

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 52

To establish a career pathway grant program.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 26, 2021

Ms. HASSAN (for herself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KAINE, and Ms. COLLINS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To establish a career pathway grant program.

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 “Gateway to Careers
5 Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. CAREER PATHWAYS GRANT PROGRAM.**

7 Title VIII of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
8 U.S.C. 1161a et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
9 the following:

1 **“PART BB—CAREER PATHWAY GRANT PROGRAM**

2 **“SEC. 899. CAREER PATHWAY GRANT PROGRAM.**

3 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 “(1) WIOA DEFINITIONS.—The terms ‘area ca-
5 reer and technical education school’, ‘career path-
6 way’, ‘in-demand industry sector or occupation’, ‘in-
7 dividual with a barrier to employment’, ‘industry or
8 sector partnership’, ‘integrated education and train-
9 ing’, ‘local board’, ‘recognized postsecondary creden-
10 tial’, and ‘State board’ have the meanings given such
11 terms in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and
12 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

13 “(2) CAREER PATHWAY PARTNERSHIP.—

14 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘career
15 pathway partnership’ means a partnership—

16 “(i) between an eligible institution, a
17 workforce development partner described
18 in subparagraph (B), and an education
19 partner described in subparagraph (C);

20 “(ii) evidenced by a formal agreement
21 between partners; and

22 “(iii) that is intended to support the
23 development and implementation of a ca-
24 reer pathway program.

25 “(B) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PART-
26 NER.—A workforce development partner de-

scribed in subparagraph (A) means one or more
of the following:

“(i) A local board or a State board.

“(ii) An industry association or other
representative of multiple employers in the
target industry, including an industry or
sector partnership.

“(iii) A community-based organization
with experience in providing employment,
education, or support services relevant to
the career pathway and student popu-
lations receiving services under the grant
under this section.

“(C) EDUCATION PARTNER.—An education
partner described in subparagraph (A) means
one or more of the following:

“(i) A local educational agency, as de-
fined under section 8101 of the Elemen-
tary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
(20 U.S.C. 7801).

“(ii) An eligible provider, as defined
under section 203 of the Workforce Inno-
vation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
3272).

1 “(iii) An institution of higher edu-
 2 cation, as defined in section 101, or a post-
 3 secondary vocational institution, as defined
 4 in section 102(c).

5 “(3) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term ‘eligi-
 6 ble institution’ means—

7 “(A) a public institution of higher edu-
 8 cation at which the highest degree that is pre-
 9 dominantly awarded to students is an associ-
 10 ate’s degree, including 2-year Tribal Colleges or
 11 Universities under section 316 of the Higher
 12 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c) and
 13 public 2-year State institutions of higher edu-
 14 cation;

15 “(B) an area career and technical edu-
 16 cation school that provides education at the
 17 postsecondary level; or

18 “(C) a consortium of institutions described
 19 in subparagraph (A) or (B).

20 “(4) EVIDENCE-BASED.—The term ‘evidence-
 21 based’ means an activity, strategy, or intervention
 22 that—

23 “(A) demonstrates a statistically signifi-
 24 cant effect on improving student outcomes or
 25 other relevant outcomes based on—

1 “(i) strong evidence from not less
 2 than 1 well-designed and well-implemented
 3 experimental study;

4 “(ii) moderate evidence from not less
 5 than 1 well-designed and well-implemented
 6 quasi-experimental study; or

7 “(iii) promising evidence from not less
 8 than 1 well-designed and well-implemented
 9 correlational study with statistical controls
 10 for selection bias;

11 “(B) demonstrates a rationale based on
 12 high quality research finding or positive evalua-
 13 tion that such activity, strategy, or intervention
 14 is likely to improve student outcomes or other
 15 relevant outcomes; and

16 “(C) includes ongoing efforts to examine
 17 the effects of such activity, strategy, or inter-
 18 vention.

