

**Senate File 202 - Introduced**

SENATE FILE 202

BY SCHOENJAHN, SODDERS,  
KIBBIE, HANCOCK, McCOY,  
HORN, DEARDEN, FRAISE,  
DANDEKAR, GRONSTAL, BLACK,  
QUIIRMBACH, BEALL, RAGAN,  
WILHELM, JOCHUM, BOLKCOM,  
BOWMAN, HOGG, DOTZLER,  
SENG, HATCH, DANIELSON, and  
COURTNEY

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to education and employment training by  
2 establishing the pathways for academic career and employment  
3 program and fund and the gap tuition assistance program and  
4 fund.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. 260H.1 Title.

2 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "*Pathways*  
3 *for Academic Career and Employment Act*".

4 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. 260H.2 Pathways for academic career  
5 and employment program and fund.

6 1. A pathways for academic career and employment program  
7 is established to provide grants to community colleges for the  
8 development of projects in coordination with the department  
9 of education, the department of economic development, Iowa  
10 workforce development, regional advisory boards established  
11 pursuant to section 84A.4, and community partners to implement  
12 a simplified, streamlined, and comprehensive process,  
13 along with customized support services, to enable eligible  
14 participants to acquire effective academic and employment  
15 training to secure gainful, quality, in-state employment.

16 2. There is established in the state treasury a pathways  
17 for academic career and employment fund to be administered by  
18 the department of economic development. The aggregate total  
19 of moneys awarded from the fund shall not be more than five  
20 million dollars during a fiscal year. Notwithstanding section  
21 8.33, moneys in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall  
22 not revert to the general fund of the state. Notwithstanding  
23 section 12C.7, subsection 2, interest or earnings on moneys in  
24 the fund shall be credited to the fund.

25 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. 260H.3 Eligibility criteria.

26 1. Projects eligible for grants from the pathways for  
27 academic career and employment fund shall be projects that  
28 further the ability of members of target populations to secure  
29 gainful, quality employment. For the purposes of this chapter,  
30 "*target population*" includes:

31 a. Persons deemed low skilled for the purposes of attaining  
32 gainful, quality, in-state employment.

33 b. Persons earning incomes at or below one hundred fifty  
34 percent of the federal poverty level as defined by the most  
35 recently revised poverty income guidelines published by the

1 United States department of health and human services.

2 *c.* Unemployed persons.

3 *d.* Underemployed persons.

4 *e.* Dislocated workers, including workers eligible for  
5 services and benefits under the federal Trade Adjustment Act of  
6 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-210, as determined by the department of  
7 workforce development and the federal internal revenue service.

8 2. Projects eligible for grants from the pathways for  
9 academic career and employment fund shall be projects that  
10 further partnerships that link the community colleges to  
11 industry and nonprofit organizations and projects that further  
12 program outcomes as provided in section 260H.4.

13 **Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. 260H.4 Program outcomes.**

14 Projects eligible for grants from the pathways for academic  
15 career and employment fund shall be programs which further the  
16 following program outcomes:

17 1. Enabling the target populations to:

18 *a.* Acquire and demonstrate competency in basic skills.

19 *b.* Acquire and demonstrate competency in a specified  
20 technical field.

21 *c.* Complete a specified level of postsecondary education.

22 *d.* Earn a national career readiness certificate.

23 *e.* Obtain employer-validated credentials.

24 *f.* Secure gainful employment in high-quality, local jobs.

25 2. Satisfaction of economic and employment goals including  
26 but not limited to:

27 *a.* Economic and workforce development requirements in each  
28 region served by the community colleges as defined by regional  
29 advisory boards established pursuant to section 84A.4.

30 *b.* Needs of industry partners in areas including but not  
31 limited to:

32 (1) Information technology.

33 (2) Health care.

34 (3) Advanced manufacturing.

35 (4) Transportation.

1 c. Economic development priorities identified by the state  
2 or a state agency that are reinforced in the regional context.

3 Sec. 5. NEW SECTION. 260H.5 Program component requirements.

4 Program components of a pathways for academic career and  
5 employment project implemented at a community college shall:

6 1. Include measurable and effective recruitment,  
7 assessment, and referral activities designed for the target  
8 populations.

9 2. Integrate basics skills and work-readiness training with  
10 occupational skills training.

11 3. Combine customized supportive and case management  
12 services with training services to help participants overcome  
13 barriers to employment.

14 4. Provide training services at times, locations, and  
15 through multiple, flexible modalities that are easily  
16 understood and readily accessible to the target populations.  
17 Such modalities shall support timeless entry, individualized  
18 learning, and flexible scheduling, and may include online  
19 remediation, learning lab and cohort learning communities,  
20 tutoring, and modularization.

