

GENERAL INFORMATION

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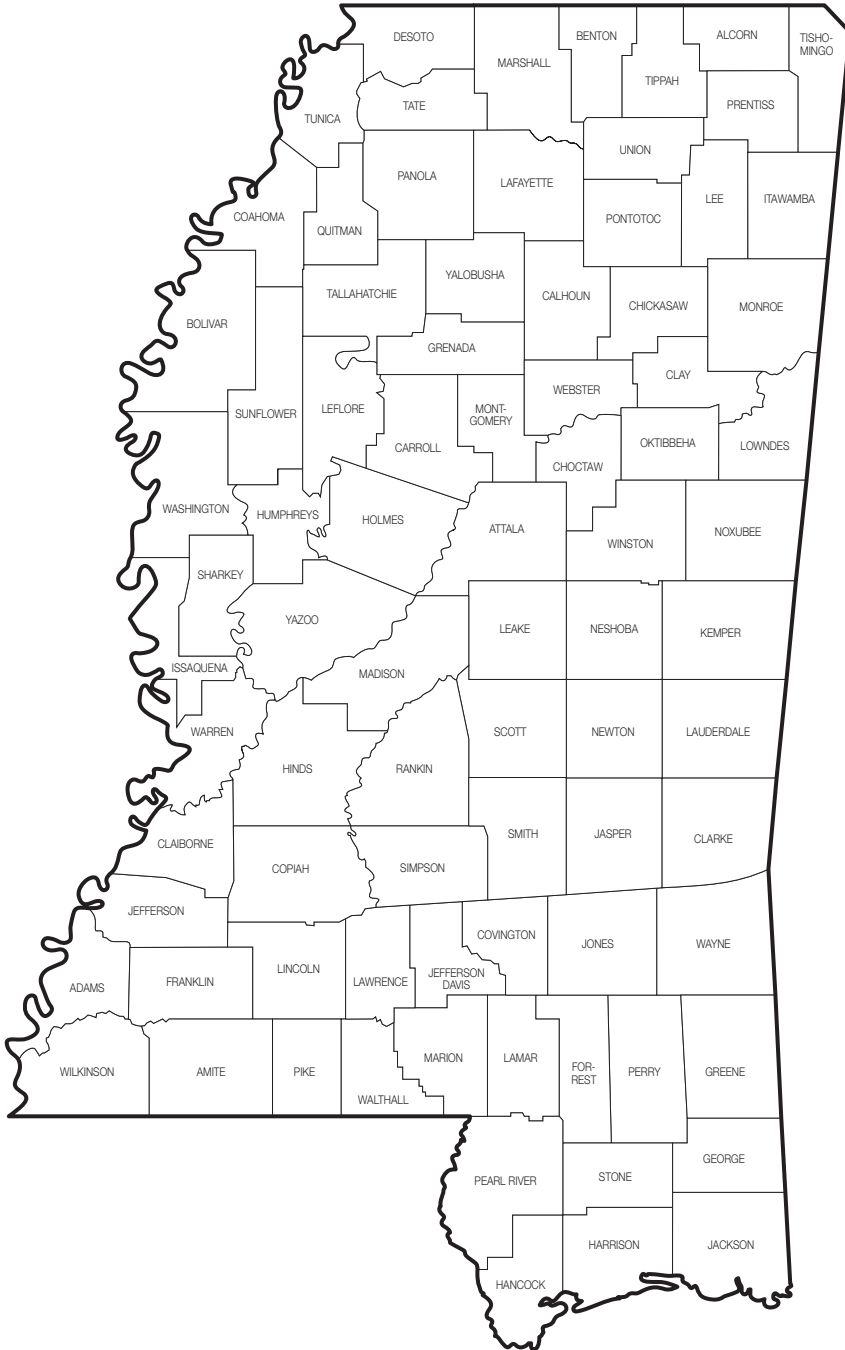
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STATE OF MISSISSIPPI



MISSISSIPPI

Established December 10, 1817, Mississippi is the 20th state admitted to the Union. David Holmes was chosen as the first governor of the state. Nicknamed both “The Magnolia State” and “The Hospitality State,” Mississippi took its name from the Mississippi River derived from the Indian word *misi-ziibi*, meaning Great River or Father of Waters.

With a 2012 estimated population of almost 3 million and a land mass of 48,430 square miles, Mississippi is the 32nd most extensive and the 31st most populous of the 50 states. The state’s density is 63.5 persons per square mile. Mississippi is heavily forested, with more than half of the state’s area covered by wild trees, including pine, cottonwood, elm, hickory, oak, pecan, sweetgum and tupelo.

