



Senate Bill No. 383

Public Act No. 26-85

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF WORKFORCE STRATEGY RELATED TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 4-124xx of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

[(a) The Chief Workforce Officer, appointed pursuant to section 4-124w, in consultation with the Labor Commissioner, the Commissioners of Social Services, Developmental Disabilities, Public Health, Higher Education and Aging and Disability Services, the Governor's Workforce Council, the Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council and regional workforce development boards, shall establish a Human Services Career Pipeline program to ensure a sufficient number of trained providers are available to serve the needs of persons in the state with an intellectual disability, other developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, cognitive impairment or mental illness and elderly persons. Such pipeline shall include training and certification for cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first aid, medication administration, job placement and incentives for retention in the human services labor sector upon successful completion of the program.]

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[(b)] (a) The Chief Workforce Officer, appointed pursuant to section 4-124w, shall consult with the Labor Commissioner and the Commissioners of Aging and Disability Services, Developmental Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Public Health and Social Services, the Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council to determine: (1) The greatest needs for human services providers to serve the needs of persons in the state with an intellectual disability, a developmental disability, a physical disability, a cognitive impairment or a behavioral health disorder and elderly persons in the state, and (2) barriers to hiring and retaining qualified providers. The Chief Workforce Officer shall assist local and regional boards of education in enhancing existing partnerships or establishing new partnerships with providers of human services and higher education institutions to provide a pathway to a diploma, credential, certificate or license and a job providing human services.

[(c)] (b) The Chief Workforce Officer, in consultation with the Labor Commissioner, shall develop a plan for the Human Services Career Pipeline program that includes, but shall not be limited to: (1) A strategy to increase the number of state residents pursuing careers in human services, (2) recommended salary and working conditions necessary to retain an adequate number of human services providers to serve state residents, and (3) estimated funding needed to support the Human Services Career Pipeline program. Not later than July 1, [2024] 2026, the Chief Workforce Officer shall submit a report on the plan, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations, aging, higher education and employment advancement, human services, labor and public health. The report shall include the Chief Workforce Officer's recommendations for establishing the career pipeline and estimates of funding needed to implement the pipeline.

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[(d) The Chief Workforce Officer shall, within available appropriations, establish such career pipeline and, if such pipeline is established, submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, not later than January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, regarding the development and implementation of the pipeline to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations, aging, higher education and employment advancement, human services, labor and public health. For purposes of this section, "human services labor sector" means persons trained to provide services to persons with an intellectual disability; other developmental disabilities, including, but not limited to, autism spectrum disorder; physical disabilities; cognitive impairment or mental illness; and elderly persons.]

Sec. 2. Section 4-124mm of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) There is established an account known as the Connecticut Career Accelerator Program Account that is within the Office of Workforce Strategy for the purpose of supporting commercial driver's license training and training for careers identified by the Office of Workforce Strategy, pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section, within the CareerConneCT workforce training program. The account shall contain any moneys required by law to be deposited therein and such moneys shall be held in such account. The account may accept gifts, grants or donations from public or private sources. Any balance remaining in the account at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried forward in the account for the fiscal year next succeeding. The account may be used for the purposes of the program described in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) (1) Not later than July 1, 2024, the Office of Workforce Strategy shall design a program to support individuals pursuing training to obtain a commercial driver's license, including through the use of

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income share agreements or equivalent financial instruments. The Office of Workforce Strategy may competitively procure a consultant to support the design and implementation of the program. The program shall be implemented not later than January 1, [2025] 2027.

(2) Not later than July 1, 2025, the Office of Workforce Strategy shall identify (A) additional training opportunities [, for careers requiring not more than one year of training,] to expand the program designed pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, and (B) training providers to use for such additional training opportunities. Such additional training opportunities may be added to or removed from such program, subject to the approval of the Chief Workforce Officer.

(c) The design of the program under subsection (b) of this section shall take into consideration: (1) Developing metrics for identifying qualified training providers, (2) developing incentive-based payments for training providers, such as paying a trainer eighty per cent of a student's tuition prior to providing any training and paying the trainer the remaining tuition upon placement of the student in a job, and (3) developing a method for targeting potential students for the program. The program shall include terms and conditions for the payment obligations undertaken by individuals who obtain tuition assistance from the account. The program shall require an individual who receives a direct tuition payment from the account to repay such payment if such individual is placed in a job after receiving training through the program that provides the individual with a higher income than such individual received prior to participating in such training. No interest shall be charged on any tuition repayment obligation. The program shall also consider offering wrap-around supports, such as stipends, child care services, counseling and other supports identified by the Office of Workforce Strategy. An individual who receives such supports shall not be required to repay the account for such supports.

(d) The Office of Workforce Strategy shall develop a marketing plan

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to attract individuals who fit the eligibility criteria for participation in the program, specifically targeted at recruiting individuals who are underserved, disadvantaged, unemployed, underemployed, dislocated workers, receiving temporary assistance for needy families, supplemental nutrition assistance program or any other public assistance benefits, formerly incarcerated or veterans of the armed services. The marketing plan shall include outreach to various state agencies, the regional workforce investment boards, transit authorities, housing authorities, the Office of Early Childhood and other partners as identified by the Office of Workforce Strategy.

[(e) (1) Not later than July 1, 2025, the Office of Workforce Strategy shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on the design and implementation of the commercial driver's license training program established under this section to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, commerce, education, finance, revenue and bonding, higher education and employment advancement and labor and public employees.

(2) Not later than July 1, 2026, the Office of Workforce Strategy shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, regarding the identification of additional training opportunities and training providers pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, commerce, education, finance, revenue and bonding, higher education and employment advancement, and labor and public employees.]

[(f)] (e) Not later than [July 1, 2026] October 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the Office of Workforce Strategy shall [submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on the commercial driver's license training program established under this section to the

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Governor and to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, commerce, education, finance, revenue and bonding, higher education and employment advancement and labor and public employees] include, as part of the annual report required pursuant to subsection (f) of section 4-124w, a report on the program for training opportunities established pursuant to this section. Such report may include information on the (1) program completion and job placement rate of individuals participating in the program; (2) starting wages, wage gains and wage growth of individuals employed after participating in the program; (3) funds used as payment obligations, grants and wraparound services for individuals participating in the program; (4) percentage of program participants in compliance with repayment obligations; and (5) total repayments received.

Sec. 3. Section 10-265s of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective July 1, 2026*)