

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 3518

To authorize the Secretary of Labor, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to make grants to eligible entities to assist certain individuals in reentering a secondary school or a high school equivalency program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 14, 2023

Mr. BOOKER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Labor, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to make grants to eligible entities to assist certain individuals in reentering a secondary school or a high school equivalency program, 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 “Reengage the Work-
5 force Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUT REENGAGEMENT**
2 **GRANT PROGRAM.**

3 (a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—From the amounts made
4 available to carry out this section, the Secretary of Labor,
5 in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall
6 make grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities
7 to carry out in-person or virtual programs to provide eligi-
8 ble secondary school dropouts each of the services de-
9 scribed in subsection (b).

10 (b) USES OF FUNDS.—A program funded with a
11 grant under this section shall provide each of the following
12 services to eligible secondary school dropouts:

13 (1) Assistance in reentering a secondary school
14 or entering an in-person or virtual high school
15 equivalency program.

16 (2) Flexible secondary school credit recovery to
17 accelerate the time to receipt of a high school di-
18 ploma, which may include waiving seat time barriers,
19 allowing virtual credit recovery programming, pro-
20 viding prior learning assessments, accepting alter-
21 native credits from internships, community service,
22 or independent study, or providing assessment tests
23 (or pre-employment tests) or GED ready tests (or
24 high school equivalency program tests).

25 (3) Life and career workshops, including—

26 (A) career planning and career exploration;

1 (B) assistance in enrolling in a program of
2 training or education at an institution of higher
3 education that leads to a recognized postsec-
4 ondary credential;

5 (C) résumé support services;

6 (D) interview assistance; and

7 (E) work-based learning such as registered
8 apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, practi-
9 cums, internships, and on-the-job training.

10 (4) Supportive services, such as transportation,
11 child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-re-
12 lated payments, that are necessary to enable an indi-
13 vidual to participate in activities described in para-
14 graphs (1) through (3).

15 (c) APPLICATION.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—To receive a grant under
17 this section, an eligible entity shall submit to the
18 Secretary an application at such time, in such man-
19 ner, and containing such information as the Sec-
20 retary may require.

21 (2) CONTENTS.—An application under para-
22 graph (1) shall include—

23 (A) a description of the program that will
24 be funded under the grant; and

1 (B) in the case of an application that sup-
2 ports an existing program (as of the date of ap-
3 plication), the number of individuals who are
4 enrolled in the program as of such date, in the
5 aggregate and disaggregated by race, gender,
6 age, and disability status.

7 (d) PREFERENCE.—In awarding grants under sub-
8 section (a), the Secretary shall give preference to eligible
9 entities that will use the grant to carry out programs de-
10 scribed subsection (b)—

11 (1) in low-income communities; or

12 (2) that will implement evidence-based prac-
13 tices, as determined by the Secretary, in providing
14 the services offered through the programs.

15 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
16 on which the first grant is awarded under subsection (a)
17 and annually thereafter for 10 years, the Secretary shall
18 submit to Congress a report on the implementation of this
19 section, which shall include the following:

20 (1) The percentage of the grant funds awarded
21 during the most recent fiscal year, which are used
22 to improve the education of eligible secondary school
23 dropouts and prepare such individuals for the work-
24 force.

1 (2) The percentage of the grant funds awarded
2 during the most recent fiscal year, which are used
3 to provide the supportive services described in sub-
4 section (b)(4) to eligible secondary school dropouts.

5 (3) The number and types of programs funded
6 under this section in the most recent academic year.

7 (4) (A) For each milestone described in sub-
8 paragraph (B), the number of individuals who, dur-
9 ing the period beginning on the date on which such
10 first grant is awarded and ending on the last day of
11 the most recent full academic year, met the mile-
12 stone, in the aggregate and disaggregated by pro-
13 gram and by race, gender, age, and disability status
14 of the individuals.

15 (B) The milestones described in this subpara-
16 graph are the following:

17 (i) Enrolled in a program funded under
18 this section.

19 (ii) Enrolled in, and completed, a program
20 funded under this section.

21 (iii) After enrollment in a program funded
22 under this section, enrolled in a program of
23 training or education at an institution of higher
24 education that leads to a recognized postsec-
25 ondary credential.

1 (iv) After completion of a program funded
 2 under this section, obtained employment in a
 3 relevant field.

4 (5) Any additional data needed to determine
 5 the impact of programs funded under this section on
 6 workforce readiness, as determined by the Secretary.

7 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 (1) ESEA TERMS.—The terms “high school”,
 9 “local educational agency”, and “secondary school”
 10 have the meanings given such terms in section 8101
 11 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of
 12 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

13 (2) WIOA TERMS.—The terms “career plan-
 14 ning”, “community-based organization”, “local
 15 board”, “poverty line”, “recognized postsecondary
 16 credential”, “State board”, and “unit of general
 17 local government” have the meanings given the
 18 terms in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and
 19 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

20 (3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
 21 ty” means a partnership between or among—

22 (A)(i) a local educational agency;

23 (ii) a unit of general local government;

1 (iii) a nonprofit intermediary (such as a
 2 local educational agency or other educational
 3 organization); or

4 (iv) a consortium of any of the entities de-
 5 scribed in clauses (i) through (iii); and

6 (B) one or more of the following:

7 (i) A community-based organization.

8 (ii) An institution of higher education.

9 (iii) A local board or State board.

10 (4) ELIGIBLE SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUT.—

11 The term “eligible secondary school dropout” means
 12 an individual who is—

13 (A) not younger than 16 years of age; and

14 (B) not enrolled in a secondary school or
 15 high school equivalency program.

16 (5) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The

17 term “institution of higher education” has the

18 meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher

19 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

20 (6) LOW-INCOME COMMUNITY.—The term “low-

21 income community” means any census block group

22 in which 30 percent or more of the population are

23 individuals with an annual household equal to, or

24 less than, the greater of—

1 (A) an amount equal to 80 percent of the
 2 median income of the area in which the house-
 3 hold is located, as reported by the Department
 4 of Housing and Urban Development; and

5 (B) an amount equal to 200 percent of the
 6 poverty line.

7 (7) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP.—The term
 8 “registered apprenticeship” means an apprenticeship
 9 registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (com-
 10 monly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”);
 11 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

12 (8) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
 13 the Secretary of Labor.

14 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry
 15 out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated
 16 \$5,520,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2034.

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