

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8947

To amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to direct the Secretary of Labor to award grants to community colleges for high-quality workforce development programs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 8, 2024

Mrs. MCBATH introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to direct the Secretary of Labor to award grants to community colleges for high-quality workforce development programs.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY COLLEGES**
4 **GRANT PROGRAM.**

5 Subtitle D of title I of the Workforce Innovation and
6 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3221 et seq.) is amended by
7 adding at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 173. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY COLLEGES WORK-**
2 **FORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROGRAM.**

3 “(a) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are—

4 “(1) to establish, improve, or expand high-quality
5 workforce development programs at community
6 colleges; and

7 “(2) to expand opportunities for individuals to
8 obtain recognized postsecondary credentials that are
9 nationally or regionally portable and stackable for
10 high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors
11 or occupations.

12 “(b) STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY COLLEGES
13 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROGRAM.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—From the amounts appro-
15 priated to carry out this section under paragraph (3)
16 and not reserved under paragraph (2), the Secretary
17 shall, on a competitive basis, make grants to eligible
18 institutions to carry out the activities described in
19 subsection (e).

20 “(2) RESERVATION.—Of the amounts appro-
21 priated to carry out this section under paragraph
22 (3), the Secretary may reserve not more than two
23 percent for the administration of grants awarded
24 under this section, including—

25 “(A) providing technical assistance and
26 targeted outreach to support eligible institu-

tions serving a high number or high percentage of low-income individuals or individuals with barriers to employment, and rural-serving eligible institutions, to provide guidance and assistance in the process of applying for grants under this section; and

“(B) evaluating and reporting on the performance and impact of programs funded under this section in accordance with subsections (f) through (h).

“(3) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$65,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2025 through 2030.

“(c) AWARD PERIOD.—

“(1) INITIAL GRANT PERIOD.—Each grant under this section shall be awarded for an initial period of not more than 4 years.

“(2) SUBSEQUENT GRANTS.—An eligible institution that receives an initial grant under this section may receive one or more additional grants under this section for additional periods of not more than 4 years each if the eligible institution demonstrates that, during the most recently completed grant period for a grant received under this section,

1 such eligible institution achieved the levels of per-
2 formance agreed to by the eligible institution with
3 respect to the performance indicators specified in
4 subsection (f).

5 “(d) APPLICATION.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a
7 grant under this section, an eligible institution shall
8 submit an application to the Secretary at such time
9 and in such manner as the Secretary may require.

10 “(2) CONTENTS.—An application submitted by
11 an eligible institution under paragraph (1) shall in-
12 clude a description of each the following:

13 “(A) The extent to which the eligible insti-
14 tution has demonstrated success building part-
15 nerships with employers in in-demand industry
16 sectors or occupations to provide students with
17 the skills needed for occupations in such indus-
18 tries and an explanation of the results of any
19 such partnerships.

20 “(B) The methods and strategies the eligi-
21 ble institution will use to engage with employers
22 in in-demand industry sectors or occupations,
23 including any arrangements to place individuals
24 who complete the workforce development pro-

grams supported by the grant into employment with such employers.

“(C) The proposed eligible institution and industry partnership that the eligible institution will establish or maintain to comply with subsection (e)(1), including—

“(i) the roles and responsibilities of each employer, organization, agency, or institution of higher education that the eligible institution will partner with to carry out the activities under this section; and

“(ii) the needs that will be addressed by such eligible institution and industry partnership.

“(D) One or more industries that such partnership will target and real-time labor market data demonstrating that those industries are aligned with employer demand in the geographic area to be served by the eligible institution.

“(E) The extent to which the eligible institution can—

“(i) leverage additional resources to support the programs to be funded with the grant, which shall include written com-

1 mitments of any leveraged or matching
2 funds for the proposed programs; and

3 “(ii) demonstrate the future sustain-
4 ability of each such program.

5 “(F) The steps the institution will take to
6 ensure the high quality of each program to be
7 funded with the grant, including the career
8 pathways within such programs.

9 “(G) The population and geographic area
10 to be served by the eligible institution, including
11 the number of individuals the eligible institution
12 intends to serve during the grant period.

13 “(H) The workforce development programs
14 to be supported by the grant.

