

Senate File 328 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 328
BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

(SUCCESSOR TO SF 202)

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 and making an appropriation.

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
18 by the department of education. There is appropriated from
19 the general fund of the state to the pathways for academic
20 career and employment fund for each fiscal year the sum of five
21 million dollars for the purpose of implementing the pathways
22 for academic career and employment program. The aggregate
23 total of moneys awarded from the fund shall not be more than
24 five million dollars during a fiscal year. Notwithstanding
25 section 8.33, moneys in the fund at the end of a fiscal
26 year shall not revert to the general fund of the state.
27 Notwithstanding section 12C.7, subsection 2, interest or
28 earnings on moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund.

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

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

35 a. Persons deemed low skilled for the purposes of attaining

1 gainful, quality, in-state employment.

2 *b.* Persons earning incomes at or below two hundred percent
3 of the federal poverty level as defined by the most recently
4 revised poverty income guidelines published by the United
5 States department of health and human services.

6 *c.* Unemployed persons.

7 *d.* Underemployed persons.

8 *e.* Dislocated workers, including workers eligible for
9 services and benefits under the federal Trade Adjustment Act of
10 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-210, as determined by the department of
11 workforce development and the federal internal revenue service.

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

17 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. 260H.4 Program outcomes.

18 Projects eligible for grants from the pathways for academic
19 career and employment fund shall be programs which further the
20 following program outcomes:

21 1. Enabling the target populations to:

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

23 *b.* Acquire and demonstrate competency in a specified
24 technical field.

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

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

27 *e.* Obtain employer-validated credentials.

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

29 2. Satisfaction of economic and employment goals including
30 but not limited to:

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

34 *b.* Needs of industry partners in areas including but not
35 limited to:

1 (1) Information technology.

2 (2) Health care.

3 (3) Advanced manufacturing.

4 (4) Transportation and logistics.

5 c. Any other industry designated as in-demand by a regional
6 advisory board established pursuant to section 84A.4.

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

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

10 1. Include measurable and effective recruitment,
11 assessment, and referral activities designed for the target
12 populations.

13 2. Integrate basics skills and work-readiness training with
14 occupational skills training.

15 3. Combine customized supportive and case management
16 services with training services to help participants overcome
17 barriers to employment.

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

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

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

31 1. To strengthen partnerships with community-based
32 organizations and industry representatives.

33 2. To improve and simplify the identification, recruitment,
34 and assessment of qualified participants.

35 3. To conduct and manage an outreach, recruitment, and

1 intake process, along with accompanying support services,
2 reflecting sensitivity to the time and financial constraints
3 and remediation needs of the target populations.

4 4. To conduct orientations for qualified participants
5 to describe regional labor market opportunities, employer
6 partners, and program requirements and expectations.

7 5. To describe the concepts of the project implemented with
8 funds from the pathways for academic career and employment fund
9 and the embedded educational and support resources available
10 through such project.

11 6. To outline the basic skills participants will learn and
12 describe the credentials participants will earn.

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

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

17 Sec. 7. NEW SECTION. **260H.7 Career pathways and bridge**
18 **curriculum development program.**

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

25 1. The articulation of courses and modules, the mapping of
26 programs within career pathways, and establishment of bridges
27 between credit and noncredit programs.

28 2. The integration and contextualization of basic skills
29 education and skills training. This process shall provide for
30 seamless progressions between adult basic education and general
31 education development programs and continuing education and
32 credit certificate, diploma, and degree programs.

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

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

2 The department of education, in coordination with the
3 community colleges, the department of economic development,
4 and Iowa workforce development, shall adopt rules pursuant to
5 chapter 17A and this chapter to implement the provisions of
6 this chapter. Regional advisory boards established pursuant
7 to section 84A.4 shall be consulted in the development and
8 implementation of rules to be adopted pursuant to this chapter.

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

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

12 **Sec. 10. NEW SECTION. 261G.2 Gap tuition assistance program**
13 **and fund.**

14 1. A gap tuition assistance program is established to
15 provide grants for need-based tuition assistance to applicants
16 to enable completion of continuing education certificate
17 training programs for in-demand occupations.

