

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 10312

To authorize workforce development innovation grants for the implementation, expansion, and evaluation of evidence-based workforce programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 5, 2024

Ms. SHERRILL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To authorize workforce development innovation grants for the implementation, expansion, and evaluation of evidence-based workforce programs, and for other purposes.

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 “Better Jobs through
5 Evidence and Innovation Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. EVALUATIONS AND RESEARCH.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 169 of the Workforce In-
8 novation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3224) is amend-
9 ed—

1 (1) by redesignating subsection (c) as sub-
2 section (d);

3 (2) by inserting after subsection (b) the fol-
4 lowing:

5 “(c) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INNOVATION
6 FUND.—

7 “(1) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

8 “(A) IN GENERAL.—From the amount
9 made available pursuant to section
10 132(a)(2)(A) for any program year to carry out
11 this subsection, the Secretary may, on a com-
12 petitive basis and in accordance with subpara-
13 graph (B), award workforce development inno-
14 vation grants described in subparagraph (C) to
15 eligible entities to enable such entities to—

16 “(i) establish, implement, replicate, or
17 take to scale evidence-based, field-initiated
18 innovation programs or services for im-
19 proving the design and delivery of employ-
20 ment and training services that generate
21 demonstrated long-term improvements in—

22 “(I) the performance or impact
23 of the workforce development system;

24 “(II) earnings and employment
25 outcomes for jobseekers (including in-

dividuals with barriers to employment) and earnings for employers; and

“(III) the cost-effectiveness of such innovation programs or services, particularly for participants and communities not sufficiently served by existing models such as participants and communities in rural areas; and

“(ii) rigorously evaluate, through a partnership with a third-party research organization or a third-party researcher, such innovation programs or services for effectiveness in achieving any demonstrated long-term improvements in an outcome described in subclause (I), (II), or (III) of clause (i).

“(B) GRANT AWARDS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary—

“(I) shall award grants under subparagraph (A) on the basis of potential achievements of the innovation program or service proposed by the eligible entity with respect to demonstrated, long-term improvements in

1 an outcome described in subclause (I),
2 (II), or (III) of subparagraph (A)(i);
3 and

4 “(II) may award under subpara-
5 graph (A) different types of grants
6 described under subparagraph (C) to
7 an eligible entity for separate innova-
8 tion programs or services that meet
9 the relevant criteria for such different
10 types of grants.

11 “(ii) DURATION OF AWARD.—A grant
12 awarded under subparagraph (A) shall be
13 awarded for a period determined appro-
14 priate by the Secretary.

15 “(C) DESCRIPTION OF GRANTS.—The
16 grants described in subparagraph (A) shall, to
17 the extent feasible, include—

18 “(i) early-phase grants for an innova-
19 tion program or service supported by any
20 level of evidence described in clause (i),
21 (ii), or (iii) of subparagraph (D), for the
22 purposes of funding the development, im-
23 plementation, and evaluation of such pro-
24 gram or service;

1 “(ii) mid-phase grants for an innova-
2 tion program or service supported by a
3 moderate level of evidence or a high level
4 of evidence (as described in clause (ii) or
5 (iii) of subparagraph (D), respectively) for
6 the purposes of funding the operation, ex-
7 pansion, and continued evaluation of such
8 innovation program or service at a single
9 site; and

10 “(iii) expansion grants for an innova-
11 tion program or service supported by a
12 high level of evidence, as described in sub-
13 paragraph (D)(iii), for the purposes of—

14 “(I) funding the operation of
15 such innovation program or service at
16 a single site;

17 “(II) expansion or such innova-
18 tion program or service to another
19 site; and

20 “(III) implementation of a multi-
21 site evaluation of such innovation pro-
22 gram or service.

23 “(D) LEVEL OF EVIDENCE STANDARDS.—

24 The levels of evidence described in this subpara-
25 graph are the following:

1 “(i) LOW LEVEL OF EVIDENCE.—An
2 innovation program or service is supported
3 by a low level of evidence if such program
4 or service has demonstrated, through a
5 reasonable hypothesis and credible research
6 findings (such as a correlational study with
7 statistical controls for selection bias), de-
8 scriptive research (such as a case study),
9 or evidence review and needs assessment,
10 the—

11 “(I) ability to achieve positive ef-
12 fects on earnings and employment
13 outcomes for jobseekers (including in-
14 dividuals with barriers to employ-
15 ment) and earnings for employers; or
16 “(II) potential to achieve such ef-
17 fect on such outcomes.

18 “(ii) MODERATE LEVEL OF EVI-
19 DENCE.—An innovation program or service
20 is supported by a moderate level of evi-
21 dence if such program or service has dem-
22 onstrated the ability to achieve sizable, but
23 not yet conclusive, positive effects on earn-
24 ings and employment outcomes for job-
25 seekers (including individuals with barriers

to employment) and earnings for employers, through—

“(I) a well-designed and well-implemented experimental study of such program or service, such as a randomized controlled trial; or

“(II) a rigorous quasi-experimental study of such program or service capable of drawing causal conclusions about the effectiveness of such program or service.

