

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 531

To assist States in, and pay for the Federal share of the cost of, defraying the cost of pre-apprenticeships or related instruction associated with qualified apprenticeship programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 11, 2025

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself 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 assist States in, and pay for the Federal share of the cost of, defraying the cost of pre-apprenticeships or related instruction associated with qualified apprenticeship 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 “American Apprentice-
5 ship Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PRE-APPRENTICESHIP AND QUALIFIED APPREN-**
7 **TICESHIP PROGRAMS.**

8 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this Act:

1 (1) QUALIFIED APPRENTICESHIP.—The term
 2 “qualified apprenticeship”, used with respect to a
 3 program, means an apprenticeship program that
 4 is—

5 (A) registered under the Act of August 16,
 6 1937 (commonly known as the “National Ap-
 7 prenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663;
 8 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.); and

9 (B) concentrated in an industry sector or
 10 occupation that represents less than 10 percent
 11 of apprenticeable occupations or of the pro-
 12 grams under the national apprenticeship sys-
 13 tem.

14 (2) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITU-
 15 TION.—The term “postsecondary educational institu-
 16 tion” means an institution of higher education, as
 17 defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act
 18 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

19 (3) PRE-APPRENTICESHIP.—The term “pre-ap-
 20 prenticeship”, used with respect to a program,
 21 means an initiative or set of strategies that—

22 (A) is designed to prepare individuals to
 23 enter and succeed in a qualified apprenticeship
 24 program;

(B) is carried out by a sponsor described in paragraph (6)(B) that has a documented partnership with one or more sponsors of qualified apprenticeship programs; and

(C) includes each of the following:

(i) Training (including a curriculum for the training), aligned with industry standards related to apprenticeships in a qualified apprenticeship program, and reviewed and approved annually by sponsors of such apprenticeships within the documented partnership, that will prepare individuals by teaching the skills and competencies needed to enter one or more qualified apprenticeship programs.

(ii) Provision of hands-on training and theoretical education to individuals that—

(I) is carried out in a manner that includes proper observation of supervision and safety protocols; and

(II) is carried out in a manner that does not displace a paid employee.

(iii) A formal agreement with a sponsor of a qualified apprenticeship program

1 that would enable participants who suc-
2 cessfully complete the pre-apprenticeship
3 program to enter directly into the qualified
4 apprenticeship program (if a place in the
5 program is available and if the participant
6 meets the qualifications of the qualified ap-
7 prenticeship program), and includes agree-
8 ments concerning earning credit recognized
9 by a postsecondary educational institution
10 for skills and competencies acquired during
11 the pre-apprenticeship program.

12 (4) RELATED INSTRUCTION.—The term “re-
13 lated instruction” means an organized and system-
14 atic form of classroom or web-based instruction de-
15 signed to provide an apprentice with the knowledge
16 of the theoretical and technical subjects related to
17 the occupation of the apprentice or the instruction
18 needed to prepare an individual to enter and succeed
19 in an qualified apprenticeship program.

20 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
21 the Secretary of Labor.

22 (6) SPONSOR.—The term “sponsor” means—
23 (A) with respect to a qualified apprentice-
24 ship program, an employer, joint labor-manage-
25 ment partnership, trade association, profes-

sional association, labor organization, or other entity, that administers the qualified apprenticeship program; and

(B) with respect to a pre-apprenticeship program, a local educational agency, a secondary school, an area career and technical education school, a State board, a local board, a joint labor-management committee, a labor organization, or a community-based organization, with responsibility for the pre-apprenticeship program.

(7) WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT DEFINITIONS.—The terms “area career and technical education school”, “community-based organization”, “individual with a barrier to employment”, “local board”, “local educational agency”, “secondary school”, and “State board” have the meanings given the terms in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

(b) GRANTS FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make grants to States on a competitive basis to assist the States in, and pay for the Federal share of the cost of, defraying the cost of a pre-apprenticeship, or the

1 cost of related instruction, associated with a quali-
2 fied apprenticeship program.

3 (2) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a
4 grant under this subsection, a State shall submit an
5 application to the Secretary for such a project at
6 such time, in such manner, and containing a stra-
7 tegic plan that contains such information as the Sec-
8 retary may require, including—

9 (A) information identifying the State agen-
10 cy (referred to in this Act as the “State enti-
11 ty”) that will administer the grant as deter-
12 mined by the Governor of the State;

13 (B) a description of strategies that the
14 State entity will use to collaborate with key in-
15 dustry representatives, State agencies, postsec-
16 ondary educational institutions, labor-manage-
17 ment entities, and other relevant partners to
18 launch or expand pre-apprenticeships for and
19 apprenticeships in qualified apprenticeship pro-
20 grams;