18 2. There is established for the community colleges a
19 gap tuition assistance fund in the state treasury to be
20 administered by the department of education. There is
21 appropriated from the general fund of the state to the gap
22 tuition assistance fund for each fiscal year the sum of five
23 million dollars for the purpose of implementing the gap tuition
24 assistance program. The aggregate total of grants awarded
25 shall not be more than five million dollars during a fiscal
26 year. Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys in the fund at the
27 end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund of the
28 state. Notwithstanding section 12C.7, subsection 2, interest
29 or earnings on moneys in the fund shall be credited to the
30 fund.

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

33 1. The department of education shall adopt rules pursuant to
34 this chapter defining eligibility criteria for persons applying
35 to receive tuition assistance under this chapter.

1 2. Eligibility for tuition assistance under this chapter
2 shall be based on financial need. Criteria to be assessed in
3 determining financial need shall include but is not limited to:
4 *a.* The applicant's family income for the twelve months prior
5 to the date of application.
6 *b.* The applicant's family size.
7 *c.* The applicant's county of residence.
8 3. *a.* The department of education shall only approve an
9 applicant for tuition assistance under this chapter if the
10 community college receiving the application determines the
11 applicant has a demonstrated capacity to achieve the following
12 outcomes:
13 (1) The ability to complete an eligible certificate
14 program.
15 (2) The ability to enter a postsecondary certificate,
16 diploma, or degree program for credit.
17 (3) The ability to gain full-time employment.
18 (4) The ability to maintain full-time employment over time.
19 *b.* The community college receiving the application shall
20 only approve an applicant for tuition assistance under this
21 chapter if the community college determines the applicant
22 has a strong likelihood of achieving the outcomes described
23 in paragraph "a" after considering factors including but not
24 limited to:
25 (1) Barriers that may prevent an applicant from completing
26 the certificate program.
27 (2) Barriers that may prevent an applicant from gaining
28 employment in an in-demand occupation.
29 4. Applicants may be found eligible for partial or total
30 tuition assistance.
31 5. Tuition assistance shall not be approved when the
32 community college receiving the application determines that
33 funding for an applicant's participation in an eligible
34 certificate program is available from any other public or
35 private funding source.

1 Sec. 12. NEW SECTION. 261G.4 Applicants for tuition
2 assistance — additional provisions.

3 1. An applicant for tuition assistance under this
4 chapter shall provide to the community college receiving the
5 application documentation of all sources of income.

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

8 3. An application shall be valid for six months from the
9 date of signature on the application.

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

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

16 Sec. 13. NEW SECTION. 261G.5 Eligible costs.

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

19 1. Tuition.

20 2. Direct training costs.

21 3. Required books and equipment.

22 4. Fees including but not limited to fees for industry
23 testing services and background check testing services.

24 Sec. 14. NEW SECTION. 261G.6 Eligible certificate programs.

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

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

30 *a.* Offers a state, national, or locally recognized
31 certificate.

32 *b.* Offers preparation for a professional examination or
33 licensure.

34 *c.* Provides endorsement for an existing credential or
35 license.

1 *d.* Represents recognized skill standards defined by an
2 industrial sector.

3 *e.* Offers a similar credential or training.

4 2. The program offers training or a credential in an
5 in-demand occupation. For the purposes of this chapter,
6 "*in-demand occupation*" includes occupations in the following
7 industries:

8 *a.* Information technology.

9 *b.* Health care.

10 *c.* Advanced manufacturing.

11 *d.* Transportation and logistics.

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

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

15 An applicant for tuition assistance under this chapter shall
16 complete an initial assessment administered by the community
17 college receiving the application to determine the applicant's
18 readiness to complete an eligible certificate program. The
19 assessment shall include assessments for completion of a
20 national career readiness certificate, including the areas of
21 reading for information, applied mathematics, and locating
22 information. An applicant must achieve a bronze-level
23 certificate or the minimum score required for an eligible
24 certificate program, whichever is higher, in order to be
25 approved for tuition assistance. An applicant shall complete
26 any additional assessments and occupational research required
27 by an eligible certificate program.

