

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 6044

To promote registered apprenticeships and other work-based learning programs for small and medium-sized businesses within in-demand industry sectors, through the establishment and support of industry or sector partnerships.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Ms. BONAMICI (for herself, Mr. FERGUSON, Ms. STEVENS, and Mr. GUTHRIE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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 promote registered apprenticeships and other work-based learning programs for small and medium-sized businesses within in-demand industry sectors, through the establishment and support of industry or sector partnerships.

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 “Promoting Apprentice-  
5 ships through Regional Training Networks for Employers

1 Required Skills Act of 2023” or the “PARTNERS Act  
2 of 2023”.

3 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

4 The purpose of this Act is to promote registered ap-  
5 prenticeships and other work-based learning programs for  
6 small and medium-sized businesses within in-demand in-  
7 dustry sectors, through the establishment and support of  
8 industry or sector partnerships.

9 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

10 In this Act:

11 (1) **ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIP.**—The term “eligi-  
12 ble partnership” means an industry or sector part-  
13 nership as defined in section 3 of the Workforce In-  
14 novation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102) that  
15 submits and obtains approval of an application con-  
16 sistent with section 5(c).

17 (2) **IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR.**—The term  
18 “in-demand industry sector” means a sector de-  
19 scribed in subparagraphs (A)(i) and (B) of section  
20 3(23) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity  
21 Act (29 U.S.C. 3102(23)).

22 (3) **LOCAL OR REGIONAL.**—The term “local or  
23 regional”, used with respect to an entity, means that  
24 the entity provides services in, respectively, a local  
25 area or region.

1           (4) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP.—The term  
2           “registered apprenticeship” means an apprenticeship  
3           registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (com-  
4           monly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”;  
5           50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

6           (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “work-based  
7           learning program” means a program that pro-  
8           vides workers with paid work experience and  
9           corresponding classroom instruction, delivered  
10          in an employment relationship that both the  
11          business and worker intend to lead to con-  
12          tinuing employment after the program ends.

13          (B) WORK EXPERIENCE.—In subpara-  
14          graph (A), the term “paid work experience” in-  
15          cludes training by an employer that is provided  
16          to a paid employee while engaged in productive  
17          work in a job that provides knowledge or skills  
18          essential to the full and adequate performance  
19          of the job.

20          (5) WORKFORCE TERMS.—The terms “Gov-  
21          ernor”, “individual with a barrier to employment”,  
22          “industry or sector partnership”, “local area”, “local  
23          board”, “State board”, “outlying area”, “recognized  
24          postsecondary credential”, “region”, “State”, and  
25          “supportive services”, used with respect to activities

1 supported under this Act, have the meanings given  
2 the terms in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation  
3 and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

4 (6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
5 the Secretary of Labor.

6 **SEC. 4. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.**

7 From funds paid into the general fund of the Treas-  
8 ury and available under section 286(s)(2) of the Immigra-  
9 tion and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1356(s)(2)), the Sec-  
10 retary shall carry out this Act.

11 **SEC. 5. ALLOTMENTS TO STATES.**

12 (a) RESERVATION.—Of the amounts available for this  
13 Act under section 4, the Secretary may reserve—

14 (1) not more than 5 percent of those amounts  
15 for the costs of technical assistance and Federal ad-  
16 ministration of this Act;

17 (2) not more than 2 percent of those amounts  
18 for the costs of evaluations conducted under section  
19 8(b); and

20 (3) not more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 1 percent of such  
21 amounts to provide assistance to the outlying areas.

22 (b) ALLOTMENTS.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts available for  
24 this Act under section 4 that remain after the Sec-  
25 retary makes the reservations under subsection (a),

1 the Secretary shall, for the purpose of supporting  
2 (which may include assistance in establishing ex-  
3 panded) local or regional eligible partnerships to  
4 support work-based learning programs under this  
5 Act, make allotments to eligible States in accordance  
6 with clauses (ii) through (v) of section 132(b)(1)(B)  
7 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
8 (29 U.S.C. 3162(b)(1)(C)), subject to paragraph  
9 (2).