The State of Mississippi is entirely composed of lowlands, the highest point being Woodall Mountain in the northeastern corner of the state at the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains, situated at 806 feet above sea level. The lowest point is sea level at the Gulf Coast. The mean elevation in the state is 300 feet above sea level.

Mississippi has a humid subtropical climate with long summers and short, mild winters. Temperatures average about 91°F in July and about 48 °F in January. Summers are long making it possible to grow crops from March through October. The average rainfall is 52 inches, with fall being the driest season.

Descendant Native American tribes include the Chickasaw and Choctaw. Other tribes who inhabited the territory of Mississippi and whose names were adopted by local towns include the Natchez, the Yazoo and the Biloxi.

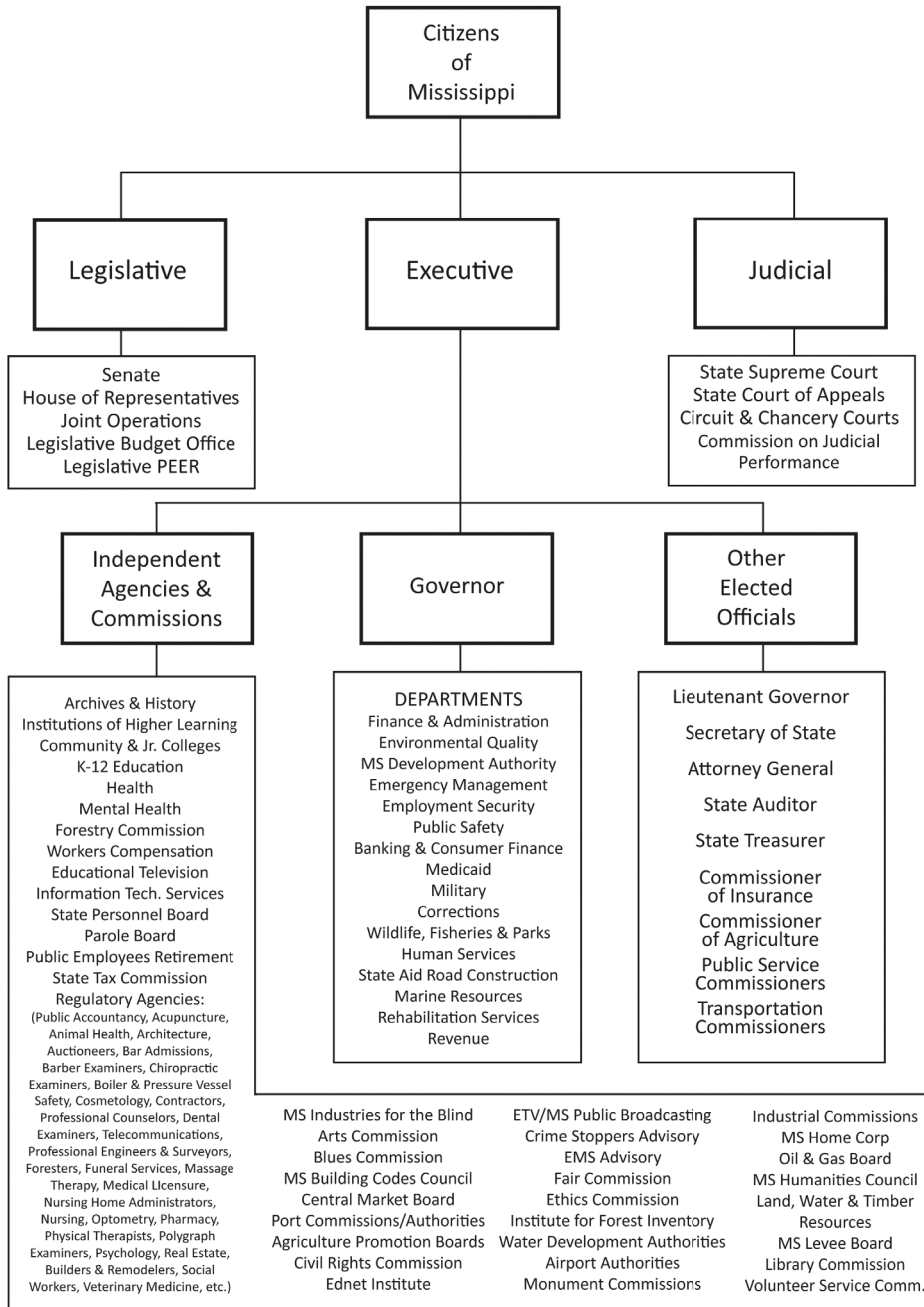
The first major European expedition into the territory that would become Mississippi was led by Hernando de Soto, who passed through in 1540. The French, in April 1699, established the first European settlement at Fort Maurepas (also known as Old Biloxi), built at Ocean Springs and settled by Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville. In 1716, the French founded Natchez on the Mississippi River as Fort Rosalie; it became the dominant town and trading post of the area. The French called the greater territory “New Louisiana” and the Spanish government continued to claim the Gulf Coast as its property.