“(iii) HIGH LEVEL OF EVIDENCE.—

An innovation program or service is supported by a high level of evidence if such program or service has demonstrated, through replication of studies, the ability to achieve a substantial and statistically significant, positive impact on earnings and employment outcomes for jobseekers (including individuals with barriers to employment) and earnings for employers, through 2 or more well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies of such program or service conducted—

1 “(I) at different implementation
2 sites; or

3 “(II) through large, multi-site,
4 randomized controlled trials.

5 “(2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND EVALUATION
6 RESEARCH.—Of the funds made available to carry
7 out this subsection for a fiscal year, the Secretary
8 shall reserve not more than 10 percent of the funds
9 to—

10 “(A) provide technical assistance to eligible
11 entities, which may include preapplication work-
12 shops, web-based seminars, support for con-
13 ducting feasibility studies and other planning
14 activities, assistance with methods and require-
15 ments for purposes of evaluation research under
16 subparagraph (D), and support for improving
17 grant implementation and the quality and effec-
18 tiveness of activities and services funded by
19 grants awarded under subparagraph (A), in-
20 cluding the use of administrative data and in-
21 formation to improve outcomes for participants;

22 “(B) disseminate information on low-,
23 moderate-, and high-evidence-based practices;

24 “(C) fund staffing and other costs related
25 to such activities; and

1 “(D) conduct evaluation research regard-
2 ing activities or services funded by grants
3 awarded under subparagraph (A).

4 “(3) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

5 “(A) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligi-
6 ble entity’ means an entity that is any of the
7 following:

8 “(i) A State workforce development
9 board established under section 101 (29
10 U.S.C. 3111).

11 “(ii) A local workforce development
12 board established under section 107 (29
13 U.S.C. 3122).

14 “(iii) An Indian tribe, tribal organiza-
15 tion, Alaska Native entity, Indian-con-
16 trolled organization serving Indians, or Na-
17 tive Hawaiian organization that is eligible
18 to receive an award under section 166 (29
19 U.S.C. 3221).

20 “(iv) An institution of higher edu-
21 cation (as defined in section 101 of the
22 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
23 1001)).

24 “(v) A State workforce agency.

25 “(vi) An organization—

1 “(I) that—

2 “(aa) is a community-based
3 organization, a nonprofit organi-
4 zation, or a nongovernment orga-
5 nization; and

6 “(bb) serves an underserved
7 population; or

8 “(II) that is a national or re-
9 gional organization that intends to
10 use funds awarded under this Act to
11 make direct grants to an organization
12 described in subclause (I).

13 “(vii) A consortium of any entities de-
14 scribed in clause (i) through (vi).

15 “(B) FIELD-INITIATED.—The term ‘field-
16 initiated’, with respect to a program or service,
17 means a program or service in which the ele-
18 ments of the program or service have been de-
19 veloped by practitioners or researchers in the
20 policy area.

21 “(C) INNOVATION PROGRAM OR SERV-
22 ICE.—The term ‘innovation program or service’
23 means a program or service designed to dem-
24 onstrate innovative and cost-effective ways to

1 augment and improve employment and training
2 services.

3 “(D) WELL-DESIGNED AND WELL-IMPLE-
4 MENTED EXPERIMENTAL STUDY.—The term
5 ‘well-designed and well-implemented experi-
6 mental study’ means a study that—

7 “(i) is replicable;

8 “(ii) uses programmatic and control
9 groups that are representative of the type
10 of population served by the program or
11 service that is subject to the study, includ-
12 ing by avoiding over-selection of partici-
13 pants who are highly skilled prior to par-
14 ticipation for such programmatic group;

15 “(iii) uses controls for aggregate
16 shifts that might affect baseline numbers;

17 “(iv) does not have problems with at-
18 trition of participants from the study; and

19 “(v) is conducted in a manner that is
20 consistent with applicable evaluation, data,
21 and privacy standards and practices de-
22 scribed in—

23 “(I) the guidelines of the Office
24 of Management and Budget entitled
25 ‘Guidelines for Ensuring and Maxi-

1 mizing the Quality, Objectivity, Util-
2 ity, and Integrity of Information Dis-
3 seminated by Federal Agencies’ (67
4 Fed. Reg. 8452 (February 22, 2002))
5 (or successor guidelines); and
6 “(II) the Foundations for Evi-
7 dence-Based Policymaking Act of
8 2018 (Public Law 115–435; 132 Stat.
9 5529) and the amendments made by
10 that Act.”.

11 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section
12 132(a)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Oppor-
13 tunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3172(a)(2)(A)) is amended by strik-
14 ing “169(c) (relating to dislocated worker projects),” and
15 inserting “169(c) (relating to the workforce development
16 innovation fund), 169(d) (relating to dislocated worker
17 projects), and”.

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