

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3246

To award funds to States and local areas for subsidized employment programs
for youth.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 14, 2021

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois (for himself, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. POCAN, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. BUSH, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. NORTON, Mr. EVANS, Mr. CARSON, Mr. TRONE, and Mr. KAHELE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To award funds to States and local areas for subsidized
employment programs for youth.

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 “Connecting Youth to
5 Jobs Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

7 The purposes of this Act are to—

1 (1) offer employment to all young people who
2 seek it, especially those who have been historically
3 disadvantaged;

4 (2) create subsidized employment opportunities
5 for young people to address National, State, and
6 local priorities, such as infrastructure enhancement,
7 manufacturing, public works, community develop-
8 ment, and the arts; and

9 (3) support young people with services, includ-
10 ing housing, healthcare, transportation, child care,
11 and access to technology.

12 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

13 In this Act:

14 (1) **QUALIFYING EMERGENCY.**—The term
15 “qualifying emergency” means—

16 (A) a public health emergency declared by
17 the Secretary of Health and Human Services
18 pursuant to section 319 of the Public Health
19 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d);

20 (B) an event for which the President de-
21 clared a major disaster or an emergency under
22 section 401 or 501, respectively, of the Robert
23 T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency As-
24 sistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170 and 5191); or

1 (C) a national emergency declared by the
2 President under section 201 of the National
3 Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

4 (2) ELIGIBLE YOUTH.—The term “eligible
5 youth” means an individual who is not younger than
6 age 14 and not older than age 24, without regard
7 to immigration status or past or current involvement
8 with the juvenile or criminal justice system.

9 (3) ESEA TERMS.—The terms “local edu-
10 cational agency” and “State educational agency”
11 have the meanings given the terms in section 8101
12 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of
13 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

14 (4) HIGH-POVERTY AREA.—The term “high-
15 poverty area” means a census tract with a youth
16 poverty rate of at least 20 percent during the most
17 recent 5 consecutive years.

18 (5) HISTORICALLY HIGH YOUTH UNEMPLOY-
19 MENT LEVELS.—The term “historically high youth
20 unemployment levels” means any local area with a
21 youth unemployment rate of at least 10 percent, as
22 measured over the most recent decennial censuses,
23 or by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the most
24 recent 5-year period for which data are available.

1 (6) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
2 term “institution of higher education” has the
3 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher
4 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

5 (7) PUBLIC EDUCATION ENTITY.—The term
6 “public education entities” includes—

7 (A) a local educational agency;

8 (B) a State educational agency; or

9 (C) a public institution of higher edu-
10 cation.

11 (8) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM.—
12 The term “registered apprenticeship programs”
13 means an apprenticeship program registered under
14 the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as
15 the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664,
16 chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.), including any re-
17 quirement, standard, or rule promulgated under
18 such Act, as such requirement, standard, or rule was
19 in effect on December 30, 2019 (or successor re-
20 quirements, standards or rule).

21 (9) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
22 the Secretary of Labor.

23 (10) SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.—The term “sup-
24 portive services” means services such as transpor-
25 tation, child care, dependent care, housing, and

1 needs-related payments, that are necessary to enable
2 an individual to participate in activities authorized
3 under this Act.

4 (11) WORK-BASED LEARNING.—The term
5 “work-based learning” has the meaning given the
6 term in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and
7 Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302),
8 except that such term includes work-based learning
9 in virtual settings.

10 (12) WIOA TERMS.—The terms “in-demand in-
11 dustry sector or occupation”, “individual with a dis-
12 ability”, “in-school youth” , “local area”, “local
13 board”, “out-of-school youth”, “outlying area”,
14 “poverty line”, “recognized postsecondary creden-
15 tial”, “State”, “State board”, and “unit of general
16 local government” have the meanings given the
17 terms in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and
18 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

19 (13) YOUTH WITH A BARRIER TO EMPLOY-
20 MENT.—The term “youth with a barrier to employ-
21 ment” means an eligible youth who—

22 (A) is a homeless child or youth (as such
23 term is defined in section 725 of the McKinney-
24 Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.
25 11434a));

(B) has been incarcerated or has past or current involvement with the criminal or juvenile justice systems;

(C) is a current or former foster youth;

(D) is an individual with a disability;

(E) is pregnant or parenting;

(F) is a school dropout (as defined by State law);

(G) is from a family with an income level at or below 200 percent of the poverty line; or

(H) is a member of another young-adult population, including racial groups, that is experiencing disparate levels of youth disconnection, as defined by the local workforce development board of the local area in which the youth resides.

