

Workforce Development Coordination Act Summary

This bill consists of three sections. **Section 1** creates the **Coordinating Council for Workforce Development**, provides for its membership and responsibilities, and describes the roles of its operating agencies. **Section 2** establishes the **Career Pathways for Success Program**. **Section 3** allows for tax credits for entities who enter into public-private workforce development partnerships and specifies the requirements for the credits.

SECTION 1

The **Coordinating Council for Workforce Development** would consist of the following members, all serving ex officio:

1. Secretary, Department of Commerce
2. Director, Technical College System
3. Director, Department of Employment and Workforce
4. State Superintendent, Department of Education
5. Chairman, Commission on Higher Education (or successor entity)

The Council would rely heavily on partnerships with and guidance from an **advisory group** of other workforce development stakeholders in our state, which would be comprised of representatives from the following agencies, entities, and communities:

Coordinating Council for Economic Development
Department of Social Services
Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
Department of Corrections
Department of Juvenile Justice
Local/regional Workforce Investment Boards
Non-profit/community organizations
Large businesses (50+ employees)
Small businesses (<50 employees)

The purpose of the Council is to coordinate the state's workforce development system in a comprehensive and integrated manner by creating and maintaining a strategic plan for workforce development that addresses three major components of workforce development--economic development, workforce readiness, and employment/job placement assistance.

The operating agencies of the Council (Department of Commerce, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, Department of Employment and Workforce, State Department of Education, and the Commission on Higher Education or successor entity) will have specific areas of responsibility within the strategic plan for workforce development. This will allow agencies to take ownership of specific, measurable goals and facilitate performance measurement and accountability.

In an effort to reduce duplication of effort and promote efficiency, effectiveness, and maximum return on investment, the Council will also be responsible for the inventory, oversight, and evaluation of all current workforce development programs.

The Council will report regularly to the General Assembly regarding the status of the state's workforce development system and strategic plan.

SECTION 2

Section 2 establishes the **Career Pathways for Success** program, which addresses critical workforce needs statewide by targeting two specific groups of individuals--students and young people preparing to enter the workforce for the first time (**Pathways to First Careers**) and adults seeking assistance with training, education, and job placement (**Pathways to New Opportunities**).

As part of Pathways to First Careers, the **State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education** and the **Department of Education** are directed to develop and implement a statewide program to facilitate a seamless transition from education to employment in industries with workforce shortages. Funds allocated can be used to provide infrastructure and facilities, vocational equipment, instructional materials, transportation, and tuition grants, and 50% of all funding must be directed to school districts currently lacking adequate career development and workforce readiness programs with priority given to school districts with a poverty index of seventy-five percent or greater.

Pathways to New Opportunities will require the **State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, Department of Commerce, Department of Employment and Workforce, and the Department of Education** to develop and implement a program to provide subsidized career training and certification and job placement assistance to adults pursuing careers in high-demand jobs in critical need industries throughout the state. Efforts will include a **Workforce Scholarships and Grants Program**, which will provide funding for tuition and education-related expenses for career training and certification programs. Agencies are also directed to work together to identify and refer eligible individuals to training programs and scholarship opportunities and place qualified individuals in available employment opportunities in high demand jobs throughout the state.

The State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education will prepare an annual report on the Career Pathways for Success program, which must be submitted to the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee by February 1 of each year.

SECTION 3

Tax credits--UNDER DEVELOPMENT!