

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1633

To amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to codify a grant program to promote and assist in the reentry of ex-offenders into the workforce.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 26, 2025

Mr. SMUCKER (for himself and Mr. OWENS) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to codify a grant program to promote and assist in the reentry of ex-offenders into the workforce.

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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Workforce Reentry
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. EX-OFFENDERS REENTRY PROGRAM START-UP**
7 **GRANTS.**

8 Subtitle D of title I of the Workforce Innovation and
9 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3221 et seq.) is amended—

1 (1) by redesignating section 172 as section 173;

2 and

3 (2) by inserting after section 171 the following

4 new section:

5 **“SEC. 172. EX-OFFENDERS REENTRY PROGRAM START-UP**
6 **GRANTS.**

7 “(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to—

8 “(1) prompt innovation and improvement in the
9 reentry of ex-offenders into the workforce so that
10 successful initiatives can be continued and rep-
11 licated; and

12 “(2) allow for the dissemination of information
13 regarding best practices in preparing ex-offenders
14 for sustained participation in the workforce.

15 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 “(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
17 tity’ means—

18 “(A) a private nonprofit organization
19 under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue
20 Code of 1986, including a faith-based organiza-
21 tion;

22 “(B) a local board;

23 “(C) a State or local government;

24 “(D) an Indian or Native American entity
25 eligible for grants under section 166;

1 “(E) an employer or group of employers;

2 “(F) an institution of higher education;

3 “(G) an industry or sector partnership; or

4 “(H) a trade or professional association.

5 “(2) ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANT.—

6 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘eligible par-

7 ticipant’ means an individual—

8 “(i) who has been convicted as a juve-

9 nile or an adult and imprisoned under

10 Federal or State law; and

11 “(ii) who has not been released from

12 prison or jail for more than 2 years before

13 the date on which the individual begins

14 participation in an activity funded under

15 this section.

16 “(B) EXCEPTION.—Up to 10 percent of all

17 participants may be individuals who do not

18 meet the requirements of clause (ii) of subpara-

19 graph (A).

20 “(3) EVIDENCE-BASED.—The term ‘evidence-

21 based’ means a program or practice that—

22 “(A) is demonstrated effective when imple-

23 mented with fidelity;

24 “(B) is based on a clearly articulated and

25 empirically supported theory;

1 “(C) has measurable outcomes relevant to
2 workforce outcomes for reentering ex-offenders;
3 and

4 “(D) has been scientifically tested and
5 proven effective through randomized control
6 studies or comparison group studies.

7 “(4) PROMISING.—The term ‘promising’ refers
8 to a program or practice that—

9 “(A) is demonstrated to be effective based
10 on positive outcomes relevant to workforce en-
11 gagement for reentering ex-offenders from one
12 or more objective, independent, and scientif-
13 ically valid evaluation; and

14 “(B) includes ongoing efforts to examine
15 the effects of such program or practice.

16 “(c) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the activi-
18 ties under this section, the Secretary shall—

19 “(A) use not less than 30 percent of the
20 funds made available to carry out this section
21 under section 173(d), to implement pay-for-per-
22 formance contracts for a contract period of not
23 more than 4 years with eligible entities to carry
24 out projects to facilitate the reentry of ex-of-
25 fenders into the workforce (which may include

1 the activities described in subsection (f)(1)),
2 and which—

3 “(i) specify a fixed amount that the
4 Secretary will pay to the entity based on
5 the achievement of specified levels of per-
6 formance on each indicator of performance
7 described in subsection (g)(1) within a de-
8 fined timetable; and

9 “(ii) may provide for bonus payments
10 from the Secretary to such entity to ex-
11 pand capacity to provide effective services;
12 and

13 “(B) using any funds remaining to carry
14 out this section under section 173(d), award
15 grants, on a competitive basis, award grants for
16 a period of not more than 4 years to eligible en-
17 tities to enable such entities to provide skills de-
18 velopment opportunities, job placement services,
19 and mentoring to eligible participants.