TITLE I—YOUTH PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

SEC. 101. FORMULA GRANTS TO STATES AND LOCAL AREAS.

(a) FUNDING ALLOTMENTS AND ALLOCATIONS.—

(1) STATE ALLOTMENTS.—To assist States and outlying areas, and to enable States and outlying areas to assist local areas, in carrying out subsidized employment programs described in subsection (b) for youth with a barrier to employment, from the funds

1 appropriated under section 105(a), the Secretary of
2 Labor shall—

3 (A) make an allotment in accordance with
4 section 127(b)(1)(C)(ii) of the Workforce Inno-
5 vation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
6 3162(b)(1)(C)(ii)) to each State that meets the
7 requirements of section 102 or 103 of such Act
8 (29 U.S.C. 3112, 3113); and

9 (B) award a grant to each outlying area
10 that complies with the requirements of title I of
11 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
12 (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) to carry out subsidized
13 youth employment programs for such youth.

14 (2) WITHIN STATE ALLOCATION.—

15 (A) STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES.—Each State
16 shall reserve 25 percent of the allotment re-
17 ceived under paragraph (1)(A) to carry out
18 statewide subsidized employment programs de-
19 scribed in subsection (b).

20 (B) ALLOCATIONS TO LOCAL AREAS.—A
21 Governor of a State that receives an allotment
22 under paragraph (1), in coordination with rel-
23 evant State and local stakeholders, shall use
24 any remaining amounts (after reserving funds
25 under subparagraph (A)), to allocate funds to

1 local areas, as long as not less than 65 percent
2 of such remaining amount is allocated to—

3 (i) high-poverty local areas with the
4 highest youth unemployment rate com-
5 pared to other local areas in the State; and

6 (ii) local areas with historically high
7 levels of youth unemployment within the
8 State.

9 (b) USES OF FUNDS.—

10 (1) SUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.—

11 (A) IN GENERAL.—Funds allotted to
12 States for statewide programs, and funds allo-
13 cated to local areas under subsection (a), shall
14 be used to carry out subsidized employment
15 programs described in paragraph (3) that—

16 (i) lead to unsubsidized, full-time em-
17 ployment for youth with a barrier to em-
18 ployment in such State or local area; or

19 (ii) provide the necessary skills and
20 competency attainment of at least 1 recog-
21 nized postsecondary credential to further
22 the education or career of such youth.

23 (2) FUNDING DISTRIBUTION.—Of the funds al-
24 lotted to States, or allocated to local areas, as de-
25 scribed in paragraph (1) for a fiscal year:

1 (A) Not less than 60 percent shall be used
2 for wages and employment benefits to individ-
3 uals employed in subsidized employment pro-
4 grams funded under this section.

5 (B) Not less than 30 percent for the first
6 fiscal year for which such funds are so allotted
7 or allocated, and not less than 20 percent for
8 each fiscal year thereafter, shall be used to pro-
9 vide career services described in section
10 134(c)(2) of the Workforce Innovation and Op-
11 portunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3174(c)(2)), training
12 services, or youth workforce investment activi-
13 ties.

14 (C) Any remaining funds may be used for
15 administrative and other allowable costs (such
16 as supplies, materials, equipment, and health
17 and safety resources) incurred by the State or
18 local area, as determined by the Secretary.

19 (3) CONDITIONS.—Except as otherwise deter-
20 mined by the Secretary, the following conditions
21 shall apply to each subsidized employment program
22 funded under this section:

23 (A) Each youth with a barrier to employ-
24 ment residing in the State or local area funding
25 such program shall be entitled to an oppor-

1 tunity to be employed by such program, and no
2 other individual shall be provided such oppor-
3 tunity.

4 (B) Each individual employed under such
5 program shall be paid a wage, which shall at
6 least be the highest of the following:

7 (i) \$15 an hour.

8 (ii) The minimum wage under the ap-
9 plicable State or local minimum wage law.

10 (iii) The prevailing rates of pay for in-
11 dividuals employed in similar occupations
12 by the same employer.

13 (iv) The Federal minimum wage in ef-
14 fect under section 6(a)(1) of the Fair
15 Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C.
16 206(a)(1)).

17 (C) With respect to a wage determined
18 under subparagraph (B), the Secretary may
19 promulgate regulations to increase such wage
20 after consideration of industry, geographical re-
21 gion, skill requirements, and individual pro-
22 ficiency.

23 (D) An individual may self-attest to being
24 a youth with a barrier to employment, and

1 verification of such eligibility may occur after
2 the individual is employed under the program.