15 “(I) The recognized postsecondary creden-
16 tials that are expected to be earned by partici-
17 pants in such workforce development programs
18 and the related high-wage, high skill, or in-de-
19 mand industry sectors or occupations for which
20 such programs will prepare participants.

21 “(J) The evidence upon which the edu-
22 cation and skills development strategies to be
23 used in such workforce development programs
24 are based and an explanation of how such evi-

1 dence influenced the design of the programs to
2 improve education and employment outcomes.

3 “(K) How activities of the eligible institu-
4 tion are expected to align with the workforce
5 strategies identified in—

6 “(i) any State plan or local plan sub-
7 mitted under this Act by the State, out-
8 lying area, or locality in which the eligible
9 institution is expected to operate;

10 “(ii) any State plan submitted under
11 section 122 of the Carl D. Perkins Career
12 and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20
13 U.S.C. 2342) by such State or outlying
14 area; and

15 “(iii) any economic development plan
16 of the chief executive of such State or out-
17 lying area.

18 “(L) The goals of the eligible institution
19 with respect to—

20 “(i) capacity building (as described in
21 subsection (f)(1)(B)); and

22 “(ii) the expected performance of indi-
23 viduals participating in the programs to be
24 offered by the eligible institution, including
25 with respect to any performance indicators

1 applicable under section 116 or subsection
2 (f) of this section.

3 “(3) CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS EXPERI-
4 ENCE.—The Secretary may not disqualify an eligible
5 institution from receiving a grant under this section
6 solely because such institution lacks previous experi-
7 ence in building partnerships, as described in para-
8 graph (2)(A).

9 “(4) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this
10 section, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible
11 institutions that—

12 “(A) will use the grant to serve—

13 “(i) individuals with barriers to em-
14 ployment; or

15 “(ii) incumbent workers who need to
16 gain or improve foundational skills to en-
17 hance their employability;

18 “(B) use competency-based assessments to
19 award academic credit for prior learning for
20 programs supported by the grant, such as any
21 competency-based assessment developed and
22 identified by the State in which the eligible in-
23 stitution is located, in coordination with indus-
24 try organizations, employers (including small
25 and mid-sized employers), industry or sector

1 partnerships, training providers, local boards,
2 and institutions of higher education; and

3 “(C) have, or will seek to have, the career
4 education programs supported by the grant in-
5 cluded on the list of eligible providers of train-
6 ing services under section 122 for the State in
7 which the eligible institution is located.

8 “(e) USES OF FUNDS.—

9 “(1) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION AND INDUSTRY
10 PARTNERSHIP.—For the purpose of carrying out the
11 activities specified in paragraphs (2) and (3), an eli-
12 gible institution that receives a grant under this sec-
13 tion shall establish a partnership (or continue an ex-
14 isting partnership) with one or more employers in an
15 in-demand industry sector or occupation (in this sec-
16 tion referred to as an ‘eligible institution and indus-
17 try partnership’) and shall maintain such partner-
18 ship for the duration of the grant period. The eligi-
19 ble institution shall ensure that the partnership—

20 “(A) targets one or more specific high-
21 skill, high-wage, or in-demand industries;

22 “(B) includes collaboration with the work-
23 force development system;

1 “(C) serves adult and dislocated workers,
2 incumbent workers, and new entrants to the
3 workforce;

4 “(D) uses an evidence-based program de-
5 sign that is appropriate for the activities carried
6 out by the partnership;

7 “(E) incorporates work-based learning op-
8 portunities, as defined in section 3 of the Carl
9 D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act
10 of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302); and

11 “(F) incorporates, to the extent appro-
12 priate, virtual service delivery to facilitate tech-
13 nology-enabled learning.

14 “(2) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—An eligible insti-
15 tution that receives a grant under this section shall,
16 in consultation with the employers in the eligible in-
17 stitution and industry partnership described in para-
18 graph (1)—

19 “(A) establish, improve, or expand high
20 quality, evidence-based workforce development
21 programs, career pathway programs, or work-
22 based learning programs (including apprentice-
23 ship programs or preapprenticeships);

24 “(B) provide career services to individuals
25 participating in the programs funded with the

1 grant to facilitate retention and program com-
2 pletion, which may include—

3 “(i) career navigation, coaching,
4 mentorship, and case management serv-
5 ices, including providing information and
6 outreach to individuals with barriers to
7 employment to encourage such individuals
8 to participate in programs funded with the
9 grant; and

