report KPI updates on time
- Increased external reporting

Phase Two & Three: Initiative Summaries

Imperative #1: Amplify Mississippi Stories

No Phase 2 or 3 Initiatives at this time.

Imperative #2: Enhance the Visitor Experience

Broaden, Inspire, and Elevate Visitor Exploration. This initiative seeks to motivate travelers to explore more widely across Mississippi through storytelling, mapping, and curated itineraries. By showcasing hidden gems and thematic routes, Visit Mississippi will inspire longer stays and greater economic impact across diverse communities.

Imperative #3: Destination Development

Conduct a statewide comprehensive destination development review to identify key development focus areas

Visit Mississippi will lead a cross-sector assessment to understand where investment and coordination could improve destination readiness and quality. This will include conducting an inventory of tourism assets, infrastructure gaps, and readiness indicators.

Assess Visit Mississippi’s capacity for destination development

Building on the insights from the statewide destination development review, Visit Mississippi will evaluate its internal ability to support and lead destination development across the state. This initiative includes reviewing staffing, funding mechanisms, inter-agency relationships, and internal alignment to determine where capacity should be strengthened.

Imperative #4: Educate, Empower, & Support

Collaborate and co-op with DMOs, attractions, and events to advance mutual goals

This initiative will expand cooperative marketing, product development, and grant alignment to help DMOs and partners achieve shared priorities. Visit Mississippi will serve as both convener and collaborator, offering structure and support to local efforts.

Imperative #5: Organizational Excellence

Refine and maximize the utilization of all program

Visit Mississippi will review its existing program offerings to ensure they are clearly understood, widely used, and driving the intended outcomes. This may include updates to application processes, guidelines, communications, and support tools.

Action Planning Example

Imperative:	Why Does This Initiative Matter?	What Skills Will We Need?	Skill Gaps We Need to Fill?	Interdependencies with Other Strategies	Key Stakeholders/ Subject Matter Experts?
Initiative: Increase and expand overall communication and public relations efforts	A stronger voice in national and regional tourism media and a more positive brand perception.	• Message development • Brand voice and tone management • Media outreach and pitching • Writing • Media training • Communications planning	Do we have the skill and expertise on our team? If not, will we need to hire for that set of skills? Borrow from another state agency or partner? Hire a vendor to assist? (Build, Borrow, or Buy)		Increase domestic brand health Increase positive stories in national publications Increase media pitches
Objectives: • Increase consumer engagement across Visit Mississippi platforms • Increase visitation to the state from both drive and air travel markets					
Initiative Lead: Director – Office of Marketing & Communications					
Initiative Team: Director - Office of International Sales, Staff Team – Office of Domestic Sales					

Milestone	Action Step	Owner(s)	Estimated Timing	Status	Risks/ Challenges/ Change Barriers/ Resources needs	General Comments
	Refresh press contact list and media kit		July-August			
	Draft core PR pitch calendar for seasonal stories		July			
	Solicit itinerary and pitch content from regional partners		July-August			
	Hire PR firm or assign internal point person for pitching		July-August			
	Conduct a brand health and perception study		July-December		Budget	
	Coordinate media FAM tour logistics (6 weeks)		Ongoing			
	Track media hits and prepare impact report (Monthly)		Ongoing			

How to Action Plan

Action plans are intended to be flexible and responsive to current conditions and resources. An action plan is a living document that should be regularly reviewed and updated. In this section, we will explain best practices in activating Initiative Teams and ensuring consistent progress.

Strategic Plan Implementation Roles

Plan Sponsor(s): Overall champion of Visit Mississippi’s strategic direction and guidance on big-picture thinking and decisions. Visit Mississippi Role: Executive Director

Plan Manager(s): Ongoing support for Initiative Leads and their teams. Primary liaison with Executive Director and ensures consistent implementation momentum and progress. Visit Mississippi Role: Deputy Director

Initiative Lead: Convenes Initiative Teams, sets agendas, and leads team meetings. Primary interface with Plan Manager, communicating needs and raising yellow flags when needed.

