

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3681

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

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## 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

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## 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-

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

(i) opportunities to foster camaraderie  
among enrollees;

(ii) prepare enrollees for training suc-  
cess;

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

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

(C) provide—

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

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

(iii) supportive services to enrollees;

(D) partner with an employer that—

(i) pays a living wage;

(ii) provides avenues for career growth  
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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