10 (2) APPLICATION.—For purposes of applying  
11 the clauses described in paragraph (1), under para-  
12 graph (1), the Secretary—

13 (A) shall not apply subclauses (I) and (III)  
14 of clause (iv) with respect to the first fiscal year  
15 after the date of enactment of this Act;

16 (B) shall apply clause (iv)(II) by sub-  
17 stituting “0.5 percent of the remaining amounts  
18 described in paragraph (1)” for the total de-  
19 scribed in that clause;

20 (C) shall not apply clause (iv)(IV);

21 (D) shall apply clause (v)(II) by sub-  
22 stituting the term “allotment percentage”, used  
23 with respect to the second full fiscal year after  
24 the date of enactment of this Act, or a subse-  
25 quent fiscal year, means a percentage of the re-

1           maintaining amounts described in paragraph (1)  
2           that is received through an allotment made  
3           under this subsection for the fiscal year for the  
4           two sentences in that clause; and

5           (E) shall apply clause (v)(III) by sub-  
6           stituting “a work-based learning program car-  
7           ried out under this Act” for “a program of  
8           workforce investment activities carried out  
9           under this subtitle”.

10          (3) USE OF UNALLOTTED FUNDS.—If a State  
11         fails to meet the requirements for an allotment  
12         under this subsection, the Secretary may allot funds  
13         that are not allotted under paragraphs (1) and (2)  
14         to eligible States under a formula based on the for-  
15         mula specified in section 132(c) of the Workforce In-  
16         novation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3173(c)).

17          (4) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term  
18         “eligible State” means a State that meets the re-  
19         quirements of section 102 or 103 of the Workforce  
20         Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3112,  
21         3113) and subsection (c).

22          (c) STATE ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive an  
23         allotment under subsection (b), a State, in consultation  
24         with State boards and local boards, shall submit an appli-  
25         cation to the Secretary, at such time, in such manner, and

1 containing a description of the activities to be carried out  
2 with the grant funds. At a minimum, the application shall  
3 include information on—

4 (1) the local or regional industry or sector part-  
5 nerships that will be supported, including the lead  
6 partners for the partnerships, and how the partner-  
7 ships will work to engage small and medium-sized  
8 businesses, as applicable, in the activities of the  
9 partnerships;

10 (2) the in-demand industry sectors that will be  
11 served, including how such industry sectors were  
12 identified, and how the activities of the partnerships  
13 will align with State, regional, and local plans as re-  
14 quired under title I of the Workforce Innovation and  
15 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3111 et seq.);

16 (3) the registered apprenticeship programs or  
17 other work-based learning programs to be supported  
18 through the partnerships;

19 (4) the populations that will receive services, in-  
20 cluding individuals with barriers to employment and  
21 populations that were historically underrepresented  
22 in the industry sectors to be served through the  
23 partnerships;

24 (5) the services, including business engagement,  
25 classroom instruction, and support services (includ-

1 ing at least 6 months of post-employment support  
2 services), that will be supported through the grant  
3 funds;

4 (6) the recognized postsecondary credentials  
5 that workers will obtain through participation in the  
6 program and the quality of the program that leads  
7 to the credentials;

8 (7) levels of performance to be achieved on the  
9 performance indicators described in section 8, to  
10 measure progress towards expanding work-based  
11 learning programs;

12 (8) how local or regional partnerships will lever-  
13 age additional resources, including funding provided  
14 under title I of the Workforce Innovation and Op-  
15 portunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3111 et seq.) and non-  
16 Federal resources, to support the activities carried  
17 out under this Act; and

18 (9) such other subjects as the Secretary may  
19 require.