Through the next decades, the area was ruled by Spanish, British and French colonial governments.

The constitution under which Mississippi is currently governed was written and adopted in 1890. It establishes a governmental structure closely patterned after the federal system with three separate divisions: the executive, legislative and judicial. Each division of government operates under a system of checks and balances designed to keep any one branch from assuming more authority than the Constitution of 1890 intended. Under the three branches, additional boards, agencies and public offices or departments have been created to deliver government services. The vast majority of these independent agencies, boards and commissions do not report directly to any elected statewide official but are overseen by boards appointed to limited terms by various officials.

Mississippi is one of five states which elects its state officials in odd-numbered years. Mississippi holds elections for the top statewide offices as well as members of the State House of Representatives and Senate every four years, always in the year preceding federal Presidential elections. On a local level, county and municipal governments are also established according to Mississippi law.

MISSISSIPPI STATE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



MISSISSIPPI STATE SYMBOLS



MISSISSIPPI'S STATE FLAG

By majority vote on April 17, 2001, the citizens of Mississippi adopted the following as Section 3-3-16 of the Mississippi Code: "The official flag of the State of Mississippi shall have the following design: with width two-thirds ($2/3$) of its length; with the union (canton) to be square, in width two-thirds ($2/3$) of the width of the flag; the ground of the union to be red and a broad blue saltire thereon, bordered with white and emblazoned with thirteen (13) mullets or five-pointed stars, corresponding with the number of the original States of the Union; the field to be divided into three (3) bars of equal width, the upper one blue, the center one white, and the lower one, extending the whole length of the flag, red (the national colors); this being the flag adopted by the Mississippi Legislature in the 1894 Special Session."

Although the 1894 Mississippi Legislature had adopted the flag described above, during the 1906 revision of the Mississippi State Code, the law designating an official state flag was not brought forward. On May 4, 2000, the Mississippi Supreme Court ruled that Mississippi did not have an official state flag. The election to select the official state flag was the recommendation of a 17-member commission appointed to study the issue by Governor Ronnie Musgrove. The 2001 Legislature passed a law setting the date for the special election. Voters chose between two designs.

The state flag may be displayed from all public buildings from sunrise to sunset; however, the state flag may be displayed from all public buildings twenty-four (24) hours a day if properly illuminated. The state flag should not be displayed when the weather is inclement, except when an all-weather flag is displayed. The state flag shall receive all of the respect and ceremonious etiquette given the American flag. Provided, however, nothing in this section shall be construed so as to affect the precedence given to the flag of the United States of America. Miss. Code Ann. § 3-3-15 (1972).

PLEDGE TO THE MISSISSIPPI FLAG

"I salute the flag of Mississippi and the sovereign state for which it stands with pride in her history and achievements and with confidence in her future under the guidance of Almighty God."

Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-7 (1972)



THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

The State Seal has been in use since Mississippi became a state in 1817. It is described in the Laws of the State of Mississippi, First Session, First General Assembly, 1817-1818: "The seal of this state, the inscription of which shall be 'the great seal of the state of Mississippi' around the margin, and in the center an eagle, with the olive branch and quiver of arrows in his claws." The Great Seal was amended by an act of the 2014 Legislature to include the words "In God We Trust."



MISSISSIPPI'S COAT-OF-ARMS

On February 7, 2001, Governor Ronnie Musgrove signed into law Senate Bill No. 2285 designating the above design as the official Mississippi Coat-of-Arms:

"... a shield, blue in color, with an eagle upon it with extended pinions, holding in the right talon a palm branch and bundle of arrows in the left, with the word 'Mississippi' above the eagle; the lettering on the shield and the eagle to be in gold; below the shield two (2) branches of the cotton stalk, saltier wise, and a scroll below extending upward and on each side three-fourths (3/4) of the length of the shield; upon the scroll, which is to be red, the motto to be printed in gold letters upon white spaces, the motto to be 'Virtute et Armis'; this being the same Coat-of-Arms adopted by the Legislature in Chapter 37, Laws of the Extraordinary Session of 1894."