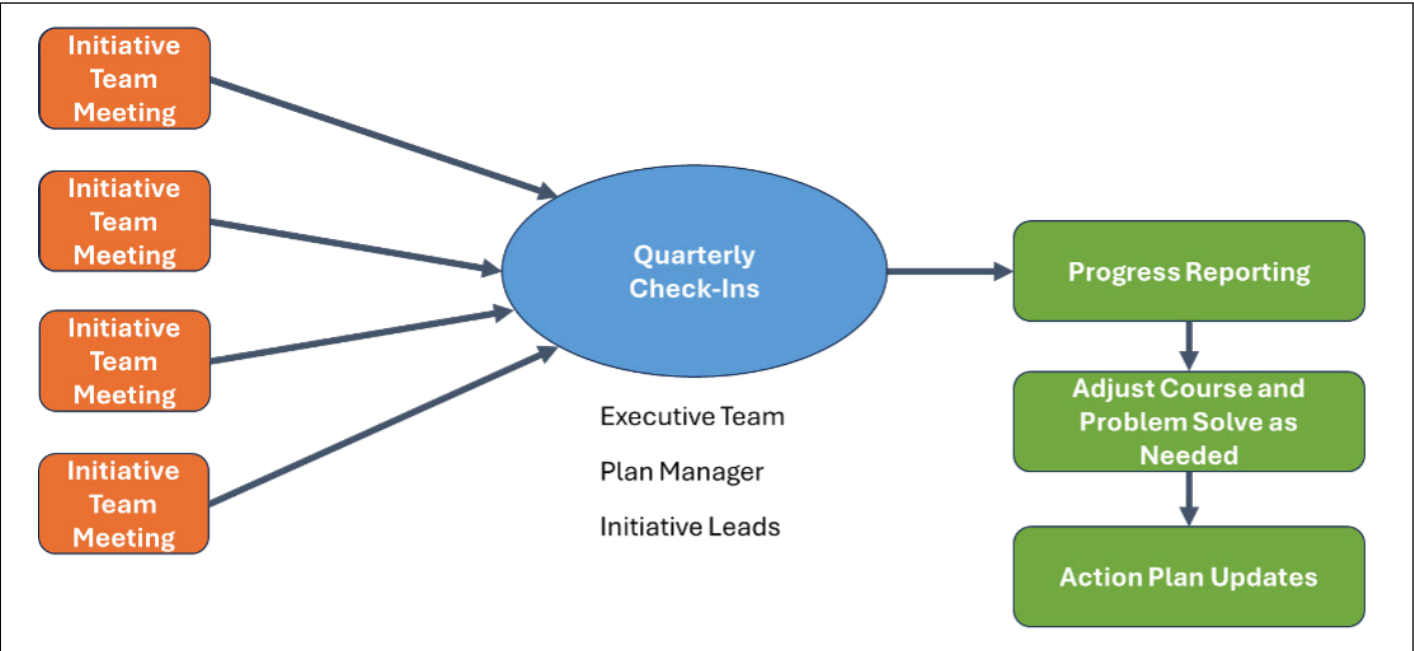
Initiative Team: Cross-functional collaborators responsible for developing and implementing agreed-upon action steps. May include vendors and partners.

Leadership Team: Consists of the Plan Sponsor, Plan Manager, and Initiative Leads. This team convenes quarterly to receive initiative updates and provide direction when changes are needed.

Strategic Plan Implementation Meetings

To ensure the Strategic Plan continues to track toward success, Visit Mississippi will engage in a series of regular meetings that will foster progress, accountability, and communication. There are two main types of meetings related to the Strategic Plan Implementation:

1. Initiative Team Meetings allow the individual Initiative Leads and their teams to kick off and come together to manage the performance of their assigned initiative overall, check its progress and what is tracking, discuss any challenges that may be surfacing, and plan for and communicate any adjustments to move the work forward. Finally, this meeting provides an opportunity for the Initiative Leads to prepare to share their initiative work at Quarterly Check-In Review Meetings with the Leadership Team.
2. Quarterly Check-In Review Meetings allow the individual Initiative Leads to come together with the Leadership Team in a more robust forum where leadership will gain an understanding of the progress of each initiative overall, adjust course as needed, identify and address barriers, and offer support and suggestions to maintain momentum.



Initiative Team Kickoff

This first meeting of the Initiative Team is to align and create the Action Plan. Meeting purpose:

- Team orientation
- Strategic Plan management orientation
- Initiative orientation
- Establish agreements and meeting cadence

Agenda (2 hours)

1. Team Introductions: Each member introduces themselves, a strength they bring to the project, what they hope to achieve in the work together, and what excites them about this work.
2. Plan Management & Initiative Orientation
 - Initiative Lead reviews Strategic Plan, how their initiative fits into the plan, and how the work of this team fits into the process of plan management.
 - Initiative Lead discusses the initiative that the team is responsible for and shares some of the background thinking from the Leadership Team of the development of the initiative.
 - Initiative Lead updates the Initiative Scoping & Action Planning Sheet based on team feedback.