20 (d) REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS.—The Secretary shall  
21 review applications submitted under subsection (c) in con-  
22 sultation with the Secretary of Education and the Sec-  
23 retary of Health and Human Services.

24 **SEC. 6. GRANTS TO PARTNERSHIPS.**

25 (a) GRANTS.—



1           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Governor of a State  
2 that receives an allotment under section 5 shall use  
3 the funds made available through the allotment and  
4 not reserved under subsection (d) to award grants to  
5 eligible partnerships. The Governor shall award the  
6 grants for the purpose of assisting (which may in-  
7 clude establishing or expanding) local or regional in-  
8 dustry or sector partnerships that are identified in  
9 the application submitted under section 5(c), to  
10 carry out activities described in section 7.

11           (2) PERIOD AND AMOUNT OF GRANT.—A State  
12 may make a grant under this section for a period of  
13 3 years, and in an amount of not more than  
14 \$500,000.

15           (3) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—The Governor of  
16 a State that receives an allotment under section 5  
17 for a fiscal year may use the funds made available  
18 through the allotment during that year or the 2 sub-  
19 sequent fiscal years.

20           (b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant  
21 under this section, an industry or sector partnership de-  
22 scribed in subsection (a)(1) shall—

23           (1) submit an application to the State at such  
24 time, in such manner, and containing such informa-  
25 tion as the State may require; and

1           (2) designate a partner in the industry or sector  
2           partnership, to serve as the fiscal agent for purposes  
3           of the grant.

4           (c) AWARDS OF GRANTS.—

5           (1) PARTICIPATION IN MULTIPLE ELIGIBLE  
6           PARTNERSHIPS.—Subject to paragraph (2), a State  
7           may award grants under this section in a way that  
8           results in an entity being represented in more than  
9           one partnership that receives such a grant.

10          (2) GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY.—In making the  
11          grants, a State shall ensure that there is geographic  
12          diversity in the areas in which activities will be car-  
13          ried out under the grants.

14          (d) ADMINISTRATION.—The State may reserve not  
15          more than 5 percent of the amount of an allotment under  
16          section 5 for the administration of the grants awarded  
17          under this section.

18       **SEC. 7. USE OF FUNDS.**

19          (a) IN GENERAL.—An eligible partnership that re-  
20          ceives a grant under section 6 shall use the grant funds  
21          to support a registered apprenticeship or other work-based  
22          learning program. The eligible partnership shall use the  
23          grant funds to support the activities described in sub-  
24          sections (b) and (c) and such other strategies as may be  
25          necessary to support the development and implementation

1 of work-based learning programs, and participant reten-  
2 tion in and completion of those programs. The partnership  
3 may use the grant funds to establish or expand eligible  
4 partnerships.

5 (b) BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT.—The eligible partner-  
6 ship shall use grant funds to provide services to engage  
7 businesses in work-based learning programs, which may  
8 include assisting a small or medium-sized business with—

9 (1) the navigation of the registration process  
10 for a sponsor of a registered apprenticeship pro-  
11 gram;

12 (2) the connection of the business with an edu-  
13 cation provider to develop classroom instruction to  
14 complement on-the-job learning;

15 (3) the development of a curriculum for a work-  
16 based learning program;

17 (4) the employment of workers in a work-based  
18 learning program for a transitional period before the  
19 business hires an individual for continuing employ-  
20 ment;

21 (5) the provision of training to managers and  
22 front-line workers to serve as trainers or mentors to  
23 workers in the work-based learning program;

24 (6) the provision of career awareness activities;  
25 and

1           (7) the recruitment of individuals to participate  
2           in a work-based learning program from individuals  
3           receiving additional workforce and human services,  
4           including—

5                   (A) workers in programs under the Work-  
6                   force Innovation and Opportunity Act (29  
7                   U.S.C. 3101 et seq.);

8                   (B) recipients of assistance through the  
9                   supplemental nutrition assistance program es-  
10                  tablished under the Food and Nutrition Act of  
11                  2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.); and

12                  (C) recipients of assistance through the  
13                  program of block grants to States for tem-  
14                  porary assistance for needy families established  
15                  under part A of title IV of the Social Security  
16                  Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).

