

COLLEGE ACCELERATION

# Expanding Pathway Opportunities



*The Expanding Pathway Opportunities Act establishes a state funded program for students to experience college and career opportunities through approved learning experiences and exams. The model policy provides eligible students with funding to direct to state-approved experiences that prepare students for college, career, and the workforce and may result in industry-recognized credentials and/or college credit.*

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## Expanding Pathway Opportunities Model Policy

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the (state):

### SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

As used in this section, these terms have the following meanings:

- (1) “Credential” means a verification of an individual’s qualification or competence issued by a third party and can take the form of an educational certificate or degree, an industry certification or badge, a government issued license, or other formal conferral.
- (2) “Eligible organizations” are those who have met the requirements of being a state-approved organization for participation.
- (3) “Gap funding” is funding to support learners with aligned expenses related to the participation in eligible experiences such as transportation or textbooks.
- (4) “Institution of higher education” means
  - (a) a public or private non-profit university or college, community college, local district college, or area technical college; or
  - (b) a postsecondary career and technical education program.
- (5) “Postsecondary” means all formal education institutions and programs leading to bachelor’s degrees, associate degrees, industry-valued certificates and diplomas, or other sub-bachelors/sub-associate licenses or credentials.



**SECTION 2. EXPANDING PATHWAY OPPORTUNITIES**

- (1) Eligible participants are individuals who have not yet earned an associate's or bachelor's degree from ages (*X years*) to (*X years old*).
- (2) Participating education providers are state-approved institutions and eligible organizations that allow participating students to complete eligible coursework, training programs, or obtain credit, credentials, or other state-approved experiences that align with the goals of this program.
- (3) Wherever possible, the (*insert agency or agencies*) shall develop a codification process for the eligible experiences to articulate to high school credit or postsecondary credit at institutions of higher education.

**SECTION 3. STATE APPROVED EXPENSES**

- (1) Eligible students may use the funds in their accounts for state approved expenses, including but not limited to:
  - (i) Courses
    - (A) The cost of the course is capped at \$ (*amount*) for purposes of this section. A course must count towards earning a credential or be part of a credential bearing program. To qualify as an eligible course for the program, the course must be approved by the (*department of education/department of higher education*).
  - (ii) Enrollment in postsecondary credit programs
    - (A) Postsecondary credit (such as dual credit), which must be offered by a regionally accredited postsecondary institution and must be a credit-bearing 100 level course, or equivalent, or higher or a postsecondary certificate program. The cost of the postsecondary credit is capped at \$ (*amount*) per credit hour for purposes of this section. The (*department of workforce development*) shall maintain a list of postsecondary certificate dual credit programs that meet the section's requirements.
  - (iii) Postsecondary credit-bearing examinations
    - (A) Including, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge AICE, or College-level Examination Program, a list of which is maintained by the (*department of education*) of eligible exams and costs.
  - (iv) Career and technical education credential examination fees
    - (A) Career and technical education credential examinations, which includes examinations that lead to an industry-recognized certification, license or degree. The (*department of workforce development*) shall develop and maintain a list of eligible credential examinations and costs based on linkage to an occupation that is in-demand and tied to middle- or higher-wages.
  - (v) Career and technical education workforce training



(A) Career and technical education workforce training, such as federally registered apprenticeships, offered by state-approved providers and lead to a credential that is in-demand and is tied to middle- or higher-wages. The cost of the award amount may not exceed \$ (*amount*) for purposes of this section. The (*department of workforce development*) shall develop and maintain a list of eligible workforce training courses and costs based on the requirements of this section.

(vi) Gap Funding

(A) State approved gap funding limited up to \$ (*amount*) of the total award funding to support learners with aligned expenses related to the participation in eligible experiences such as transportation, textbooks or required tools, and other incurred expenses as determined by the administrator.

(vii) Other state-approved secondary or postsecondary experiences, including college and career counseling and aligned college and career opportunities (e.g. a coding bootcamp).

(2) The (*department of workforce development*) and the (*department of education*) shall adopt rules to implement this program.

#### SECTION 4. ADMINISTRATOR REQUIREMENTS

(1) The (*department of education*) in collaboration with the (*department of workforce*) shall administer the program and has the right to contract program administration out to a not-for-profit third-party provider, including an Institution of Higher Education to be the administrator of the program.

(2) The duties of the administrator shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Overseeing the Expanded Pathways Opportunity program.
- (b) Verifying that eligible organizations who meet the criteria for participating in this program.
- (c) Establishing eligibility for gap funding allowable expenses.
- (d) Overseeing an online platform that provides a catalog to students and families of all approved opportunities and funds.
- (e) Establishing a communication plan that ensures families are aware of approved opportunities.
- (f) Ensuring a mechanism for postsecondary credit earning availability be communicated to participating students and families.

#### SECTION 5. STATE FUNDING

(1) Funds in the student's expanding pathway opportunities account may not be used to pay an amount that exceeds the price to the student of the course and examinations.



- (2) Funding will be awarded based on order of received applications, if the available funding allocation is reached.

#### SECTION 6. REPORT

- (1) By *(date)* of each year, the *(department of education)* shall report to the *(Governor and Legislative leaders)* on expanded pathway opportunities usage in the state. The report shall include, at a minimum, the following information broken down by district, region and student demographics:
  - (a) Participation and enrollment data by permissible use.
  - (b) Participant outcome data by permissible use, including examinations passed, college credit earned, credentials earned, and workforce training courses completed.
  - (c) The amount of funds expended per participant on average and in total.
- (2) The report shall also include recommendations to improve the program.

#### SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