This design was declared the official state Coat-of-Arms by the 1894 Legislature, but the original law was not brought forward in the 1906 revision of the Mississippi Code. The Mississippi Supreme Court ruled in May 2000 that Mississippi did not have an official Coat-of-Arms. A 17-member commission appointed by Governor Ronnie Musgrove to study the issue recommended to the Legislature the re-adoption of the Coat-of-Arms.

STATE LANGUAGE

English was designated the official language of the State in Chapter 439, General Laws of Mississippi 1987.



STATE FLOWER AND TREE

An election was held in November 1900 to select a State Flower. Votes were submitted by 23,278 school children. The magnolia received 12,745 votes, the cotton blossom 4,171, and the cape jasmine 2,484. A few votes were for other flowers. The magnolia was officially designated as the State Flower by the 1952 Legislature. In 1935, the Director of Forestry started a movement to select a State Tree for Mississippi. The tree was to be nominated and elected by school children of the state.

Four nominations were made: the magnolia, oak, pine, and dogwood. The magnolia received the majority. On April 1, 1938, the Mississippi Legislature officially designated the magnolia as the State Tree in Chapter 365, Laws of Mississippi 1938.

STATE SOIL

Natchez Silt Loam (*Typic Eutrudepts*) was designated the State Soil of Mississippi in Chapter 360, General Laws of 2002.

STATE DANCE

The square dance was adopted as the American folk dance of Mississippi, Chapter 303, General Laws of Mississippi 1995.

STATE GRAND OPERA HOUSE

The Grand Opera House of Meridian was designated the State Grand Opera House in Chapter 313, General Laws of Mississippi 1993.

STATE MUSEUMS

The Mississippi Code Ann. (1972) also identifies Tupelo Automobile Museum as the State Automobile Museum and the Mississippi Industrial Heritage Museum as the State Historical Industrial Museum.

OTHER OFFICIAL DESIGNATIONS

1. STATE BIRD

Found in all sections of Mississippi, the Mockingbird was selected as the official State Bird by the Women's Federated Clubs and by the State Legislature in 1944.

2. STATE REPTILE

The American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) was designated the State Reptile by Senate Bill 2060 which was adopted by the Mississippi Legislature during the 2005 Regular Session.

3. STATE WATER MAMMAL

An act designating the bottlenosed dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), commonly called the porpoise, as the State Water Mammal was approved April 12, 1974, as Chapter 551, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974.

4. STATE FISH

The largemouth or black bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) was designated the State Fish of Mississippi, Chapter 551, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974.

5 AND 6. STATE LAND MAMMALS

The white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) was designated the State Land Mammal of Mississippi by Senate Bill No. 2324, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974. The Red Fox was also named State Land Mammal in the 1997 Legislative Session.

7. STATE WILDFLOWER

The Coreopsis was designated the State Wildflower in 1991, Chapter 332 of the General Laws of Mississippi.

8. STATE BUTTERFLY

An act designating the spicebush swallowtail (*Pterourus troilus*) as the State Butterfly of Mississippi was approved in 1991 as Chapter 315, General Laws of Mississippi of 1991.

9. STATE INSECT

The honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) was designated the State Insect of Mississippi in Chapter 317, General Laws of Mississippi of 1980.

10. STATE FOSSIL

A Senate Concurrent Resolution designating the pre-historic whale as the State Fossil was adopted March 26, 1981.

11. STATE STONE

A Senate Concurrent Resolution designating petrified wood as the State Stone was adopted April 14, 1976.

12. STATE WATERFOWL

The wood duck (*Aix sponsa*) was designated the State Waterfowl of Mississippi in Chapter 551, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974.