21 Sec. 6. NEW SECTION. 260H.6 Pipeline program.

22 Each community college receiving a grant from the pathways  
23 for academic career and employment fund shall develop a  
24 pipeline program in order to better serve the academic,  
25 training, and employment needs of the target populations. A  
26 pipeline program shall have the following goals:

27 1. To strengthen partnerships with community-based  
28 organizations and industry representatives.

29 2. To improve and simplify the identification, recruitment,  
30 and assessment of qualified participants.

31 3. To conduct and manage an outreach, recruitment, and  
32 intake process, along with accompanying support services,  
33 reflecting sensitivity to the time and financial constraints  
34 and remediation needs of the target populations.

35 4. To conduct orientations for qualified participants

1 to describe regional labor market opportunities, employer  
2 partners, and program requirements and expectations.

3 5. To describe the concepts of the project implemented with  
4 funds from the pathways for academic career and employment fund  
5 and the embedded educational and support resources available  
6 through such project.

7 6. To outline the basic skills participants will learn and  
8 describe the credentials participants will earn.

9 7. To describe success milestones and ways in which temporal  
10 and instructional barriers have been minimized or eliminated.

11 8. To review how individualized and customized service  
12 strategies for participants will be developed and provided.

13 **Sec. 7. NEW SECTION. 260H.7 Career pathways and bridge**  
14 **curriculum development program.**

15 Each community college receiving a grant from the pathways  
16 for academic career and employment fund shall develop a career  
17 pathways and bridge curriculum development program in order  
18 to better serve the academic, training, and employment needs  
19 of the target populations. A career pathways and bridge  
20 curriculum development program shall have the following goals:

21 1. The articulation of courses and modules, the mapping of  
22 programs within career pathways, and establishment of bridges  
23 between credit and noncredit programs.

24 2. The integration and contextualization of basic skills  
25 education and skills training. This process shall provide for  
26 seamless progressions between adult basic education and general  
27 education development programs and continuing education and  
28 credit certificate, diploma, and degree programs.

29 3. The development of career pathways that support the  
30 attainment of industry-recognized credentials, diplomas, and  
31 degrees through stackable, modularized program delivery.

32 **Sec. 8. NEW SECTION. 260H.8 Rules.**

33 The department of economic development, in coordination  
34 with the community colleges, the department of education, and  
35 Iowa workforce development, shall adopt rules pursuant to

1 chapter 17A and this chapter to implement the provisions of  
2 this chapter. Regional advisory boards established pursuant  
3 to section 84A.4 shall be consulted in the development and  
4 implementation of rules to be adopted pursuant to this chapter.

5 **Sec. 9. NEW SECTION. 261G.1 Title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "*Gap*  
7 *Tuition Assistance Act*".

8 **Sec. 10. NEW SECTION. 261G.2 Gap tuition assistance program**  
9 **and fund.**

10 1. A gap tuition assistance program is established to  
11 provide grants for need-based tuition assistance to applicants  
12 to enable completion of continuing education certificate  
13 training programs for in-demand occupations.

14 2. There is established for the community colleges a  
15 gap tuition assistance fund in the state treasury to be  
16 administered by the college student aid commission. The  
17 aggregate total of grants awarded shall not be more than five  
18 million dollars during a fiscal year. Notwithstanding section  
19 8.33, moneys in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall  
20 not revert to the general fund of the state. Notwithstanding  
21 section 12C.7, subsection 2, interest or earnings on moneys in  
22 the fund shall be credited to the fund.

23 **Sec. 11. NEW SECTION. 261G.3 Applicants for tuition**  
24 **assistance — eligibility criteria.**

25 1. The college student aid commission shall adopt rules  
26 pursuant to this chapter defining eligibility criteria for  
27 persons applying to receive tuition assistance under this  
28 chapter.

29 2. Eligibility for tuition assistance under this chapter  
30 shall be based on financial need. Criteria to be assessed in  
31 determining financial need shall include but is not limited to:

32 a. The applicant's family income for the twelve months prior  
33 to the date of application.

34 b. The applicant's family size.

35 c. The applicant's county of residence.

1 3. a. The college student aid commission shall only approve  
2 an applicant for tuition assistance under this chapter if the  
3 community college receiving the application determines the  
4 applicant has a demonstrated capacity to achieve the following  
5 outcomes:

6 (1) The ability to complete an eligible certificate  
7 program.

8 (2) The ability to enter a postsecondary certificate,  
9 diploma, or degree program for credit.

10 (3) The ability to gain full-time employment.

11 (4) The ability to maintain full-time employment over time.

12 b. The college student aid commission shall only approve  
13 an applicant for tuition assistance under this chapter if the  
14 community college receiving the application determines the  
15 applicant has a strong likelihood of achieving the outcomes  
16 described in paragraph "a" after considering factors including  
17 but not limited to:

18 (1) Barriers that may prevent an applicant from completing  
19 the certificate program.

