

CY 2025 Annual Review of MAGCOR's Work Initiative Program

Issue Brief #728 | January 5, 2026

Update

MAGCOR established the first and only work release program operating under MISS. CODE ANN. § 47-5-579 (1972) in September 2022 at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) with a cap of 25 participants. Although the Legislature required MAGCOR to expand the program to include South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI), Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP), and Mississippi Correctional Institute for Women (MCIW) in 2024 and Delta Correctional Facility (DCF) in 2025, MAGCOR has not been able to expand the program. MAGCOR cited infrastructure limitations, security concerns, and lack of funding as primary reasons the program has not expanded to date. MDOC requires participants be housed in a secure facility, separate from the general population (including security and entry/exit).

Authority

MISS. CODE ANN. § 47-5-579 requires the PEER Committee to annually review the effectiveness of work initiative programs. This is the third report, including the pilot report.

Program Participation

From September 2022 through June 2025, there have been a cumulative total of 88 offenders that have previously or are currently participating in the work initiative program. Of the 63 participants that exited the program, 37 (59%) participants successfully completed the work initiative program by being paroled or released, while 26 participants (41%) were removed from the program, primarily due to rule violations or termination by their employer. There are 25 participants that remain in the program.

The average duration that an offender participates in the work initiative program prior to completion is 286 days or roughly nine months.

Program Status	Number of Program Participants	Average Hours Worked	Average Gross Earnings	Average Fees/Fines Paid	Average Savings
Released from Prison – Completed Program	37	1,796	\$1,243	\$2,833	\$13,592
Removed from Program	26	1,047	\$1,096	\$2,102	\$7,119
Active Participant through June 30, 2025	25	2,641	\$1,574	\$4,250	\$21,739

Participant Earnings

Since the work initiative program began, program participants earned \$2,339,897 over the course of 155,993 labor hours through June 7, 2025, an average of \$15.00 per hour. After taxes, this nets to \$1,950,883.62, an average of \$12.51 per hour.

Program Effectiveness

The program has not been in existence long enough to measure recidivism within 36 months. To date, 5 of the 10 participants released by June 30, 2024, have returned to state custody (a recidivism rate of at least 50%). Since then, 34 participants have been released, and one has returned to custody.

Summary of Recommendations

- The Legislature should amend MISS. CODE ANN. § 47-5-579 to reflect the current administrative fee deduction of 15% and require MAGCOR to report the following for each work initiative participant:
 - total amounts of any dependent support payments, fines, restitutions, fees, or costs as ordered by the court; and,
 - the remaining length of his or her sentence.
- MAGCOR should report actual expenditures, not estimated expenditures, as part of its annual report. In limited instances where MAGCOR identifies a need to report estimated expenditures, MAGCOR should specify the reasoning for doing so.
 - In addition, MAGCOR should report the work initiative program's funding sources, including the amount of funding from each source, and, if applicable, any in-kind support (e.g., MDOC provision of meals to participants).
- MAGCOR should update its policies and procedures manual to reflect current statutory requirements; specify and establish a formal process for how any participant earnings can be transferred or utilized while in the program and upon graduation; and, incorporate all newly adopted program goals, objectives, and performance measures.