17           (c) SUPPORT SERVICES FOR WORKERS.—

18                   (1) IN GENERAL.—The eligible partnership  
19                   shall use grant funds to provide support services for  
20                   workers to assure their success in work-based learn-  
21                   ing programs, which may include—

22                           (A) connection of individuals with adult  
23                           basic education during pre-work-based learning  
24                           or training, and during the period of employ-  
25                           ment;

1 (B) connection of individuals with pre-  
2 work-based learning or training, including  
3 through a pre-apprenticeship program;

4 (C) provision of additional mentorship and  
5 retention supports for individuals pre-work-  
6 based learning or training, and during the pe-  
7 riod of employment;

8 (D) provision of tools, work attire, and  
9 other required items necessary to start employ-  
10 ment pre-work-based learning or training, and  
11 during the period of employment; and

12 (E) provision of transportation, child care  
13 services, or other support services pre-work-  
14 based learning or training, and during the pe-  
15 riod of employment, except that not more than  
16 5 percent of grant funds received by an eligible  
17 partnership may be used for the provision of  
18 such services.

19 (2) LENGTH OF SERVICES.—Each eligible part-  
20 nership shall provide support services for workers for  
21 not less than 12 months after the date of placement  
22 of an individual in a work-based learning program.  
23 That 12-month period shall include a period of pre-  
24 work-based learning or training, a transitional pe-

1       riod of employment as described in subsection  
2       (b)(4), and a period of continuing employment.

3       **SEC. 8. PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY.**

4       (a) LOCAL REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after  
5       receiving a grant under section 6, and annually thereafter,  
6       each eligible partnership in a State shall conduct an eval-  
7       uation and submit to the State a local report containing  
8       information on—

9               (1) levels of performance achieved by the eligi-  
10       ble partnership with respect to the performance indi-  
11       cators under section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce  
12       Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.  
13       3141(b)(2)(A))—

14               (A) for all workers in the work-based  
15       learning program involved; and

16               (B) for all such workers, disaggregated by  
17       each population specified in section 3(24) of the  
18       Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29  
19       U.S.C. 3102(24)) and by race, ethnicity, sex,  
20       and age; and

21               (2) levels of performance achieved by the eligi-  
22       ble partnership with respect to the performance indi-  
23       cators under that section 116(b)(2)(A)—

1 (A) for individuals with barriers to employ-  
2 ment in the work-based learning program in-  
3 volved; and

4 (B) for all such individuals, disaggregated  
5 by each population specified in section 3(24) of  
6 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
7 and by race, ethnicity, sex, and age.

8 (b) STATE REPORTS.—Not later than 24 months  
9 after receiving initial local reports under subsection (a)  
10 (but in no case less than 18 months after the cor-  
11 responding grants are awarded) and annually thereafter,  
12 the State shall conduct an evaluation and submit a report  
13 to the Secretary containing—

14 (1) the information provided by the eligible  
15 partnerships through the local reports; and

16 (2) the State level of performance, aggregated  
17 across all eligible partnerships, with respect to the  
18 performance indicators described in subsection (a).

19 **SEC. 9. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**

20 (a) AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS AND WORKFORCE  
21 IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1998.—Section 414(c) of the  
22 American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement  
23 Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2916a) is repealed.

1 (b) IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT.—Section  
2 286(s)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8  
3 U.S.C. 1356(s)(2)) is amended to read as follows:

4 “(2) USE OF FEES FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING  
5 PROGRAMS.—50 percent of amounts deposited into  
6 the H–1B Nonimmigrant Petitioner Account shall  
7 remain available to the Secretary of Labor until ex-  
8 pended to carry out the PARTNERS Act.”.

○