20 (2) Barriers that may prevent an applicant from gaining  
21 employment in an in-demand occupation.

22 4. Applicants may be found eligible for partial or total  
23 tuition assistance.

24 5. Tuition assistance shall not be approved when the  
25 college student aid commission determines that funding for an  
26 applicant's participation in an eligible certificate program is  
27 available from any other public or private funding source.

28 **Sec. 12. NEW SECTION. 261G.4 Applicants for tuition**  
29 **assistance — additional provisions.**

30 1. An applicant for tuition assistance under this  
31 chapter shall provide to the community college receiving the  
32 application documentation of all sources of income.

33 2. Only an applicant eligible to work in the United States  
34 shall be approved for tuition assistance under this chapter.

35 3. An application shall be valid for six months from the

1 date of signature on the application.

2 4. A person shall not be approved for tuition assistance  
3 under this chapter for more than one eligible certificate  
4 program.

5 5. Eligibility for tuition assistance under this chapter  
6 shall not be construed to guarantee enrollment in any community  
7 college certificate program.

8 Sec. 13. NEW SECTION. **261G.5 Eligible costs.**

9 Costs of a certificate program eligible for coverage by  
10 tuition assistance shall include but are not limited to:

- 11 1. Tuition.
- 12 2. Direct training costs.
- 13 3. Required books and equipment.
- 14 4. Fees.

15 Sec. 14. NEW SECTION. **261G.6 Eligible certificate programs.**

16 For the purposes of this chapter, "*eligible certificate*  
17 *program*" means a program meeting all of the following criteria:

18 1. The program is not offered for credit, but is aligned  
19 with a certificate, diploma, or degree for credit, and does any  
20 of the following:

- 21 *a.* Offers a state, national, or locally recognized  
22 certificate.
- 23 *b.* Offers preparation for a professional examination or  
24 licensure.
- 25 *c.* Provides endorsement for an existing credential or  
26 license.
- 27 *d.* Represents recognized skill standards defined by an  
28 industrial sector.
- 29 *e.* Offers a similar credential or training.

30 2. The program offers training or a credential in an  
31 in-demand occupation. For the purposes of this chapter,  
32 "*in-demand occupation*" includes occupations in the following  
33 industries:

- 34 *a.* Information technology.
- 35 *b.* Health care.



1     *c.* Advanced manufacturing.

2     *d.* Transportation.

3     *e.* Any other industry designated as in-demand by a regional  
4 advisory board established pursuant to section 84A.4.

5     Sec. 15. NEW SECTION. **261G.7 Initial assessment.**

6     An applicant for tuition assistance under this chapter shall  
7 complete an initial assessment administered by the community  
8 college receiving the application to determine the applicant's  
9 readiness to complete an eligible certificate program. The  
10 assessment shall include assessments for completion of a  
11 national career readiness certificate, including the areas of  
12 reading for information, applied mathematics, and locating  
13 information. An applicant must achieve a bronze-level  
14 certificate or the minimum score required for an eligible  
15 certificate program, whichever is higher, in order to be  
16 approved for tuition assistance. An applicant shall complete  
17 any additional assessments and occupational research required  
18 by an eligible certificate program.

19     Sec. 16. NEW SECTION. **261G.8 Program interview.**

20     An applicant for tuition assistance under this chapter shall  
21 meet with a member of the staff for an eligible certificate  
22 program offered by the community college receiving the  
23 application. The staff member shall discuss the relevant  
24 industry, any applicable occupational research, and any  
25 applicable training relating to the eligible certificate  
26 program. The discussion shall include an evaluation of  
27 the applicant's capabilities, needs, family situation, work  
28 history, educational background, attitude and motivation,  
29 employment skills, vocational potential, and employment  
30 barriers. The discussion shall also include potential start  
31 dates, support needs, and other requirements for an eligible  
32 certificate program.

33     Sec. 17. NEW SECTION. **261G.9 Participation requirements.**

34     1. A participant in an eligible certificate program who  
35 receives tuition assistance pursuant to this chapter shall do

1 all of the following:

2     *a.* Maintain regular contact with staff members for the  
3 certificate program to document the applicant's progress in the  
4 program.

5     *b.* Sign a release form to provide relevant information to  
6 community college faculty or case managers.

7     *c.* Discuss with staff members for the certificate program  
8 any issues that may impact the participant's ability to  
9 complete the certificate program, obtain employment, and  
10 maintain employment over time.

11     *d.* Attend all required courses regularly.

12     *e.* Provide documentation of completion of the certificate  
13 program to the college student aid commission.

14     *f.* Meet with staff members for the certificate program to  
15 develop a job search plan.

16     *g.* Provide information to the college student aid commission  
17 relating to employment status as required by the college  
18 student aid commission.