19 “(5) MEASURABLE SKILL GAINS.—The term
 20 ‘measurable skill gains’ has the meaning given the
 21 term in section 361.155(a)(1)(v) of title 34, Code of
 22 Federal Regulations (or successor regulations).

23 “(6) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means
 24 the Secretary of Education.

1 “(b) PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.—The Secretary, in
2 consultation with the Secretary of Labor, shall establish
3 a career pathway grant program, through which the Sec-
4 retary shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligi-
5 ble institutions in order to enable eligible institutions to
6 carry out the activities described in subsection (e).

7 “(c) APPLICATION.—An eligible institution desiring
8 to receive a grant under this section shall submit an appli-
9 cation, at such time and in such manner as the Secretary
10 may require, that includes the following information:

11 “(1) A description of the career pathway part-
12 nership, including the roles and responsibilities of
13 each partner.

14 “(2) A description of the career pathway pro-
15 gram that will be supported under the grant, includ-
16 ing a description of the in-demand industry sectors
17 or occupations that will be targeted and the recog-
18 nized postsecondary credentials to be awarded.

19 “(3) A description of how the career pathway
20 program supported under the grant are aligned and
21 coordinated with other employment, education, and
22 support services offered in the geographic area
23 served under the grant.

24 “(4) A description of the student populations
25 that will be served under the grant, including an

1 analysis of any barriers to postsecondary access and
2 completion that such populations face, and an anal-
3 ysis of how the services to be provided under the
4 grant will address those barriers.

5 “(5) A description of the activities and services
6 to be provided under this grant, consistent with the
7 subsection (e).

8 “(6) A description of the performance outcomes
9 that the eligible institution plans to achieve, includ-
10 ing a description of how the eligible institution will
11 evaluate and measure student progress and measur-
12 able skill gains along a career pathway.

13 “(7) Such other information as the Secretary
14 may require.

15 “(d) PRIORITY IN AWARDING GRANTS.—The Sec-
16 retary shall award grants under this part in a manner
17 that—

18 “(1) supports geographic diversity among
19 grantees;

20 “(2) gives priority to eligible institutions that
21 seek to serve individuals with a barrier to employ-
22 ment or individuals with a barrier to postsecondary
23 education; and

24 “(3) gives priority to eligible institutions that
25 will use grant funds for evidence-based activities.

1 “(e) USE OF FUNDS.—

2 “(1) DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING CAREER
3 PATHWAY PROGRAMS.—An eligible institution receiv-
4 ing a grant under this section shall use grant funds
5 to carry out activities that support the development
6 and implementation of career pathway programs,
7 which shall include one or more of the following:

8 “(A) The planning and implementation of
9 agreements between the eligible institution and
10 other partners in the career pathway partner-
11 ship to support seamless transitions between
12 elements of the career pathway program offered
13 by different partners, as appropriate.

14 “(B) The development and expansion of
15 new or existing programs at the eligible institu-
16 tion that utilize integrated education and train-
17 ing strategies, and support multiple entry and
18 exit points for working learners, which may in-
19 clude—

20 “(i) dual-enrollment approaches for
21 secondary students or disconnected youth
22 seeking to participate in a career pathway
23 program; and

24 “(ii) strategies that help working stu-
25 dents and other nontraditional and adult

1 student populations access skills and recog-
2 nized postsecondary credentials.

3 “(C) The provision of evidence-based pro-
4 fessional development for faculty and other
5 staff at the eligible institution or at partner or-
6 ganizations described under subparagraph (B)
7 or (C) of subsection (a)(2) on the development
8 and implementation of career pathways.

9 “(D) The acquisition of equipment nec-
10 essary to support the delivery of career pathway
11 programs supported through a grant under this
12 section.

13 “(E) Any other evidence-based activities
14 identified by the eligible institution or partners
15 as necessary to support the development or im-
16 plementation of career pathway programs, as
17 long as such activities are clearly outlined in
18 the grant application.