How to Action Plan

3. Agreements and Meeting Cadence
 - Establish Team Agreements regarding how you will work together. What commitments will you make to ensure you have a positive team experience and that you effectively deliver on the tasks and responsibilities of the team? Draft these at this meeting but revisit them at each meeting and update them as needed.
 - Clarify roles as needed.
 - Initiative Lead discusses the meeting cadence with the team members and supports align on the next steps for moving the initiative forward. If you want to rotate roles for meetings, discuss this as well.
4. Action Steps: Align on and document any next steps. This may include team members doing some pre-reflection on the Scoping & Action Planning Sheet elements.

Ongoing Initiative Team Meetings

Meeting Purpose

1. Initiative updates and performance management
2. Celebrate successes and identify areas of need/improvement
3. Preparation for Quarterly Check-In Review Meeting with Leadership Team

Agenda (1.5-2 hours)

1. Welcome, agenda and agreements review, and team check-in.
2. General Initiative Update
 - Each team member provides an update on their actions and progress.
 - For those actions not going as planned, capture relevant details and determine next steps.

Item	Update/Issue	Responsible Team Member
1		
2		
3		

3. Initiative Performance Management – Issue Responses
 - Identify response to issues noted in previous meetings.

Item	Responses	Responsible Team Member	Due
1			
2			
3			

4. Initiative Performance Management – Changes
 - Outline any changes to the Scoping and Action Planning Sheet.

Item	Proposed Changes to Scoping and Action Planning Sheet	Responsible Team Member	Due
1			
2			
3			

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6. Leadership Team updates or needs
- Identify any Scoping and Action Planning Sheet changes to communicate, outstanding issues, or needs from the Leadership Team.

Item	Items to Elevate	Responsible Team Member	Due
1			
2			
3			

7. Next Action Steps

What	Who	When	Notes

Quarterly Check-In Review Meetings (Initiative Leads and Leadership Team)

Meeting Purpose
The purpose of the Quarterly Check-In Review Meetings is for the Initiative Leads and the Leadership Team to come together to bring clarity, focus, alignment, and agreements around directions, roles, and team collaborations required to manage the Strategic Plan. The goal for the Quarterly Check-In Review Meeting is also to:

- Share Quarterly Progress Summaries and update one another on each initiative’s progress.
- Serve as a Community of Practice to get support, best practices, ideas, etc. from one another.

How do we prepare for this meeting?
A Leadership Team Member should schedule the meeting for two to three hours and should send an email out to all attendees in advance (Leadership Team and all Initiative Leads).

A Leadership Team Member should ensure that all attendees will be able to view the Strategic Plan, Individual Initiative Action Planning Sheets, meeting agenda, and other relevant documents, such as the Initiative Quarterly Progress Summaries. The Leadership Team Member or another team member should take minutes during the meeting and update relevant documents, as needed.

Each Initiative Lead should send out an email to their team a week or so in advance.

Sample Quarterly Leadership Team Review Topics

- Meeting Purpose**
- Understand how the Initiative Action Plans are progressing
 - Identify issues and plan responses
 - Provide leadership direction and/or resourcing as needed
 - Capture any plan changes or management details
 - Develop a communications plan

How to Action Plan

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Agenda

1. Initiative Update

- Review Quarterly Progress Summaries for each initiative (or a high-level summary of these overall, whatever feels like the right level of detail)
- Key questions:
 - Is the work on track?
 - What challenges or barriers are interfering with success?
 - What supports or decisions from leadership or other departments/person(s) are required to complete the initiative or get through a milestone?
 - What expectations need to be reset?
 - Do we need to rethink the approach to any of the initiative work or course correct?
 - Are we progressing on our objectives?
 - Are there any unresolved issues?
 - What are the planned responses to unresolved issues?
 - Are there any major Initiative Action Plan changes we recommend?
 - Are there any resources/help we need to be successful?
 - Are there any other decisions we need to make?