21 (C) a description of how the State entity
22 will—

23 (i) coordinate activities carried out
24 under this subsection with activities car-
25 ried out under the Carl D. Perkins Career

1 and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20
2 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) and the Workforce
3 Innovation and Opportunity Act (29
4 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) to support pre-ap-
5 prenticeships for and apprenticeships in
6 qualified apprenticeship programs;

7 (ii) leverage funds provided under the
8 Acts specified in clause (i) to support pre-
9 apprenticeships for and apprenticeships in
10 qualified apprenticeship programs; and

11 (iii) utilize, and encourage individual
12 participants in programs supported under
13 this subsection to utilize, available Federal
14 and State financial assistance, including
15 assistance available under the Workforce
16 Innovation and Opportunity Act (29
17 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.), education assistance
18 benefits available to veterans, and Federal
19 Pell Grants available under section 401 of
20 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
21 U.S.C. 1070a), prior to using assistance
22 made available under this Act;

23 (D) a description of strategies to elevate
24 apprenticeships in qualified apprenticeship pro-
25 grams as a workforce solution in nontraditional

1 industries, such as information technology,
2 health care, advanced manufacturing, transpor-
3 tation, and other industries determined to be
4 high-demand by the State board for the State;

5 (E) a description of activities that the
6 State entity will carry out to build awareness
7 about the economic potential of apprenticeships
8 in qualified apprenticeship programs;

9 (F) a description that outlines how the
10 State entity will increase opportunities for pre-
11 apprenticeships for and apprenticeships in
12 qualified apprenticeship programs, among mem-
13 bers of minority groups, youth, individuals with
14 disabilities, veterans, and individuals with bar-
15 riers to employment;

16 (G) a description of—

17 (i) how the State entity will ensure
18 that the qualified apprenticeship program
19 meets certain performance measures and
20 quality standards, including that the quali-
21 fied apprenticeship program has been in
22 existence for not fewer than 6 months
23 prior to the application date;

24 (ii) the targeted outreach strategies
25 that the State entity will use for popu-

lations previously underserved through apprenticeships; and

(iii) any State performance measures that the State will use, at the election of the State, to measure the effectiveness of the project; and

(H) in the case of a State that has already received a grant under this subsection for a project, information indicating that the State met the performance measures with respect to the project.

(3) APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS.—A joint team of employees from the Department of Labor and the Department of Education shall—

(A) review such an application; and

(B) make recommendations to the Secretary regarding approval of the application.

(4) USE OF FUNDS.—A State that receives a grant under this subsection shall use the funds made available through the grant to defray any of the following costs of related instruction:

(A) Tuition and fees.

(B) Cost of textbooks, equipment, curriculum development, and other required educational materials.

1 (C) Costs of any other item or service de-
 2 termined by the State to be necessary.

3 (5) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—The State may
 4 use not more than 10 percent of the grant funds for
 5 administrative costs relating to carrying out the
 6 project described in paragraph (1).

7 (6) PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION.—The
 8 Secretary, after consultation with the Secretary of
 9 Education, shall—

10 (A) establish performance measures based
 11 on indicators set by the Administrator of the
 12 Office of Apprenticeship of the Department of
 13 Labor; and

14 (B) establish an evaluation system aligned
 15 with the performance measures, and reporting
 16 requirements for the program carried out under
 17 this subsection.

18 (c) FEDERAL SHARE.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Federal share of the
 20 cost described in subsection (b)(1) shall be not less
 21 than 20 percent and not more than 50 percent.

22 (2) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The State may
 23 make the non-Federal share available—

24 (A) in cash or in kind, fairly evaluated, in-
 25 cluding plant, equipment, or services; and

1 (B) directly or through donations from
2 public or private entities.

3 (d) REPORT.—The Secretary shall prepare and sub-
4 mit to Congress, not later than September 30, 2030, a
5 report—

6 (1) detailing the results of the evaluation de-
7 scribed in subsection (b)(6)(B); and

8 (2) analyzing the extent to which States have
9 used grant funds effectively under this section.

10 (e) POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES.—It is the pol-
11 icy of the United States that funds made available under
12 this section should be used to supplement and not sup-
13 plant other funds available under the Workforce Innova-
14 tion and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) and
15 other Federal and State funds available to the State to
16 support workforce development programs.

17 **SEC. 3. IDENTIFYING IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS.**

18 The Secretary shall—

19 (1) identify in-demand occupations nationally
20 and regionally that lack the use of apprenticeships
21 in qualified apprenticeship programs;

22 (2) analyze the use of the qualified apprentice-
23 ship program model in those identified in-demand
24 occupations; and

1 (3) prepare and submit to States and Congress
2 a report that contains the analysis described in para-
3 graph (2).

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

5 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
6 this Act \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through
7 2031.

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