13. STATE SHELL

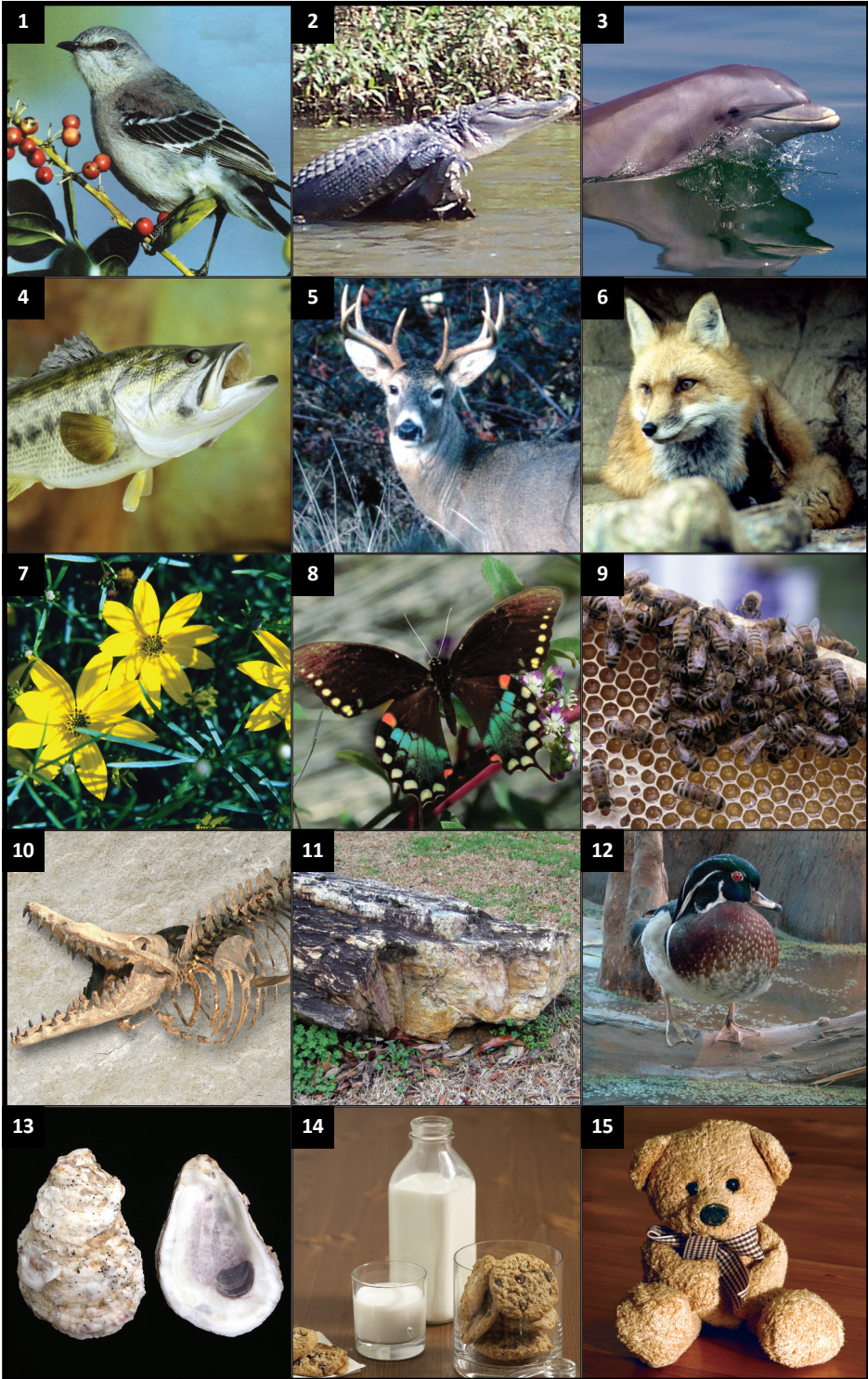
An act designating the oyster shell (*Crassostrea virginica*) as the State Shell was approved April 12, 1974, as Chapter 551, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974.

14. STATE BEVERAGE

An act to designate milk as the State Beverage was adopted by the Mississippi Legislature during the 1984 Regular Session, in Chapter 394, General Laws of Mississippi 1984.

15. STATE TOY

The Teddy Bear is designated the state toy of Mississippi, in recognition of the Mississippi connection to the origin of the Teddy Bear inspired by President Theodore Roosevelt's bear hunt in the Delta, in Chapter 834, General Laws of Mississippi 2003.



GO, MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Official State Song - Adopted by Legislature 1962

Words and Music by
HOUSTON DAVIS

INTRO.

Brightly

VERSE

E_b Fm E_b A_b E_b Fm E_b B₇

States may sing their songs of praise, with wav - ing flags and hip - hoorays, let

E_b Fm E_b A_b E_b Fm E_b B₇

cym - bals crash and let bells ring 'cause here's one song I'm proud to sing.