19 “(2) STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES.—In addi-
20 tion to the activities described in paragraph (1), an
21 eligible institution receiving a grant under this sec-
22 tion shall use grant funds to provide student support
23 services to students engaged in career pathway pro-
24 grams, which shall include—

1 “(A) the provision of direct support serv-
2 ices such as childcare, transportation, mental
3 health and substance use disorder treatment,
4 assistance in obtaining health insurance cov-
5 erage, and assistance in accessing the supple-
6 mental nutrition assistance program established
7 under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7
8 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), the special supplemental
9 nutrition program for women, infants, and chil-
10 dren established by section 17 of the Child Nu-
11 trition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786), housing,
12 and other benefits, as appropriate;

13 “(B) offering career pathway navigation
14 and case management services, including pro-
15 viding information and outreach to target popu-
16 lations to encourage individuals to take part in
17 programs and service offerings; and

18 “(C) the provision of emergency grants to
19 help students facing financial hardships that
20 may impact enrollment or completion of an ele-
21 ment of a career pathway program.

22 “(f) DURATION OF AWARD.—A grant under this sec-
23 tion shall be for a period of not more than 4 years. An
24 eligible institution may apply for subsequent grants after
25 the completion of a grant period.

1 “(g) REPORTS.—

2 “(1) REPORT TO THE SECRETARY.—Each eligi-
3 ble institution receiving a grant under this section
4 shall submit a report to the Secretary, on an annual
5 basis, describing—

6 “(A) the activities provided under the
7 grant, including activities carried out directly
8 by the eligible institution and activities carried
9 out by partner organizations;

10 “(B) the students receiving services under
11 the grant, disaggregated by age, race or eth-
12 nicity, gender, barriers to employment, and in-
13 come; and

14 “(C) indicators of performance for stu-
15 dents receiving services through a career path-
16 way program carried out through a grant under
17 this part, disaggregated by participant type as
18 described in paragraph (2), including, at a min-
19 imum—

20 “(i) the percentage of program par-
21 ticipants who are in unsubsidized employ-
22 ment prior to enrollment in the career
23 pathway program;

24 “(ii) the percentage of program par-
25 ticipants who are in unsubsidized employ-

1 ment during the second quarter after exit
2 from the program;

3 “(iii) the percentage of program par-
4 ticipants who are in unsubsidized employ-
5 ment during the fourth quarter after exit
6 from the program;

7 “(iv) the median earnings of program
8 participants who are in unsubsidized em-
9 ployment prior to enrollment in the career
10 pathway program;

11 “(v) the median earnings of program
12 participants who are in unsubsidized em-
13 ployment during the second quarter after
14 exit from the program;

15 “(vi) the percentage of program par-
16 ticipants who obtain a recognized postsec-
17 ondary credential, or a secondary school di-
18 ploma or its recognized equivalent, during
19 participation in or within 1 year after exit
20 from the program;

21 “(vii) the percentage of program par-
22 ticipants who, during a program year, are
23 in an education or training program that
24 leads to a recognized postsecondary cre-
25 dential or employment and who are achiev-

1 ing measurable skill gains toward such a
2 credential or employment; and

3 “(viii) the percentage of program par-
4 ticipants receiving support services, disag-
5 gregated by type of service.

6 “(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary
7 shall submit a report to Congress, on a biennial
8 basis, containing a summary of the information de-
9 scribed in paragraph (1).

10 “(h) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall reserve not
11 less than 1 percent and not more than 3 percent of the
12 funds made available under subsection (i) for each fiscal
13 year to—

14 “(1) conduct a rigorous, independent evaluation
15 of the activities funded under this section; and

16 “(2) disseminate and promote the utilization of
17 evidence-based practices related to career pathway
18 programs for postsecondary students.

19 “(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
20 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the activi-
21 ties described in this section, such sums as may be nec-
22 essary for fiscal year 2022 and for each subsequent fiscal
23 year thereafter.”.

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