3 (E) Earnings from such program shall not
4 be regarded as income and shall not be re-
5 garded as a resource for the month of receipt
6 and the following 12 months, for purposes of
7 determining the eligibility of an individual (or
8 the individual's spouse or family) for benefits or
9 assistance, or the amount or extent of benefits
10 or assistance, under any Federal program or
11 under any State or local program financed in
12 whole or in part with Federal funds.

13 (F) Such program shall coordinate with
14 the workforce systems and activities promoted
15 by the State or local board to connect youth
16 with a barrier to employment to educational or
17 career opportunities.

18 (G) Such program shall establish or ex-
19 pand diversity and inclusion opportunities and
20 collect disaggregated data on related efforts.

21 **SEC. 102. COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—From the amounts appropriated
23 under section 105(b), the Secretary shall award grants,
24 on a competitive basis, to eligible entities for activities de-
25 scribed in subsection (d).

1 (b) REQUIREMENTS ON USES OF FUNDS.—In award-
2 ing funds under this section the Secretary shall ensure the
3 following:

4 (1) DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—Not less
5 than 40 percent of such funds are used to provide
6 direct financial assistance to eligible youth to sup-
7 port such youth with financial needs with respect to
8 entering, remaining enrolled in, and completing a
9 subsidized employment program described in section
10 101(b) (including related costs of training, supplies,
11 food and nutrition, housing, transportation, child
12 care, mental health and substance abuse services,
13 payment of fines, or other targeted costs determined
14 allowable by the Secretary).

15 (2) IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS OR OCCU-
16 PATIONS.—Not less than 40 percent of such funds
17 are used to connect eligible youth to employers for
18 in-demand industry sectors or occupations, work-
19 based learning opportunities, registered apprentice-
20 ship programs, or to reconnect to a public education
21 entity.

22 (3) DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTIVITIES.—
23 Not less than 10 percent of such funds are used for
24 promoting, creating, or expanding diversity and in-

1 clusion activities for the purposes of diversifying
2 workforce systems.

3 (c) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The term “eligible entity”
5 means an entity that the Secretary determines to
6 serve a high number or high percentage of youth
7 with a barrier to employment who are employed in
8 a subsidized employment programs described in sec-
9 tion 101(b).

10 (2) INCLUSIONS.—The term “eligible entity”
11 includes—

12 (A) a community-based organization;

13 (B) a State and unit of general local gov-
14 ernment in a partnership with a community-
15 based organization;

16 (C) a partnership among States and units
17 of general local government, community-based
18 organizations, public education entities, reg-
19 istered apprenticeships, and employers from in-
20 demand industry sectors or occupations;

21 (D) a partnership among community-based
22 organizations and juvenile and adult correc-
23 tional facilities;

24 (E) a labor organization or joint labor-
25 management organization; or

1 (F) a tribal organization (as defined in
2 section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and
3 Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b)) or
4 an urban Indian organization (as defined in
5 section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improve-
6 ment Act (25 U.S.C. 1603))”.

7 (d) USES OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives
8 a grant under this section—

9 (1) shall use the grant to match youth with a
10 barrier to employment to subsidized employment
11 programs funded under section 101, and provide
12 hands-on work experience that does not supplant the
13 work of existing employees; and

14 (2) may use a grant received under this section
15 to carry out 1 or more of the following:

16 (A) Establish or expand diversity and in-
17 clusion opportunities and collect disaggregated
18 data on related efforts.

19 (B) Provide (directly or through partner-
20 ships) technical assistance and supportive serv-
21 ices to eligible youth and their families to help
22 navigate supportive services and other Federal
23 and State assistance programs to support the
24 recruitment, retention, and completion of a pro-
25 gram funded under section 101.

1 (C) Coordinate partnerships with programs
2 funded under section 101 to connect eligible
3 youth to educational or career opportunities, in-
4 cluding to employers for in-demand industry
5 sectors or occupations, work-based learning op-
6 portunities, registered apprenticeship programs,
7 or to reconnect to a public education entity.

8 (D) Form comprehensive youth service de-
9 livery systems to improve education and em-
10 ployment outcomes for youth and to strategi-
11 cally connect local sectors, systems, and re-
12 sources by strategically coordinating resources
13 and public, private, and nonprofit funding to
14 create youth pathways to further the education,
15 skills, and access to jobs and successful careers,
16 by—

17 (i) conducting and improving outreach
18 to underrepresented youth and families
19 with respect to the programs funded under
20 section 101;

21 (ii) making appropriate use of existing
22 education, child welfare, social services,
23 and workforce development data collection
24 systems to facilitate the entity's ability to
25 recruit youth participants; and

1 (iii) developing wide-ranging higher
2 education or employment pathways for
3 youth.

