

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7069

To amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to make permanent a grant program to promote and assist in the reentry of ex-offenders into the workforce.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 16, 2018

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to make permanent a grant program to promote and assist in the reentry of ex-offenders into the workforce.

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 “Workforce Reentry
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. EX-OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAM START-UP** 7 **GRANTS.**

8 Subtitle D of title I of the Workforce Innovation and
9 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3221 et seq.) is amended—

1 (1) by redesignating section 172 as section 173;

2 and

3 (2) by inserting after section 171 the following

4 new section:

5 **“SEC. 172. EX-OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAM START-UP**
6 **GRANTS.**

7 “(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to—

8 “(1) prompt innovation and improvement in the
9 reentry of ex-offenders into the workforce so that
10 successful initiatives can be continued and rep-
11 licated; and

12 “(2) allow for the dissemination of information
13 regarding best practices in preparing ex-offenders
14 for sustained participation in the workforce.

15 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 “(1) APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES.—The
17 term ‘apprenticeship opportunities’ includes reg-
18 istered apprenticeship, industry-recognized appren-
19 ticeship, and preapprenticeship programs.

20 “(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
21 tity’ means—

22 “(A) a private non-profit organization
23 under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue
24 Code of 1986;

25 “(B) a local workforce development board;

1 “(C) a State or local government; or

2 “(D) an Indian or Native American entity
3 eligible for grants under section 166.

4 “(3) ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANT.—

5 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘eligible par-
6 ticipant’ means an individual—

7 “(i) who is not less than age 18;

8 “(ii) who has been convicted as an
9 adult and imprisoned under Federal or
10 State law;

11 “(iii) whose most recent offense has
12 not been a violent or sex-based offense; or

13 “(iv) who has not been released from
14 prison or jail for more than 180 days be-
15 fore the date on which the individual be-
16 gins participation.

17 “(B) EXCEPTION.—Up to 10 percent of all
18 participants may be individuals who do not
19 meet the requirements of clause (iv) of subpara-
20 graph (A).

21 “(4) EVIDENCE-BASED.—The term ‘evidence-
22 based’ means a program or practice that—

23 “(A) is demonstrated effective when imple-
24 mented with fidelity;

1 “(B) is based on a clearly articulated and
2 empirically supported theory;

3 “(C) has measurable outcomes relevant to
4 workforce outcomes for reentering offenders;
5 and

6 “(D) has been scientifically tested and
7 proven effective through randomized control
8 studies or comparison group studies.

9 “(5) PROMISING.—The term ‘promising’ refers
10 to a program or practice that—

11 “(A) is demonstrated to be effective based
12 on positive outcomes relevant to workforce en-
13 gagement for reentering offenders from 1 or
14 more objective, independent, and scientifically
15 valid evaluation; and

16 “(B) includes ongoing efforts to examine
17 the effects of such program or practice.

18 “(c) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the activi-
20 ties under this section, the Secretary shall, on a
21 competitive basis, award grants for a period of not
22 more than 5 years to eligible entities to enable such
23 entities to provide job training, job placement serv-
24 ices, and mentoring.

1 “(2) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants, the Sec-
2 retary shall give priority to eligible entities that—

3 “(A) establish partnerships with business
4 or educational institutions to provide a program
5 of study leading to postsecondary credentials in
6 in-demand occupations; or

7 “(B) provide customized training that is
8 designed to meet the specific requirements of
9 an employer (including a group of employers)
10 and is conducted with a commitment by the em-
11 ployer to employ an individual upon successful
12 completion of the training.

13 “(3) RENEWAL.—The Secretary may renew a
14 grant to an eligible entity under this section for a
15 period no longer than 5 additional years if the eli-
16 gible entity—

17 “(A) demonstrates success in helping eligi-
18 ble participants reenter the workforce according
19 to the performance indicators under (g)(1); and

20 “(B) provides an assurance that the entity
21 will provide a non-Federal contribution, includ-
22 ing cash and in-kind donations, in an amount
23 not less than 100 percent of the total funds
24 awarded in the renewal grant.

1 “(d) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant
2 under this section, an eligible entity shall submit an appli-
3 cation to the Secretary, which shall include the following:

4 “(1) A detailed description of the program in-
5 cluding the core services they will provide, how the
6 eligible entity will recruit and select eligible partici-
7 pants for the program, how many participants they
8 plan on serving each year, and the length of partici-
9 pation in the program.

10 “(2) A description of evidence-based or prom-
11 ising practices the eligible entity will use in the ad-
12 ministration of the program.

13 “(3) A description of partnerships with local
14 businesses to provide apprenticeship opportunities,
15 work-based learning, and job placement and recruit-
16 ment (if applicable).

17 “(4) An assurance that the eligible entity will
18 coordinate activities with workforce development pro-
19 grams and other services provided under this title,
20 including utilizing the one-stop delivery system of
21 the local workforce development areas to provide ap-
22 propriate services and recruit eligible individuals to
23 ensure the maximum number of eligible individuals
24 will have the opportunity to participate in the pro-
25 gram.

1 “(5) An assurance that the eligible entity will
2 provide a 50-percent match, as described in sub-
3 section (e).

4 “(6) A plan to coordinate with other programs
5 and entities, including those that may be provided
6 by such other programs and entities, to provide sub-
7 stance abuse treatment services, mental health treat-
8 ment services, housing services, and transportation
9 services.