20 “(2) PRIORITY.—In awarding contracts or
21 grants under this section, the Secretary shall give
22 priority to eligible entities that—

23 “(A) establish partnerships with business,
24 educational institutions, or eligible providers
25 identified by the State under section 122 to

1 provide a program of study leading to postsec-
2 ondary credentials in in-demand occupations; or

3 “(B) provide on-the-job training or cus-
4 tomized training that is designed to meet the
5 specific requirements of an employer (including
6 a group of employers) and is conducted with a
7 commitment by the employer to employ an indi-
8 vidual upon successful completion of the pro-
9 gram.

10 “(3) ADDITIONAL CONTRACTS OR GRANTS.—

11 The Secretary may award, for not longer than a pe-
12 riod of 4 years, one or more additional grants to an
13 eligible entity that received a grant or contract
14 under this section if the eligible entity achieved the
15 expected performance levels identified by the eligible
16 entity under subsection (d)(4) during the preceding
17 grant or contract period.

18 “(d) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a con-
19 tract or grant under this section, an eligible entity shall
20 submit an application to the Secretary, which shall include
21 each of the following:

22 “(1) A detailed description of the program in-
23 cluding the core services they will provide, how the
24 eligible entity will recruit and select eligible partici-
25 pants for the program, how many participants they

1 plan on serving each year, and the length of partici-
2 pation in the program.

3 “(2) A description of evidence-based or prom-
4 ising practices the eligible entity will use in the ad-
5 ministration of the program.

6 “(3) A description of partnerships with local
7 businesses to provide apprenticeship opportunities,
8 work-based learning, and job placement and recruit-
9 ment (if applicable).

10 “(4) The expected levels of performance the eli-
11 gible entity will achieve on the indicators of perform-
12 ance described in subsection (g)(1).

13 “(5) An assurance that the eligible entity will
14 coordinate activities with workforce development pro-
15 grams and other services provided under this title,
16 including utilizing the one-stop delivery system of
17 the local workforce development areas to provide ap-
18 propriate services and recruit eligible individuals to
19 ensure the maximum number of eligible individuals
20 will have the opportunity to participate in the pro-
21 gram.

22 “(6) In the case of a grant, an assurance that
23 the eligible entity will meet the matching require-
24 ment described in subsection (e).

1 “(7) A plan to coordinate with other programs
2 and entities, including those that may be provided
3 by such other programs and entities, to provide sub-
4 stance abuse treatment services, mental health treat-
5 ment services, housing services, and transportation
6 services.

7 “(8) An assurance that the eligible entity will
8 provide the data necessary for the indicators of per-
9 formance in subsection (g).

10 “(9) A plan to continue the program with non-
11 Federal funds after the grant or contract period.

12 “(e) MATCHING REQUIREMENT FOR GRANTS.—In
13 order to receive a grant from the Secretary under this sec-
14 tion, each eligible entity shall provide a non-Federal con-
15 tribution, including cash and in-kind donations, in the fol-
16 lowing amounts:

17 “(1) With respect to the award period of the
18 first grant awarded to such eligible entity under this
19 section, in an amount that is not less than 25 per-
20 cent of the total grant amount awarded to the eligi-
21 ble entity during such period.

22 “(2) With respect to any additional award peri-
23 ods, in an amount not less than 50 percent of the
24 total grant amount awarded to the eligible entity
25 during such additional period.

1 “(f) USE OF FUNDS FOR GRANTS.—

2 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A grant awarded under
3 this section may be used to—

4 “(A) provide workforce development and
5 job placement services to eligible participants,
6 including occupational skills education, on-the-
7 job training, apprenticeship opportunities, work
8 experience, job referrals, basic skills remedi-
9 ation, educational services, work readiness ac-
10 tivities, and post-placement support, in coordi-
11 nation with the one-stop partners and one-stop
12 operators that provide services at any center
13 operated under a one-stop deliver system estab-
14 lished under section 121;

15 “(B) mentor eligible participants, including
16 the provision of support, guidance, and assist-
17 ance in the community and the workplace to
18 address the challenges faced by ex-offenders;

19 “(C) provide outreach to State or Federal
20 correctional facilities to increase awareness,
21 identify and recruit eligible participants, provide
22 screening and assessment of eligible partici-
23 pants and align educational offerings with exist-
24 ing services available to individuals who are
25 presently incarcerated;

1 “(D) coordinate with employers to develop
2 on-the-job training or customized training pro-
3 grams and agreements around the hiring of eli-
4 gible participants; or

5 “(E) carrying out the activities described
6 in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), or (D) with re-
7 spect to eligible participants who will be re-
8 leased from prison or jail within 90 days.