2. Key Learnings – What have we learned so far?

- The good
- The bad
- The ugly

3. Celebration and Communication

- Celebration – What are we really excited about sharing?
- Communication – How should we best share this information?

4. Next Steps

Staffing Recommendations

With the Strategic Plan in hand, Visit Mississippi will evaluate the skills needed to successfully execute each initiative. This worksheet will assist leadership in determining the skills and experience that currently exist at Visit Mississippi and which skills will need to be built, borrowed, or bought. Page 5 of this Implementation Plan goes into further detail about potential avenues for obtaining necessary expertise. In short, Visit Mississippi can evaluate which skills to build (hire or train staff), borrow (determine resources that may exist in other state agencies, shared services, or among partners), or buy (specialized skills and services that can be purchased from vendors). Some initiatives may require more than one avenue to convene an effective initiative team.

	Phase 1 Initiative	Skills or Experience Needed	Existing	Build	Borrow	Buy
Amplify Mississippi Stories	Create new and engaging content for all platforms	Content strategy				
		Storytelling				
		Copywriting				
		Photography and videography				
		Graphic Design				
		Brand management				
		Audience research				
		Project management and budget planning				
	Optimize and expand marketing strategies and tactics	Marketing strategy development				
		SEO				
		Audience segmentation and persona development				
		Social media management				
		Data analysis				
		Integrated campaign planning				
		Agency and vendor management				
		Cross-team collaboration and communication				
		Project management and budget planning				

	Phase 1 Initiative	Skills or Experience Needed	Existing	Build	Borrow	Buy
Amplify Mississippi Stories	Increase and expand overall communication and public relations efforts	Message development				
		Brand voice and tone management				
		Media outreach and pitching				
		Writing				
		Media training				
		Communications planning				
Enhance the Visitor Experience	Amplify Welcome Center visibility and visitor engagement	Customer service				
		Destination knowledge				
		Vendor and partner coordination				
		Logistics				
		Community outreach				
	Enhance and optimize on-the-ground resources and visitor communications	Storytelling				
		Community outreach and coordination				
		Logistics				
Destination Development	Elevate Visit Mississippi programs and communication tools to enhance accessibility	ADA and WCAG expertise				
		Digital accessibility tools proficiency				
		Partnership and collaboration with advocacy groups				
		Accessibility policy development				
		Measurement and reporting				
		Project management				

Staffing Recommendations

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	Phase 1 Initiative	Skills or Experience Needed	Existing	Build	Borrow	Buy
Educate, Empower, & Support	Educate stakeholders on the value of tourism	Message and narrative development				
		Plain language writing				
		Infographic and presentation design				
		Public speaking				
		Media relations				
		Government relations				
		Partner communication and collaboration				
	Provide data, resources, and toolkits to empower stakeholders' strategy and marketing	Education campaign development				
		Vendor and contract management				
		Partner engagement and collaboration				
		Graphic design				
		Program management				
		Contract management				
		Marketing expertise				
Organizational Excellence	Strengthen internal communication, collaboration, and engagement	Leadership				
		Communication				
		Staff engagement and culture development				
		Project management				
	Track, analyze, and communicate the ROI and KPIs	Research and data analysis				
		Writing and communication				
		Staff and vendor management				
		Data-driven decision making				

Tourism Advisory Group

Purpose and Role

The Mississippi State Tourism Advisory Group (TAG) is proposed as a strategic resource to advise the Director of Tourism of Visit Mississippi on critical issues related to statewide tourism marketing, destination development, and industry-wide coordination. This group is the evolution of the ad-hoc working groups established during the strategic planning process. While Mississippi has existing organizations that focus on tourism advocacy or professional development—such as the Mississippi Tourism Association—this group is designed to serve a non-lobbying, advisory function specifically focused on state-level tourism strategy.

The group will serve as a standing body of industry leaders, providing formal recommendations to the Director of Tourism on emerging trends, operational needs, and programmatic improvements. It will help Visit Mississippi remain responsive to the needs of tourism businesses, cultural and heritage sites, outdoor recreation providers, and destination marketing organizations statewide.

Group Formation and Membership

The Tourism Advisory Group will consist of up to 30 members. The group’s composition is intended to reflect the diversity of Mississippi’s tourism ecosystem—from small businesses and nonprofit attractions to regional DMOs and sector-specific experts. Members may be appointed through the following pathways:

- Open application and nomination process
- Invitations extended to existing strategic planning working group members
- Targeted outreach to underrepresented industry sectors or geographic areas

Members will serve as volunteers and will not receive compensation or travel reimbursement.