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

29 An applicant for tuition assistance under this chapter shall
30 meet with a member of the staff for an eligible certificate
31 program offered by the community college receiving the
32 application. The staff member shall discuss the relevant
33 industry, any applicable occupational research, and any
34 applicable training relating to the eligible certificate
35 program. The discussion shall include an evaluation of

1 the applicant's capabilities, needs, family situation, work
2 history, educational background, attitude and motivation,
3 employment skills, vocational potential, and employment
4 barriers. The discussion shall also include potential start
5 dates, support needs, and other requirements for an eligible
6 certificate program.

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

8 1. A participant in an eligible certificate program who
9 receives tuition assistance pursuant to this chapter shall do
10 all of the following:

11 a. Maintain regular contact with staff members for the
12 certificate program to document the applicant's progress in the
13 program.

14 b. Sign a release form to provide relevant information to
15 community college faculty or case managers.

16 c. Discuss with staff members for the certificate program
17 any issues that may impact the participant's ability to
18 complete the certificate program, obtain employment, and
19 maintain employment over time.

20 d. Attend all required courses regularly.

21 e. Meet with staff members for the certificate program to
22 develop a job search plan.

23 2. A community college may terminate tuition assistance
24 for a participant who fails to meet the requirements of this
25 section.

26 Sec. 18. NEW SECTION. **261G.10 Oversight.**

27 1. The department of education, in coordination with the
28 community colleges, shall establish a steering committee. The
29 steering committee shall determine if the performance measures
30 of the gap tuition assistance program are being met and shall
31 take necessary steps to correct any deficiencies. The steering
32 committee shall meet at least quarterly to evaluate and monitor
33 the performance of the gap tuition assistance program.

34 2. The department of education, in coordination with the
35 community colleges, shall develop a common intake tracking

1 system that shall be implemented consistently by each
2 participating community college.

3 3. The department of education shall coordinate statewide
4 oversight, evaluation, and reporting efforts for the gap
5 tuition assistance program.

6 Sec. 19. NEW SECTION. 261G.11 Rules.

7 The department of education, in consultation with the
8 community colleges, shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A
9 and this chapter to implement the provisions of this chapter.

10 EXPLANATION

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

34 The bill also requires eligible projects to further
35 partnerships that link the community colleges to industry and

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

16 The bill also establishes the gap tuition assistance program
17 and fund to provide need-based tuition assistance to applicants
18 to enable completion of continuing education certificate
19 training programs for in-demand occupations. The bill
20 establishes the fund in the treasury for community colleges.
21 The bill provides for an appropriation of \$5 million to the
22 fund each fiscal year from the general fund of the state. The
23 fund is to be administered by the department of education and
24 may pay out up to \$5 million per fiscal year. The bill provides
25 that notwithstanding Code section 8.33, moneys in the fund at
26 the end of a fiscal year will not revert to the general fund of
27 the state, and notwithstanding Code section 12C.7, subsection
28 2, interest or earnings on moneys in the fund will be credited
29 to the fund.

30 The bill sets out criteria for eligible applicants based
31 on financial need. The bill provides that applicants must
32 demonstrate a capacity for and likelihood of achieving certain
33 outcomes. The bill prohibits the approval of a grant for an
34 applicant who has other sources of funding available. The bill
35 sets out what costs are eligible for coverage by a grant. The

1 bill defines what certificate programs are eligible for grant
2 funding. The bill requires such programs to be in certain
3 in-demand occupations. The bill requires an applicant to
4 undergo an initial assessment and an interview with a staff
5 member of the certificate program to be pursued before a grant
6 can be approved. The bill sets out various requirements for
7 approved participants in an eligible certificate program and
8 provides that failure to meet the requirements can result
9 in termination of the assistance. The bill provides for
10 oversight functions for the program, including the formation
11 of a steering committee. The bill directs the department of
12 education, in consultation with community colleges, to adopt
13 rules pursuant to Code chapter 17A to implement the program.