

1 State of Arkansas As Engrossed: S3/19/15 H3/27/15

2 90th General Assembly

A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2015

SENATE BILL 891

4

5 By: Senator J. English

6 By: Representatives Gossage, E. Armstrong, Bentley, Blake, Bragg, Davis, Eubanks, M.J. Gray, House,

7 Leding, Tucker, Vaught

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For An Act To Be Entitled

10 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE WORKFORCE INITIATIVE ACT OF

11 2015; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

12

13

14

Subtitle

15 TO ESTABLISH THE WORKFORCE INITIATIVE ACT

16

OF 2015.

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19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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21 *SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative intent – Findings.*

22 *(a) The General Assembly finds that is it necessary for Arkansas to*

23 *properly evaluate and address the workforce training needs of our state in*

24 *order to compete with an aggressive and effective economic development*

25 *strategy for the twenty-first century.*

26 *(b) Consideration of secondary and postsecondary education, including*

27 *career and technical programs, is essential for creating a successful*

28 *economic climate in the state.*

29 *(c) Encouraging Arkansans to pursue high-demand jobs, including*

30 *without limitation industry-recognized credentials, career and technical*

31 *certificates, associate degree programs, and bachelor's degree programs is*

32 *essential to building a skilled and work-ready workforce.*

33 *(d) A program that offers short-term career and technical training and*

34 *those programs that produce certificates of proficiency, technical*

35 *certificates, Associate of Applied Science degrees, and Bachelor of Applied*

36 *Science degrees or similarly designed bachelor degrees are critical to the*



1 success of economic development in Arkansas.

2 (e)(1) Institutions and organizations will unite around shared
3 regional sector strategies that support an employer demand-driven workforce
4 system.

5 (2) This system should support:

6 (A) Creation of state and regional industry-sector driven
7 partnerships that employers lead and to which education institutions respond;

8 (B) Data-driven decisions on development and deployment of
9 workforce training and education programs;

10 (C) Development of articulated education pathways, from
11 grades K-12 to baccalaureate, that are aligned with employment career
12 pathways that include industry-recognized credential and employment step-out
13 points; and

14 (D) Increased diversity and representation from all
15 regions of the state.

16
17 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 60, Subchapter 1, is amended
18 to add an additional section to read as follows:

19 6-60-105. Workforce initiative funding.

20 (a)(1) The Department of Higher Education shall act as the disbursing
21 entity for all funds for the Workforce Initiative Act.

22 (2) The Department of Higher Education shall establish
23 procedures for the request for proposals under subdivision (b)(2) of this
24 section that shall:

25 (A) Be approved by the Governor;

26 (B) Include input from the Department of Education, the
27 Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Economic Development
28 Commission, and the Department of Career Education; and

29 (C) Be reported to the Legislative Council.

30 (3) The Department of Higher Education shall establish a grant
31 application review and award process under this section that shall:

32 (A) Be approved by the Governor; and

33 (B) Include recommendations from the Department of
34 Education, the Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Economic
35 Development Commission, and the Department of Career Education.

36 (b)(1) The Department of Higher Education shall set funding priorities

1 in three (3) phases.

2 (2)(A)(i) Phase one shall seek requests for proposals from
3 alliances consisting of technical institutes, community colleges,
4 universities, the kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) education system,
5 educational cooperatives, or employers, with input from local workforce
6 investment boards, to receive planning grants of up to one hundred thousand
7 dollars (\$100,000).

8 (ii)(a) The local workforce investment boards shall
9 identify the industry sectors for each of their ten (10) areas.

10 (b) The identification process shall include a
11 comprehensive data analysis of employer skill requirements in each sector in
12 each region.

13 (c) The identified industry sectors and
14 employment skills shall serve as the basis for an application to a request
15 for proposal from the Department of Higher Education.

16 (B) A request for proposal shall include an education and
17 employer alignment plan that includes state-approved, employer-driven career
18 pathways that are supported by a secondary center that awards concurrent
19 credit courses that can be applied to a certificate of proficiency, technical
20 certificate, Associate of Applied Science degree, or Bachelor of Applied
21 Science degree or a similarly designed bachelor degree.

22 (C) Recognizing the limited state resources, the priority
23 for planning grants shall be given to the applicants that best enhance
24 regional efforts, including collaboration between community colleges,
25 universities, public schools, education service cooperatives, the local
26 workforce investment boards, career and technical education programs,
27 multidistrict vocational centers, and private partnerships with clearly
28 defined and measurable performance and effectiveness objectives.

29 (3)(A) Phase two shall provide implementation grants in an
30 amount necessary to provide the resources to implement approved projects
31 concluded and approved by the Department of Higher Education from phase one.

32 (B) Implementation grants shall include clearly defined
33 outcome measures and last for up to two (2) years.

34 (4)(A) Phase three shall provide continuation grants for phase
35 two recipients that meet or exceed the outcome measures.

36 (B) Continuation grants shall be used to align the

1 performance and relevance of programs to ever changing workforce training
2 needs.

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4 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 19, Chapter 5, Subchapter 12, is
5 amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6 19-5-1255. Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Fund.

7 (a) There is created on the books of the Treasurer of State, the
8 Auditor of State, and the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State a miscellaneous
9 fund to be known as the "Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 Fund".

10 (b) The fund shall consist of those general revenues as may be
11 authorized by law and other nonfederal funds as may be provided by law.

12 (c) The fund shall be used by the Department of Higher Education for
13 distributing grants to programs identified under § 6-60-105.

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15 /s/J. English

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18 **APPROVED: 04/06/2015**