Term Lengths and Structure

Each member will serve a two-year term. To maintain continuity and institutional knowledge, terms will be staggered so that no more than 50% of the group rotates off in a given year. This structure promotes long-term strategic alignment while also allowing new voices and perspectives to join the group.

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Subcommittees

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the group will be appointed by Visit Mississippi. These individuals will oversee group facilitation, coordinate with Visit Mississippi staff, and help establish subcommittees as needed. Subcommittees may be:

- Standing (e.g., Tourism Development, Industry Collaboration, Marketing, Tourism Programming)
- Ad hoc (formed at the discretion of the Director of Tourism or Chair for specific time-bound issues)

Meeting Cadence and Deliverables

The full advisory group will meet quarterly in a virtual format. The final quarterly meeting of each year will include a presentation of each

subcommittee’s recommendations and a live discussion with the Director of Tourism of Visit Mississippi.

Subcommittees will meet as needed between quarterly meetings. Each subcommittee is responsible for:

- Conducting independent research and collaboration
- Developing formal written recommendations
- Submitting their final letter to the Chair and Vice-Chair for approval
- Delivering the approved letter to the Director of Tourism by early fall each year

Reporting and Implementation

Subcommittee recommendations will be submitted as formal letters to the Director of Tourism of Visit Mississippi, using a structure modeled on the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. The Director of Tourism, with input from the Deputy Director and other leadership team members, will review, consider, and formally respond to the recommendations—either by accepting them into future planning, requesting clarification, or explaining rationale for non-adoption.

Transparency and Public Access

To ensure accountability and public trust, the names of members, meeting agendas, and formal recommendation letters will be published on Visit Mississippi’s website or made available upon request. Subcommittee meetings and internal notes, however, will not be subject to public disclosure unless required by law.

Timeline to Establish the Advisory Group

Outlined below is the recommended timeline to stand up the Tourism Advisory Group:

Month 1
• Finalize Tourism Advisory Group charter and internal approval • Design application/invitation framework
Month 2
• Issue public call for interest • Conduct targeted outreach to key sectors and working group members
Months 3 and 4
• Review applicants and confirm member selections • Appoint Chair and Vice-Chair
Month 5
• Host orientation meeting for all members • Establish standing and ad hoc subcommittees
Months 6 and 7
• Begin quarterly virtual meetings • Subcommittees begin initial research and topic identification

SAMPLE Tourism Advisory Group Charter

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I. Official Name

The official name of this body is the Mississippi Tourism Advisory Group (TAG).

II. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Tourism Advisory Group is to provide strategic recommendations to the Director of Tourism of Visit Mississippi regarding policies, initiatives, and programmatic directions related to statewide tourism marketing, destination development, research priorities, and workforce support.

TAG is designed to support implementation of the Visit Mississippi Strategic Plan and advise on topics that enhance Mississippi's tourism competitiveness, brand visibility, accessibility, and stakeholder collaboration. The group does not engage in lobbying, advocacy, or legislative activity.

III. Duties

The duties of TAG include:

- Advising Visit Mississippi on statewide tourism priorities and implementation challenges
- Identifying opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and improvement
- Developing formal recommendations for the Director of Tourism through subcommittee efforts
- Reviewing statewide tourism performance trends and best practices

IV. Membership

The group shall consist of no more than 32 members, representing a broad cross-section of Mississippi's tourism economy. Members may include destination marketing organizations, tourism-related business owners, attraction operators, Indigenous tourism leaders, heritage sites, and representatives from rural and urban areas.

Members will serve two-year terms. Terms may be renewed once, subject to approval by Visit Mississippi. Terms will be staggered to ensure continuity and maintain institutional knowledge.

V. Officers

The Chair and Vice-Chair will be appointed by Visit Mississippi. These officers will be responsible for convening meetings, facilitating discussion, guiding subcommittee formation, and coordinating the delivery of final recommendation letters.

VI. Subcommittees

TAG will include both standing and ad hoc subcommittees. Standing subcommittees may include Tourism Development, Industry Collaboration, Marketing, and Tourism Programming. Ad hoc subcommittees may be created to address emerging priorities or special assignments at the discretion of the Chair or Director of Tourism.