CHORUS

E_b

1. GO, MIS - SIS - SIP - PI, keep roll - ing a - long, ___
 2. GO, MIS - SIS - SIP - PI, you're on the right track, ___
 3. GO, MIS - SIS - SIP - PI, ___ straight down the line, ___

B₇

GO, MIS - SIS - SIP - PI, you can - not go wrong, ___
 GO, MIS - SIS - SIP - PI, and this is a fact, ___
 GO, MIS - SIS - SIP - PI, ___ ev - 'ry - things fine ___

E_b E_b7

GO, MIS - SIS - SIP - PI, we're sing - ing your song ___
 GO, MIS - SIS - SIP - PI, you'll nev - er look back ___
 GO, MIS - SIS - SIP - PI, It's your state and mine ___

A_b E_b A_b E_b B₇

1-4.	5.
E _b For all choruses	E _b Last time

M - I - S, - S - I - S, - S - I - P - P - I.
 M - I - S, - S - I - S, - S - I - P - P - I.
 M - I - S, - S - I - S, - S - I - P - P - I.

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 Adapted from original publication.

STATE SONG – “GO, MISSISSIPPI”*Words and music by Houston Davis*

The Jackson Board of Realtors undertook the task of finding a satisfactory song to represent the State of Mississippi. They selected through an advisory committee a song entitled, “Go, Mississippi” by Houston Davis. On May 17, 1962, the Mississippi Legislature officially designated “Go, Mississippi” as the official song of the State of Mississippi. General Laws of Mississippi of 1962, Chapter 654.

“GO, MISSISSIPPI”**VERSE 1**

States may sing their songs of praise,
With waving flags and hip-hoo-rays,
Let cymbals crash and let bells ring
‘Cause here’s one song I’m proud to sing.

CHORUS

Go, Mississippi, keep rolling along,
Go, Mississippi, you cannot go wrong,
Go, Mississippi, we’re singing your song
M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I

VERSE 2

Go, Mississippi, you’re on the right track,
Go, Mississippi, and this is a fact,
Go, Mississippi, you’ll never look back
M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I

VERSE 3

Go, Mississippi, straight down the line,
Go, Mississippi, ev’rything’s fine,
Go, Mississippi, It’s your state and mine
M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I

VERSE 4

Go, Mississippi, continue to roll,
Go, Mississippi, the top is the goal.
Go, Mississippi, you’ll have and you’ll hold
M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I

VERSE 5

Go, Mississippi, get up and go,
Go, Mississippi, let the world know
That our Mississippi is leading the show
M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I

STATE MOTTO

“Virtute et armis”—A Latin phrase which translates “By Valor and Arms”—has not been adopted by the Legislature as an official motto as such, but has appeared on the State Coat-of-Arms since 1894. It was suggested by James Rhea Preston, a former Mississippi Superintendent of Education.

The Mississippi motto supposedly has its roots and inspiration from another motto created by Lord Gray de Wilton “Virtute Non Armis Fido” which means “I trust in virtue not arms.”

HOW DO I?

Apply for a job in Mississippi?

Visit the Mississippi Department of Employment Security website to search for openings.
www.mdes.ms.gov

Form a Mississippi Corporation or LLC? Search for a business entity in Mississippi?

Visit the Mississippi Secretary of State's website and click on Business Services tab.
www.sos.ms.gov

Find information about or locate a nearby hospital?

Visit the Hospital Locator website or the Mississippi Department of Health website.
www.msdh.state.ms.us

Find fishing condition reports?

Current Mississippi fishing condition reports are located at the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks website.
www.mdwfp.com

Find historic Mississippi landmarks?

Historic Mississippi landmarks can be found at the National Register of Historic Places.
www.nps.gov/nr

Find Mississippi maps and highway information?

Maps of the State of Mississippi can be found on the website of the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT).
www.mdot.ms.gov

Find information on my child's school or local school district?

Mississippi public school or school district websites can be found by visiting the Mississippi Department of Education's website.
www.mde.k12.ms.us

Find my Mississippi State Representative or Senator?

Find out more about the Mississippi State House of Representatives and State Senate on the Mississippi Legislature's website.
www.legislature.ms.gov

Find out about the arts and culture in Mississippi?

The Mississippi Arts Commission is one of the best places to start your search of the arts in Mississippi.
www.arts.state.ms.us

Find out more about the Mississippi Blues Trail?

The Mississippi Blues Trail website offers a wealth of information about the historic trail.
www.msbluestrail.org

Find more information about Mississippi's government, economy, education and tourism?

The official website for Mississippi government contains numerous links to topical websites.
www.ms.gov