4 (E) Assist in the transition between sub-
5 sidized youth employment programs and unsub-
6 sidized employment or education.

7 (F) In the case of an eligible entity de-
8 scribed in subsection (d)(2)(D), assist in the
9 transition from incarceration with the goal of
10 reducing rates of recidivism and ensuring incar-
11 cerated youth and formerly incarcerated youth
12 have access to employment and educational op-
13 portunities.

14 **SEC. 103. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

15 Nothing in this title shall be construed to prohibit
16 an individual receiving assistance under this title from
17 being represented by a labor organization.

18 **SEC. 104. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION, DATA COLLECTION,**
19 **AND ACCOUNTABILITY.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
21 first grant is awarded under section 101, and annually
22 thereafter, each program funded under section 101 shall
23 be evaluated by the State board of the State receiving an
24 allotment under section 101 to carry out such program

1 or the local board of the local area receiving an allocation
2 under section 101 to carry out such program.

3 (b) PERFORMANCE DATA COLLECTION.—The Sec-
4 retary of Labor shall collect data on—

5 (1) the performance of each program using the
6 disaggregated indicators of performance in section
7 116(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Workforce Innovation and
8 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3141(b)(2)(A)(i));

9 (2) the completion rates of the program;

10 (3) the rate of full-time unsubsidized employ-
11 ment after program completion;

12 (4) the rate of reconnection to public education
13 entities after program completion; and

14 (5) the diversity and equal opportunity in such
15 programs.

16 (c) ACCOUNTABILITY METRICS.—The Secretary shall
17 establish a youth work-readiness indicator.

18 **SEC. 105. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

19 Not later than December 31, 2024, and annually
20 thereafter, the Secretary of Labor shall submit a publicly
21 available report to the Committee on Education and Labor
22 of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
23 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate
24 that includes—

1 (1) a review and assessment of all information
2 related to the programs funded under this Act;

3 (2) any relevant guidance issued by the Sec-
4 retary with respect to such programs; and

5 (3) an analysis of equity, diversity, and inclu-
6 sion activities, best practices, and recommendations
7 for improvement with respect to increasing the suc-
8 cess of such programs and outcomes for youth, and
9 participant demographics (while maintaining privacy
10 protections), disaggregated by race, ethnicity, sex,
11 age, and subpopulations described in subparagraphs
12 (B) and (C) of section 129(a)(1) of the Workforce
13 Innovation and Opportunity Act.

14 **SEC. 106. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

15 (a) MANDATORY FUNDS.—There are authorized to be
16 appropriated, and there are appropriated (in addition to
17 any other amounts appropriated to carry out this section
18 101 and out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise
19 appropriated), such sums as may be necessary to carry
20 out section 101 for fiscal year 2022 and each of the suc-
21 ceeding 9 fiscal years.

22 (b) COMPETITIVE GRANTS.—There are authorized to
23 be appropriated \$10,000,000,000 to carry out section 102
24 for fiscal year 2022 and each of the succeeding 9 fiscal
25 years.

TITLE II—GAO REPORT

SEC. 201. GAO REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the published report in section 105, and every 4 years thereafter, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an independent evaluation of the activities funded under this Act and submit to Congress a report that shall be made publicly available.

(b) EVALUATION.—In conducting the evaluation under subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall consider, as applicable and appropriate, information from the report under section 105.

(c) REPORT.—The report described in subsection (a) shall review, assess, and provide recommendations, as appropriate, on the following:

(1) Compliance with the requirements established under this Act.

(2) The effectiveness of the requirements established under this Act, associated challenges, and trends in the youth progress made toward the goals described in section 101(b)(1)(A).

(3) Federal guidance, best practices, and funding recommendations for related Federal youth employment activities and any innovative State and local actions that improve or further the education

1 or career of youth participants, including employ-
2 ment opportunities that lead to long-term, unsub-
3 sidized employment.

4 **TITLE III—YOUTH STUDENT IN-**
5 **COME EXCLUSION UNDER**
6 **THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRI-**
7 **TION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

8 **SEC. 301. YOUTH STUDENT INCOME EXCLUDED UNDER THE**
9 **FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008.**

10 Section 5(d)(7) of the Food and Nutrition Act of
11 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(d)(7)) is amended by inserting be-
12 fore the semicolon at the end the following:

13 “and income earned by a household member who is
14 less than 22 years of age, who is an elementary or
15 secondary school student, and who lives with a nat-
16 ural, adoptive, or stepparent”.

○