10 “(ii) providing access to course mate-
11 rials, technological devices, required equip-
12 ment, and other supports necessary for
13 participation in and successful completion
14 of such programs; and

15 “(C) make available, in a format that is
16 open, searchable, and easily comparable, infor-
17 mation on—

18 “(i) curricula and recognized postsec-
19 ondary credentials offered through pro-
20 grams funded with the grant, including
21 any curricula or credentials created or fur-
22 ther developed using such grant, which for
23 each recognized postsecondary credential,
24 shall include—

1 “(I) the issuing entity of such
2 credential;

3 “(II) any third-party endorse-
4 ments of such credential;

5 “(III) the occupations for which
6 the credential prepares individuals;

7 “(IV) the skills and competencies
8 necessary to achieve to earn such cre-
9 dential;

10 “(V) the level of mastery of such
11 skills and competencies (including how
12 mastery is assessed); and

13 “(VI) any transfer value or
14 stackability of the credential;

15 “(ii) any skills or competencies devel-
16 oped by individuals who participate in such
17 programs beyond the skills and com-
18 petencies identified as part of the recog-
19 nized postsecondary credential awarded;
20 and

21 “(iii) related employment and earn-
22 ings outcomes on the primary indicators of
23 performance described in subclauses (I)
24 through (III) of section 116(b)(2)(A)(i),

1 except that subclause (II) of such section
2 shall be applied by—

3 “(I) substituting ‘second’ for
4 ‘fourth’; and

5 “(II) as if ‘and remain in unsub-
6 sidized employment during the fourth
7 quarter after exit from the program’
8 were inserted after ‘the program’.

9 “(3) ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES.—In addition to
10 the activities required under paragraph (2), an eligi-
11 ble institution that receives a grant under this sec-
12 tion shall, in consultation with the employers in the
13 eligible institution and industry partnership de-
14 scribed in paragraph (1), carry out one or more of
15 the following activities:

16 “(A) Establish, improve, or expand—

17 “(i) articulation agreements (as de-
18 fined in section 486A(a) of the Higher
19 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
20 1093a(a)));

21 “(ii) credit transfer agreements;

22 “(iii) corequisite remediation pro-
23 grams that enable a student to receive re-
24 medial education services while enrolled in
25 a postsecondary course rather than requir-

1 ing the student to receive remedial edu-
2 cation before enrolling in a such a course;

3 “(iv) dual or concurrent enrollment
4 programs;

5 “(v) competency-based education and
6 assessment; or

7 “(vi) policies and processes to award
8 academic credit for prior learning or for
9 the programs described in paragraph
10 (2)(A).

11 “(B) Establish or implement plans for pro-
12 viders of the programs described in paragraph
13 (2)(A) to meet the criteria and carry out the
14 procedures necessary to be included on the eli-
15 gible training services provider list described in
16 section 122(d).

17 “(C) Purchase, lease, or refurbish special-
18 ized equipment as necessary to carry out such
19 programs, provided that not more than 15 per-
20 cent of the funds awarded to the eligible insti-
21 tution under this section may be used for activi-
22 ties described in this subparagraph.

23 “(D) Reduce or eliminate unmet financial
24 need relating to the cost of attendance (as de-
25 fined under section 472 of the Higher Edu-

1 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087ll)) of par-
2 ticipants in such programs.

3 “(4) ADMINISTRATIVE COST LIMIT.—An eligible
4 institution may use not more than 7 percent of the
5 funds awarded under this section for administrative
6 costs, including costs related to collecting informa-
7 tion, analysis, and coordination for purposes of sub-
8 section (f).

9 “(f) PERFORMANCE LEVELS AND PERFORMANCE
10 REVIEWS.—

11 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop
12 and implement guidance that establishes the levels
13 of performance that are expected to be achieved by
14 each eligible institution receiving a grant under this
15 section. Such performance levels shall be established
16 on the following indicators:

17 “(A) Each of the primary indicators of
18 performance for adults described in section
19 116(b), which shall be applied for all individuals
20 who participated in a program that received
21 funding from a grant under this section.