19     2. The college student aid commission may terminate tuition  
20 assistance for a participant who fails to meet the requirements  
21 of this section.

22     Sec. 18. NEW SECTION. 261G.10 Oversight.

23     1. The college student aid commission, in coordination  
24 with the community colleges, shall establish a steering  
25 committee. The steering committee shall determine if the  
26 performance measures of the gap tuition assistance program  
27 are being met and shall take necessary steps to correct any  
28 deficiencies. The steering committee shall meet at least  
29 quarterly to evaluate and monitor the performance of the gap  
30 tuition assistance program.

31     2. The college student aid commission, in coordination  
32 with the community colleges, shall develop a common intake  
33 tracking system that shall be implemented consistently by each  
34 participating community college.

35     3. The steering committee shall designate one community

1 college to serve as the lead community college for the gap  
2 tuition assistance program. The lead community college shall  
3 coordinate statewide oversight, evaluation, and reporting  
4 efforts for the gap tuition assistance program.

5 Sec. 19. NEW SECTION. **261G.11 Rules.**

6 The college student aid commission, in consultation with the  
7 community colleges, shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A  
8 and this chapter to implement the provisions of this chapter.

9

EXPLANATION

10 This bill establishes the pathways for academic career and  
11 employment program and fund to provide grants to community  
12 colleges for the development of projects in coordination  
13 with the department of education, the department of economic  
14 development, Iowa workforce development, regional advisory  
15 boards established pursuant to Code section 84A.4, and  
16 community partners to implement a simplified, streamlined,  
17 and comprehensive process to enable eligible participants to  
18 acquire effective academic and employment training to secure  
19 gainful, quality, in-state employment. The fund is to be  
20 administered by the department of economic development. The  
21 fund may pay out up to \$5 million per fiscal year in grants.  
22 The bill provides that notwithstanding Code section 8.33,  
23 moneys in the fund at the end of a fiscal year will not revert  
24 to the general fund of the state, and notwithstanding Code  
25 section 12C.7, subsection 2, interest or earnings on moneys  
26 in the fund will be credited to the fund. The bill sets out  
27 criteria for community college projects eligible to receive  
28 grants. Eligible projects must further the ability of certain  
29 target populations of underserved persons to secure gainful,  
30 quality, in-state employment.

31 The bill also requires eligible projects to further  
32 partnerships that link the community colleges to industry and  
33 nonprofit organizations. The bill sets out certain program  
34 outcomes relating to target populations and economic and  
35 employment criteria which eligible projects must satisfy. The

1 bill sets out certain program components which an eligible  
2 project must include. The bill provides for two programs, a  
3 pipeline program and a career pathways and bridge curriculum  
4 development program, which participating community colleges  
5 must adopt, and sets out certain features of those programs.  
6 The bill directs the department of economic development,  
7 in coordination with community colleges, the department of  
8 education, and Iowa workforce development, to adopt rules  
9 pursuant to Code chapter 17A to implement the program.  
10 The bill provides that the rulemaking should be done in  
11 consultation with regional advisory boards established pursuant  
12 to Code section 84A.4.

13 The bill also establishes the gap tuition assistance program  
14 and fund to provide need-based tuition assistance to applicants  
15 to enable completion of continuing education certificate  
16 training programs for in-demand occupations. The bill  
17 establishes the fund in the treasury for community colleges.  
18 The fund is to be administered by the college student aid  
19 commission and may pay out up to \$5 million per fiscal year in  
20 grants. The bill provides that notwithstanding Code section  
21 8.33, moneys in the fund at the end of a fiscal year will not  
22 revert to the general fund of the state, and notwithstanding  
23 Code section 12C.7, subsection 2, interest or earnings on  
24 moneys in the fund will be credited to the fund.

25 The bill sets out criteria for eligible applicants based  
26 on financial need. The bill provides that applicants must  
27 demonstrate a capacity for and likelihood of achieving certain  
28 outcomes. The bill prohibits the approval of a grant for an  
29 applicant who has other sources of funding available. The bill  
30 sets out what costs are eligible for coverage by a grant. The  
31 bill defines what certificate programs are eligible for grant  
32 funding. The bill requires such programs to be in certain  
33 in-demand occupations. The bill requires an applicant to  
34 undergo an initial assessment and an interview with a staff  
35 member of the certificate program to be pursued before a grant

1 can be approved. The bill sets out various requirements for  
2 approved participants in an eligible certificate program and  
3 provides that failure to meet the requirements can result  
4 in termination of the assistance. The bill provides for  
5 oversight functions for the program, including the formation of  
6 a steering committee and the designation of a lead community  
7 college to coordinate oversight functions. The bill directs  
8 the college student aid commission, in consultation with  
9 community colleges, to adopt rules pursuant to Code chapter 17A  
10 to implement the program.