9 “(2) LIMITATIONS.—

10 “(A) CERTAIN SERVICES EXCLUDED.—
11 Grants provided under this section may not be
12 used to provide substance abuse treatment serv-
13 ices, mental health treatment services, or hous-
14 ing services, except that such a grant may be
15 used to coordinate with other programs and en-
16 tities to provide substance abuse treatment
17 services, mental health treatment services, or
18 housing services to eligible participants.

19 “(B) ADMINISTRATIVE COST LIMIT.—A
20 grantee may not use more than 5 percent of the
21 funds received under a grant for administrative
22 costs, including for the purpose of collecting in-
23 formation for purposes of subsection (g)(1).

24 “(C) LIMIT ON AMOUNT PAID AS STIPENDS
25 TO PARTICIPANTS.—A grantee may not use

1 more than 15 percent of the funds received
2 under such grant to provide stipends to pro-
3 gram participants while completing an edu-
4 cational or skill development program.

5 “(D) LIMIT ON FUNDS FOR EMERGENCY
6 SITUATIONS.—A grantee may not use more
7 than 5 percent of the funds to assist eligible
8 participants in an emergency situation.

9 “(g) PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES AND ACCOUNT-
10 ABILITY.—

11 “(1) INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE.—Each eli-
12 gible entity receiving a grant or contract under this
13 section shall report each year to the Secretary on
14 the primary indicators of performance described in
15 section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) and an indicator established
16 by the Secretary with respect to participant recidi-
17 vism.

18 “(2) INDEPENDENT EVALUATION.—Not later
19 than 5 years after the date of enactment of this sec-
20 tion and from amounts made available under section
21 173(d) for this section, the Secretary shall submit to
22 Congress a report on an independent evaluation of
23 each grant and contract entered into under this sec-
24 tion, including an assessment of the effectiveness of

1 each such grant and contract in reducing recidivism
2 and assisting eligible participants in—

3 “(A) earning credentials;

4 “(B) finding and maintaining employment;

5 and

6 “(C) increasing their earnings.

7 “(3) REPORT.—The Secretary shall, on an an-
8 nual basis—

9 “(A) submit to the Committee on Edu-
10 cation and Workforce of the House of Rep-
11 resentatives, and the Committee on Health,
12 Employment, Labor, and Pensions of the Sen-
13 ate, a report, with respect to the preceding fis-
14 cal year, on—

15 “(i) the number of individuals who
16 participated in programs assisted under
17 this section;

18 “(ii) the percentage of individuals par-
19 ticipating in a program assisted under this
20 section that successfully completed the pro-
21 gram; and

22 “(iii) the performance of eligible enti-
23 ties as measured by the performance indi-
24 cators set forth in paragraph (1); and

1 “(B) publish such report on a publicly
2 available website of the Department of Labor.

3 “(4) DISSEMINATING BEST PRACTICES.—Using
4 the findings of the independent evaluation under
5 paragraph (2) the Secretary shall disseminate infor-
6 mation to State and local government, local boards,
7 and relevant stakeholders regarding best practices in
8 providing workforce development opportunities for
9 ex-offenders and reducing recidivism.

10 “(h) ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary
11 may use up to 2 percent of the funds annually appro-
12 priated to carry out the activities of this section, including
13 disseminating best practices and providing technical as-
14 sistance to eligible entities receiving grants or contracts
15 under this section and partnering businesses regarding the
16 availability of the work opportunity credit determined
17 under section 51(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

18 “(i) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
19 tion shall be construed to authorize any new appropria-
20 tions to carry out the purpose of this section.”.

21 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZED FUNDS.**

22 Section 173(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Op-
23 portunity Act (as redesignated by section 2(1)) is amended

1 by striking “section 169” and inserting “sections 169 and
2 172”.