22 “(B) The extent to which the eligible insti-
23 tution built capacity by—

24 “(i) increasing the breadth and depth
25 of employer engagement and investment in

1 workforce development programs in the in-
2 demand industry sectors and occupations
3 targeted by the eligible institution and in-
4 dustry partnership established or main-
5 tained by the eligible institution under sub-
6 section (e)(1);

7 “(ii) designing or implementing new
8 and accelerated instructional techniques or
9 technologies, including the use of advanced
10 online and technology-enabled learning
11 (such as immersive technology); and

12 “(iii) increasing program and policy
13 alignment across systems and decreasing
14 duplicative services or service gaps.

15 “(C) With respect to individuals who par-
16 ticipated in a workforce development program
17 funded with the grant—

18 “(i) the percentage of participants
19 who successfully completed the program;
20 and

21 “(ii) of the participants who were in-
22 cumbent workers at the time of enrollment
23 in the program, the percentage who ad-
24 vanced into higher level positions during or
25 after completing the program.

1 “(2) CONSULTATION AND DETERMINATION OF
2 PERFORMANCE LEVELS.—

3 “(A) CONSIDERATION.—In developing per-
4 formance levels in accordance with paragraph
5 (1), the Secretary shall take into consideration
6 the goals of the eligible institution pursuant to
7 subsection (d)(2)(L).

8 “(B) DETERMINATION.—After completing
9 the consideration required under subparagraph
10 (A), the Secretary shall separately determine
11 the performance levels that will apply to each
12 eligible institution, taking into account—

13 “(i) the expected performance levels of
14 each eligible institution with respect to the
15 goals described by the eligible institution
16 pursuant to subsection (d)(2)(L); and

17 “(ii) local economic conditions in the
18 geographic area to be served by the eligible
19 institution, including differences in unem-
20 ployment rates and job losses or gains in
21 particular industries.

22 “(C) NOTICE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—

23 “(i) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall
24 provide each eligible institution with a
25 written notification that sets forth the per-

1 performance levels that will apply to the eligi-
2 ble institution, as determined under sub-
3 paragraph (B).

4 “(ii) ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—After re-
5 ceiving the notification described in clause
6 (i), each eligible institution shall submit to
7 the Secretary written confirmation that the
8 eligible institution—

9 “(I) received the notification; and

10 “(II) agrees to be evaluated in
11 accordance with the performance lev-
12 els determined by the Secretary.

13 “(3) PERFORMANCE REVIEWS.—On an annual
14 basis during each year of the grant period, the Sec-
15 retary shall evaluate the performance during such
16 year of each eligible institution receiving a grant
17 under this section in a manner consistent with the
18 performance levels determined for such institution
19 pursuant to paragraph (2).

20 “(4) FAILURE TO MEET PERFORMANCE LEV-
21 ELS.—After conducting an evaluation under para-
22 graph (3), if the Secretary determines that an eligi-
23 ble institution did not achieve the performance levels
24 applicable to the eligible institution under paragraph
25 (2), the Secretary shall—

1 “(A) provide technical assistance to the eli-
2 gible institution; and

3 “(B) develop a performance improvement
4 plan for the eligible institution.

5 “(g) EVALUATIONS AND REPORTS.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 4 years
7 after the date on which the first grant is made
8 under this section, the Secretary shall design and
9 conduct an evaluation to determine the overall effec-
10 tiveness of the eligible institutions receiving a grant
11 under this section.

12 “(2) ELEMENTS.—The evaluation of the effec-
13 tiveness of eligible institutions conducted under
14 paragraph (1) shall include an assessment of the
15 general effectiveness of programs and activities sup-
16 ported by the grants awarded to such eligible insti-
17 tutions under this section, including the extent to
18 which the programs and activities—

19 “(A) developed new, or expanded existing,
20 successful industry sector strategies, including
21 the extent to which such eligible institutions
22 deepened employer engagement and developed
23 workforce development programs that met in-
24 dustry skill needs;

1 “(B) created, expanded, or enhanced ca-
2 reer pathways, including the extent to which the
3 eligible institutions developed or improved com-
4 petency-based education and assessment, credit
5 for prior learning, modularized and self-paced
6 curricula, integrated education and workforce
7 development, dual enrollment in secondary and
8 postsecondary career pathways, stacked and
9 latticed credentials, and online and distance
10 learning;

11 “(C) created alignment between eligible in-
12 stitutions and the workforce development sys-
13 tem;

14 “(D) assisted individuals with finding, re-
15 taining, or advancing in employment;

16 “(E) assisted individuals with earning rec-
17 ognized postsecondary credentials; and

18 “(F) provided equal access to various de-
19 mographic groups, including people of different
20 geographic locations, ages, races, national ori-
21 gins, and sexes.

