

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3681

To direct the Secretary of Labor to award grants to certain entities to establish workforce training programs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 3, 2025

Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. EDWARDS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Labor to award grants to certain entities to establish workforce training 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Leveraging Edu-
5 cational Opportunity Networks Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) About 60 percent of workers in the United
9 States do not hold a 4-year college degree. These al-
10 most 70,000,000 workers in the United States with-

1 out a bachelor's degree have gained marketable skills
2 through on-the-job training, boot camps, micro-
3 credentialing programs, community colleges, and
4 many other types of job training programs. Short-
5 term workforce training programs have been grow-
6 ing in demand. Polling data finds that people in the
7 United States are increasingly seeking education
8 programs that are relevant for work and suited to
9 their personal needs. Over the past 2 years, even as
10 community college enrollment has dropped, boot
11 camps, and online training programs are growing in
12 size and market share.

13 (2) Federal job training policy should focus on
14 making more funding available to support high-qual-
15 ity sectoral training programs, including wraparound
16 supports. Policymakers should prioritize options that
17 boosts Federal funding for cohort-based sectoral
18 training programs, including through the Workforce
19 Innovation and Opportunity Act. Complementary
20 models could include grant competitions that encour-
21 age cross-sector partnerships and support training
22 investments for high priority roles (e.g. the Depart-
23 ment of Commerce's Good Jobs Challenge).

24 (3) Further, the working poor are a pool of in-
25 visible talent and the source for a revitalized work-

1 force to fill high-demand jobs in manufacturing, en-
2 ergy, health, technology, and science sectors of the
3 economy. More than 32 percent of the United States
4 labor force, or 51.9 million workers, currently make
5 less than \$15 an hour and 1.1 million workers earn
6 wages at the prevailing Federal minimum wage
7 (\$7.25 an hour, or \$14,137 a year).

8 (4) Using United States Census Bureau data,
9 the Bureau of Labor Statistics determined that
10 6,300,000 workers were living at or below the offi-
11 cial poverty level in 2020, which represented 4.1 per-
12 cent of the total workforce (U.S. Department of
13 Labor, September 2022) and 25 percent of working
14 families can be considered working poor.

15 (5) The United States is experiencing a long-
16 term labor shortage, “The Demographic Drought”.
17 As the size of the United States working age popu-
18 lation shrinks, the country is experiencing record-low
19 rates of labor participation, and it has the lowest
20 birth rates in history.

21 (6) Economic growth is dependent on a reliable
22 supply of skilled and ready to work employees. The
23 economy is expected to add 12,000,000 jobs between
24 2020 and 2030. Science, technology, engineering,
25 and mathematics (“STEM”) occupations will experi-

1 ence the highest growth rates. Occupations in the
2 STEM field are expected to grow 8 percent by 2029,
3 compared with 3.7 percent for all other occupations.

4 (7) As of April 2023, there were 10,100,000 job
5 openings and only 5,700,000 people looking for work
6 (U.S. Department of Labor April 2023 Employment
7 Report).

8 (8) About 60 percent of workers do not have a
9 bachelor's degree, and about 45 percent of workers
10 have a bachelor's degree.

11 (9) More than 39 million people in the United
12 States have attended some college but earned no de-
13 gree.

14 (10) A 2015 evaluation by the Aspen Institute's
15 Economic Opportunities Program documented that
16 poor, unemployed, and under employed students who
17 earned an industry-recognized credential landed high
18 skill entry level positions and earned 18 percent
19 more in income than a similar group of people who
20 did not receive this type of training.

21 (11) African American men face a range of
22 challenges in the labor market which hinder their
23 employment opportunities. African American men
24 comprise about 13 percent of the male population,
25 but 35 percent of those incarcerated. One in 3 Afri-

1 can American men born today can expect to be in-
2 carcerated in his lifetime, compared to 1 in 6 Latino
3 men and 1 in 17 White men. African American
4 women are similarly affected where 1 in 18 African
5 American women born in 2001 are likely to be incar-
6 cerated sometime in her life, compared to 1 in 111
7 white women. The effect of these realities is dev-
8 astating and enduring, formerly incarcerated people
9 are unemployed at a rate of over 27 percent which
10 is higher than the total United States unemployment
11 rate during any historical period, including the
12 Great Depression.

13 (12) More must be done to break the cycle of
14 generational poverty and reduce racial, economic,
15 and social disparities in the United States.

16 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM.**

17 (a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Labor shall
19 award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible enti-
20 ties to develop and implement workforce training
21 programs.

22 (2) GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY.—To the max-
23 imum extent practicable, the Secretary shall ensure
24 geographical diversity in selecting eligible entities to
25 receive grants under subsection (a).

1 (b) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—An eligible entity is a con-
2 sortium of the following:

3 (1) An organization described in section
4 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26
5 U.S.C. 501(c)(3));

6 (2) A national training organization with dues
7 paying affiliated members in at least 10 States;

8 (3) An accredited institution, not including an
9 institution of higher education (as defined in section
10 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
11 U.S.C. 101)); or

12 (4) An institution that operates a post-sec-
13 ondary, career and technical network of accredited,
14 dues paying institutions.