10 “(7) An assurance that the eligible entity will
11 provide the data necessary for the indicators of per-
12 formance in subsection (g).

13 “(8) A plan to continue the program with non-
14 Federal funds after grant period.

15 “(e) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—In order to receive
16 a grant from the Secretary under this section, each eligible
17 entity shall provide a non-Federal contribution, including
18 cash and in-kind donations, in an amount not less than
19 50 percent of the total funds awarded.

20 “(f) USE OF FUNDS.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A grant awarded under
22 this section may be used to—

23 “(A) provide workforce development and
24 job placement services to eligible participants,
25 including occupational skills education, on-the-

1 job training, apprenticeship opportunities, work
2 experience, job referrals, basic skills remedi-
3 ation, educational services, work readiness ac-
4 tivities, and post-placement support, in coordi-
5 nation with the one-stop partners and one-stop
6 operators that provide services at any center
7 operated under a one-stop deliver system estab-
8 lished under section 121;

9 “(B) mentor eligible participants, including
10 the provision of support, guidance, and assist-
11 ance in the community and the workplace to
12 address the challenges faced by ex-offenders;

13 “(C) provide outreach to State or Federal
14 correctional facilities to increase awareness,
15 identify and recruit eligible participants, provide
16 screening and assessment of eligible partici-
17 pants and align educational offerings with exist-
18 ing services available to individuals who are
19 presently incarcerated; or

20 “(D) coordinate with employers to develop
21 customized training programs and agreements
22 around the hiring of eligible participants.

23 “(2) LIMITATIONS.—

24 “(A) CERTAIN SERVICES EXCLUDED.—
25 Funds provided under this section may not be

1 used to provide substance abuse treatment serv-
2 ices, mental health treatment services, or hous-
3 ing services, except that such a grant may be
4 used to coordinate with other programs and en-
5 tities to provide substance abuse treatment
6 services, mental health treatment services, or
7 housing services to eligible participants.

8 “(B) ADMINISTRATIVE COST LIMIT.—A
9 grantee may not use more than 10 percent of
10 the funds received under a grant for adminis-
11 trative costs.

12 “(C) LIMIT ON AMOUNT PAID AS STIPENDS
13 TO PARTICIPANTS.—A grantee may not use
14 more than 15 percent of the funds received
15 under such grant to provide stipends to pro-
16 gram participants while completing an edu-
17 cational or skill development program.

18 “(g) PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES AND ACCOUNT-
19 ABILITY.—

20 “(1) INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE.—Each eli-
21 gible entity receiving a grant under this section shall
22 report each year to the Secretary of Labor on the
23 following indicators of performance:

24 “(A) The percentage of program partici-
25 pants who are in unsubsidized employment dur-

1 ing the second quarter after exit from the pro-
2 gram.

3 “(B) The percentage of program partici-
4 pants who are in unsubsidized employment dur-
5 ing the fourth quarter after exit from the pro-
6 gram.

7 “(C) The median earnings of program par-
8 ticipants who are in unsubsidized employment
9 during the second quarter after exit from the
10 program.

11 “(D) The percentage of program partici-
12 pants who obtain a recognized postsecondary
13 credential, or a secondary school diploma or its
14 recognized equivalent, during participation in or
15 within one year after exit from the program.

16 “(2) INDEPENDENT EVALUATION.—Not later
17 than five years after the date of enactment of this
18 section and from amounts made available under sec-
19 tion 173(d), the Secretary shall provide for and re-
20 port to Congress on an independent evaluation of
21 the grant program established under this section
22 that includes an assessment of the effectiveness of
23 the grant program and the effectiveness of individual
24 grantees included in the evaluation in reducing re-
25 cidivism and assisting individuals in—

1 “(A) earning credentials;

2 “(B) finding and maintaining employment;

3 and

4 “(C) increasing their earnings.

5 “(3) REPORT.—The Secretary shall release an
6 annual report on—

7 “(A) the number of individuals who par-
8 ticipated in programs assisted under this sec-
9 tion;

10 “(B) the percentage of individuals partici-
11 pating in a program assisted under this section
12 that successfully completed the program; and

13 “(C) the performance of grantees as meas-
14 ured by the performance indicators set forth in
15 paragraph (1).

16 “(4) DISSEMINATING BEST PRACTICES.—Using
17 the findings of the independent evaluation under
18 paragraph (2) the Secretary shall disseminate infor-
19 mation to State and local government, local work-
20 force development boards, and relevant stakeholders
21 regarding best practices in providing workforce de-
22 velopment opportunities for ex-offenders and reduc-
23 ing recidivism.

24 “(h) ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary
25 may use up to 2 percent of the funds annually appro-

1 priated to carry out the activities of this section including
2 disseminating best practices and providing technical as-
3 sistance to grantees and partnering businesses regarding
4 the availability of applicable tax credits including the
5 Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

6 “(i) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this sec-
7 tion shall be construed to authorize any new appropria-
8 tions to carry out the purpose of this section.”.

9 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZED FUNDS.**

10 Section 173(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Op-
11 portunity Act (as redesignated by section 2(1)) is amended
12 by striking “section 169” and inserting “sections 169 and
13 172”.

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