22 “(3) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—The evaluation
23 under this subsection shall—

24 “(A) be designed by the Secretary (acting
25 through the Chief Evaluation Officer) in con-

1 junction with the eligible institutions being eval-
2 uated;

3 “(B) include analysis of program partici-
4 pant feedback and outcome and process meas-
5 ures; and

6 “(C) use designs that employ the most rig-
7 orous analytical and statistical methods that
8 are reasonably feasible, such as the use of con-
9 trol groups.

10 “(4) DATA ACCESSIBILITY.—The Secretary
11 shall make available on a publicly accessible website
12 of the Department of Labor any data collected as
13 part of the evaluation under this subsection. Such
14 data shall be made available in an aggregated for-
15 mat that does not reveal personally identifiable in-
16 formation and that ensures compliance with relevant
17 Federal laws, including section 444 of the General
18 Education Provisions Act (commonly known as the
19 ‘Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of
20 1974’) (20 U.S.C. 1232g).

21 “(5) PUBLICATION AND REPORTING OF EVAL-
22 UATION FINDINGS.—The Secretary (acting through
23 the Chief Evaluation Officer) shall—

24 “(A) in accordance with the timeline deter-
25 mined to be appropriate by the Chief Evalua-

1 tion Officer, publish an interim report on the
2 preliminary results of the evaluation conducted
3 under this subsection;

4 “(B) not later than 60 days after the date
5 on which the evaluation is completed under this
6 subsection, submit to the Committee on Edu-
7 cation and the Workforce of the House of Rep-
8 resentatives and the Committee on Health,
9 Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate
10 a report on such evaluation; and

11 “(C) not later than 90 days after such
12 completion date, publish and make the results
13 of such evaluation available on a publicly acces-
14 sible website of the Department of Labor.

15 “(h) ANNUAL REPORTS.—The Secretary shall make
16 available on a publicly accessible website of the Depart-
17 ment of Labor, in transparent, linked, open, and inter-
18 operable data formats, the following information:

19 “(1) The performance of eligible institutions on
20 the capacity-building performance indicator set forth
21 under subsection (f)(1)(B).

22 “(2) The performance of eligible institutions on
23 the workforce development participant outcome per-
24 formance indicators set forth under subsection
25 (f)(1)(C).

1 “(3) The number of individuals enrolled in
2 workforce development programs funded with a
3 grant under this section.

4 “(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

5 “(1) COMMUNITY COLLEGE.—The term ‘com-
6 munity college’ means—

7 “(A) a public institution of higher edu-
8 cation (as defined in section 101(a) of the
9 Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)), at
10 which—

11 “(i) the highest degree awarded is an
12 associate degree; or

13 “(ii) an associate degree is the most
14 frequently awarded degree;

15 “(B) a branch campus of a 4-year public
16 institution of higher education (as defined in
17 section 101 of the Higher Education Act of
18 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)), if, at such branch
19 campus—

20 “(i) the highest degree awarded is an
21 associate degree; or

22 “(ii) an associate degree is the most
23 frequently awarded degree;

24 “(C) a 2-year Tribal College or University
25 (as defined in section 316(b)(3) of the Higher

1 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
2 1059c(b)(3))); or

3 “(D) a degree-granting Tribal College or
4 University (as defined in section 316(b)(3) of
5 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
6 1059c(b)(3))) at which—

7 “(i) the highest degree awarded is an
8 associate degree; or

9 “(ii) an associate degree is the most
10 frequently awarded degree.

11 “(2) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term ‘eligi-
12 ble institution’ means—

13 “(A) a community college;

14 “(B) a postsecondary vocational institution
15 (as defined in section 102(c) of the Higher
16 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c))); or

17 “(C) a consortium of such colleges or insti-
18 tutions.

19 “(j) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds made
20 available under this section shall be used to supplement,
21 and not supplant, other Federal, State, and local public
22 funds made available for carrying out the activities de-
23 scribed in this section.”.