VII. Meetings and Deliverables

TAG will meet quarterly in a virtual setting. Subcommittees will meet more frequently to conduct their work. Each fall, every subcommittee will submit a formal letter of recommendations to the Director of Tourism of Visit Mississippi. The year-end quarterly meeting will include live report-outs from each subcommittee to the Director of Tourism.

VIII. Transparency and Public Records

Visit Mississippi will maintain records of meetings and recommendation letters. These materials will be publicly accessible through the Visit Mississippi website or in accordance with Mississippi public records law. Subcommittee working sessions and internal deliberations may be excluded unless otherwise mandated.

Community Engagement: Strategic Plan Webinars

Why Community Engagement Matters

The success of Visit Mississippi’s strategic plan depends not only on internal execution, but also on the active engagement of the broader Mississippi tourism industry. Local tourism stakeholders—DMOs, attractions, small businesses, regional alliances, and civic leaders—are essential partners in amplifying Mississippi’s story, enhancing the visitor experience, and advancing sustainable growth. Community engagement through consistent, transparent communication ensures that stakeholders understand the priorities guiding Visit Mississippi’s work and recognize how their own efforts align.

Equally important, these engagement efforts serve to build industry-wide buy-in, surface practical insights from the field, and strengthen the collaborative relationships that make implementation possible across a diverse and geographically broad state.

Outcomes of Stakeholder Engagement

This effort directly supports the strategic initiative to “Educate stakeholders on the value of tourism” by:

- Sharing the economic and cultural rationale behind Visit Mississippi’s priorities
- Increasing transparency and trust with partners across all five strategic imperatives
- Helping communities advocate for tourism investment by giving them tools, data, and updates to reference in their own work

Mechanisms for Engagement

There are two primary formats for delivering consistent engagement around the Strategic Plan:

Virtual Webinars: Delivered live and repeated for different regions or industry audiences to inform stakeholders of progress and activate their involvement.

Standard Strategic Plan Slides for All Presentations: Included in most Visit Mississippi presentations unless the session is highly technical or specific.

Tailoring the Webinars for the Audience

To maximize relevance, Visit Mississippi staff should adapt messaging, case studies, and calls-to-action depending on the audience.

Examples:

- Regional DMOs: Emphasize cooperative opportunities, data tools, grant timelines, and alignment details
- Attraction Operators: Highlight marketing initiatives and opportunities to be featured in promotional content
- Local Elected Officials or Civic Partners: Focus on tourism’s economic impact and cross-sector partnership benefits

Tailored Calls-to-Action: Examples by Industry Group

Examples of customized calls-to-action for industry groups include

- Cultural and Heritage Museums: Submit story ideas and event listings for inclusion in marketing content.
- Outdoor Recreation Outfitters: Participate in regional brand mapping and provide visitor feedback data.
- Hospitality Businesses: Attend grant workshops, download messaging toolkits, and nominate peers for recognition.

Suggested Webinar Agenda - 45 minute

Time	Slide(s)	Description
0:00 – 0:05	Welcome and Introductions	Welcome attendees, introduce presenters, and share housekeeping notes (e.g., chat use, Q&A format, session recording). Reaffirm who the webinar is for and what the goal is.
0:05 – 0:12	The Strategic Plan at a Glance	Present an overview of the five strategic imperatives. Share a quick story of how the plan was developed and why it matters now. Use slides with clear visuals of imperatives, phases, and goals.
0:12 – 0:20	What We’re Working on Now	Share current Phase 1 initiatives underway. Use 2–3 brief case examples to make the work real (e.g., Welcome Center improvements, new marketing content, grant toolkit updates). Highlight specific progress, timelines, and partners.
0:20 – 0:28	How It Impacts You	Tailor this section to the audience type. Describe how their role or organization connects to current efforts. Use this moment to empower stakeholders with talking points, alignment opportunities, or collaboration channels.
0:28 – 0:35	What We Need From You	Provide a tailored call-to-action for the audience (e.g., submit content, attend grant trainings, advocate locally). Offer 2–3 clear steps for how they can stay engaged and support the plan’s momentum.
0:35 – 0:43	Q&A / Discussion	Invite participants to ask questions or share feedback via chat or open mic. Encourage “what else should we know?” or “what’s working in your region?” style prompts.
0:43 – 0:45	Closing and Next Steps	Thank participants, recap action items, and share contact info. Mention upcoming webinars, newsletter updates, or where to access resources online.