15 (c) USES OF FUNDS.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that re-
17 ceives a grant under this Act shall use such grant
18 to—

19 (A) develop and implement a career and
20 technical education program as described in
21 subsection (d);

22 (B) offer a program to enrollees prior to
23 the participation of such enrollees in a work-
24 force training program that supports the enroll-

1 ees in transitioning to a learning environment,
2 which shall include—

3 (i) opportunities to foster camaraderie
4 among enrollees;

5 (ii) prepare enrollees for training suc-
6 cess;

7 (iii) tutoring and employment readi-
8 ness coaching; and

9 (iv) cognitive behavioral techniques to
10 support a change in the perception and
11 thinking of enrollees;

12 (C) provide—

13 (i) need-based stipends to enrollees in
14 a workforce training program to assist en-
15 rollees in completing training programs;

16 (ii) conflict resolution services and
17 regular check-ins on a monthly basis to an
18 employer that employs an enrollee who has
19 completed a workforce training program
20 offered by the eligible entity; and

21 (iii) supportive services to enrollees;

22 (D) partner with an employer that—

23 (i) pays a living wage;

24 (ii) provides avenues for career growth
25 and professional development to enrollees

1 who complete a program of an eligible enti-
2 ty that the employer partnered with; and

3 (iii) engages in the career training
4 process, including—

5 (I) serving on an industry advi-
6 sory group;

7 (II) assisting the eligible entity
8 with establishing a career and tech-
9 nical education program as described
10 in subsection (d);

11 (III) sponsoring internships; and

12 (IV) participating in mock inter-
13 view hiring sessions and hiring fairs;

14 (E) determine the qualifications and cre-
15 dentials required for employment by the em-
16 ployers identified in paragraph (4);

17 (F) assess and understand the demand of
18 employers for employees in the local areas in
19 which;

20 (G) identify employers that pay a living
21 wage in the local areas in which an eligible enti-
22 ty operates a career and technical education
23 program;

24 (H) identify employers and industry sec-
25 tors in which job growth is expected to occur;

1 (I) produce—

2 (i) an analysis of existing and emerg-
3 ing in-demand industry sectors and occu-
4 pations and the employment needs of em-
5 ployers in such industry sectors; and

6 (ii) an analysis of the knowledge and
7 skills needed to meet the employment
8 needs of the employers in the States in
9 which the entity operates a career and
10 technical education program; and

11 (J) implement strategies to recruit individ-
12 uals into the workforce training program and
13 assess prospective enrollees.

14 (2) REQUIRED ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—An el-
15 igible entity that receives a grant under this Act
16 shall use at least 70 percent of such grant for the
17 uses of funds described in subparagraphs (A) and
18 (C)(i).

19 (d) CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PRO-
20 GRAM.—A career and technical education program devel-
21 oped and implemented under this Act shall—

22 (1) be developed to meet the in-demand needs
23 of employers in the local area in which such program
24 is being implemented;

25 (2) pay enrollees a living wage;

1 (3) be at least 12 weeks in duration;

2 (4) upon an enrollee completing such a pro-
3 gram, result in the enrollee earning a recognized
4 post-secondary credential;

5 (5) operate in at least 10 States;

6 (6) prioritize enrollees who read at no higher
7 than the 6th grade reading level; and

8 (7) ensure that at least 50 percent of the indi-
9 viduals enrolled the program are—

10 (A) offenders (as defined in section 3(38)
11 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity
12 Act (29 U.S.C. 3102(3)(38)));

13 (B) low-income and economically isolated
14 individuals (including individuals who are from
15 rural, urban, and historically disadvantaged
16 communities); and

17 (C) from populations that have been un-
18 derserved or adversely affected by persistent
19 poverty or inequality.

20 (e) APPLICATION.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a
22 grant under this Act, an eligible entity shall submit
23 an application at such time, in such manner, and
24 containing such information as the Secretary may
25 require.

1 (2) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize
2 eligible entities that propose to carry out a work-
3 force training program in the following industries:

4 (A) Construction.

5 (B) Disaster relief and recovery services.

6 (C) Industrial manufacturing.

7 (D) Food manufacturing.

8 (E) Supply chain management and serv-
9 ices.

10 (F) Information technology.

11 (G) Financial services.

12 (H) Ship building and other defense-re-
13 lated industries.

14 (I) Health care.

15 (f) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after and eligible
16 entity receives a grant under this Act, and on an annual
17 basis thereafter, each eligible entity shall submit to the
18 Secretary of Labor a report on the following:

19 (1) The earnings of each enrollee—

20 (A) prior to entering into a career and
21 technical education program operated by such
22 eligible entity; and

23 (B) 6 months after completing such pro-
24 gram.

1 (2) The percentage of program participants who
2 are in unsubsidized employment—

3 (A) after 30 days and prior to 90 days
4 after exit from such program; and

5 (B) after 280 days and prior to 365 days
6 after exit from such program;

7 (3) The starting wages of the program partici-
8 pants described in paragraph (2)(A); and

9 (4) The percentage of program participants who
10 obtain a recognized postsecondary credential during
11 participation in, or within 1 year after exit from, the
12 program.

13 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

14 (1) CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.—The
15 term “career and technical education” has the
16 meaning given the term in section 3(5) of the Carl
17 D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of
18 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302).

19 (2) LIVING WAGE.—The term “living wage”
20 means a wage that one full-time worker earns that
21 covers the cost of the minimum basic needs of the
22 worker and the family of the worker for the area in
23 which such worker lives.

24 (3) SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.—The term “sup-
25 portive services” means services such as transpor-

1 tation, child care, dependent care, housing, and
2 needs-related payments, that are necessary to enable
3 an individual to participate in a career and technical
4 education program carried out under this Act.

5 (4) WIOA TERMS.—The terms “local area” and
6 “recognized postsecondary credential” have the
7 meanings given the terms in section 3 of the Work-
8 force Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
9 3102).

10 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

11 To carry out this Act, there is authorized to be appro-
12 priated \$30,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2026
13 through 2029.

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