

CHAPTER 252

AN ACT concerning an industry-valued credentials pilot program, and supplementing and amending P.L.1992, c.43.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

C.34:15D-30 Definitions relative to an industry-valued credentials pilot program.

1. As used in this act:

“Eligible adult” means an individual who is a “qualified displaced worker” or a “qualified disadvantaged worker” as defined in section 3 of P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-3).

“Information or math literacy” means an individual’s ability to use appropriate mathematical, literacy, or technical skills for career success.

“Secretary” means the Secretary of Higher Education.

“Soft skills” means social skills, transferrable skills, and interpersonal skills, which relate to an individual’s ability to communicate and collaborate with others.

C.34:15D-31 Design of pilot program.

2. a. (1) The Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education, the county colleges, county vocational school districts, and the Department of Education, shall design a pilot program through which an eligible adult who has an insufficient level of information or math literacy may obtain industry-valued credentials on an accelerated schedule to assist the eligible adult in entering or re-entering the workforce or in obtaining better employment. The pilot program shall include at least 20 certificates that eligible adults may obtain by completing courses that integrate information and math literacy development programs, and soft skills development programs, with career and technical training. The time required to complete a certificate program shall not exceed 12 months.

(2) The commissioner shall develop and initially offer under the pilot program at least 10 industry-valued credentials by the fall semester of the 2020-2021 academic year and at least 10 additional industry-valued credentials by the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. In determining for which industries to develop and offer a certificate program, the commissioner shall give preference to industries with occupations on the Demand Occupation List, or any successor list, compiled by New Jersey Career Connections in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. One of the industries for which the commissioner shall develop and offer a certificate program shall be the restaurant and hospitality industry. A certificate program for the restaurant and hospitality industry shall include the following employer-valued credentials:

(a) ServSafe Food Manager Certification;

(b) ServSafe Alcohol Certificate; and

(c) ServSafe Workplace.

b. The commissioner shall collaborate with and may enter into memorandums of understanding with county colleges, county vocational school districts, the Department of Education, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, and other adult education providers to ensure that the pilot program is implemented locally.

c. The commissioner shall ensure that, at a minimum, the pilot program:

(1) is available to eligible adults who are seeking to enter or re-enter the workforce or obtain better employment and who may benefit from information and math literacy development programs, as indicated by the individual’s score on a basic skills assessment in English and Mathematics selected by the secretary;

(2) includes only industry-valued credentials that a student can complete within 12 months; and

(3) requires that each course offered through a certificate program integrates appropriate information or math literacy instruction, career and technical skills, and soft skills, and is jointly designed by mathematics, English, and career and technical education faculty.

d. A county college, a county vocational school district, or an adult education program operated in cooperation with the Department of Education or the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, may choose to participate in the pilot program by implementing one or more of the certificate programs established by the commissioner pursuant to this act.

e. An entity that participates in the pilot program to offer one or more certificate programs shall on or before July 1 of each year of the pilot program submit to the commissioner a report that includes the following information:

(1) the certificate programs offered;

(2) the number of students who enrolled in each certificate program;

(3) the number of students who successfully completed each certificate program; and

(4) the percentage of students who obtained employment in the area in which they obtained a certificate or who enrolled in additional educational offerings in that subject area.

f. No later than January 1, 2023, the commissioner shall submit to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), a report that evaluates the results of the pilot program and its effectiveness in assisting program participants in entering or re-entering the workforce or in obtaining better employment. The report shall include a recommendation on the advisability of the program's continuation and extension to additional certificate and technical programs.

3. Section 9 of P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-9) is amended to read as follows:

C.34:15D-9 Workforce Development Partnership Fund.

9. a. A restricted, nonlapsing, revolving Workforce Development Partnership Fund, to be managed and invested by the State Treasurer, is hereby established to: provide employment and training services to qualified displaced, disadvantaged and employed workers by means of training grants or customized training services; provide for the other costs indicated in subsection a. of section 4 of P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-4); provide for the New Jersey Innovation and Research Fellowship Program as provided for in section 3 of P.L.2015, c.235 (C.34:15D-26); provide for the Talent Network Program as provided for in section 2 of P.L.2019, c.125 (C.34:15D-29); and facilitate the provision of education and training to youth by means of grants provided by the Youth Transitions to Work Partnership pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1993, c.268 (C.34:15E-1 et al.). All appropriations to the fund, all interest accumulated on balances in the fund and all cash received for the fund from any other source shall be used solely for the purposes specifically delineated by this act.

b. During any fiscal year beginning after June 30, 2001, of the total revenues dedicated to the program during any one fiscal year: 25% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved to provide employment and training services for qualified displaced workers, and through fiscal year 2023, not less than 10% of the revenues deposited in that account shall be reserved to provide employment and training services to qualified displaced workers in the pursuit of industry-valued credentials under the pilot program established pursuant to P.L.2019, c.252 (C.34:15D-30 et al.); 6% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved to provide employment and training services for qualified disadvantaged workers, and through fiscal year 2023, not less than 10% of

the revenues deposited in that account shall be reserved to provide employment and training services to qualified disadvantaged workers in the pursuit of industry-valued credentials under the pilot program established pursuant to P.L.2019, c.252 (C.34:15D-30 et al.); 37% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved for and appropriated to the Office of Customized Training; 5% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved for and appropriated to the Talent Network Program established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2019, c.125 (C.34:15D-29); 3% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved for occupational safety and health training; 5% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved for the Youth Transitions to Work Partnership created pursuant to P.L.1993, c.268 (C.34:15E-1 et seq.); 3% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved for the New Jersey Innovation and Research Fellowship Program established pursuant to section 3 of P.L.2015, c.235 (C.34:15D-26); 10% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved for administrative costs as defined in section 3 of P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-3); 0.5% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved for the State Employment and Training Commission to design criteria and conduct an annual evaluation of the program; and 5.5% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund to be used, at the discretion of the commissioner, for any of the purposes indicated in subsection a. of section 4 of P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-4).

c. Beginning January 1, 1995, through June 30, 2002, the balance in the fund as of the previous December 31, as determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, shall not exceed 1.5 times the amount of contributions deposited for the calendar year then ended. If the balance exceeds this amount, the excess shall be deposited into the unemployment compensation fund within seven business days of the date that the determination is made.

d. Beginning July 1, 2002, and for any subsequent fiscal year, if the unexpended cash balance in any of the accounts indicated in subsection b. of this section, except for the account reserved for the Talent Network Program, less any amount awarded in grants but not yet disbursed from the account, is determined to exceed 20% of the amount of contributions collected for deposit in the account pursuant to this subsection during the fiscal year then ended, the excess shall be regarded as an unemployment compensation contribution and deposited into the unemployment compensation fund within seven business days of the date that the determination is made. If the unexpended cash balance in the account reserved for the Talent Network Program, less any amount awarded in grants but not yet disbursed from the account, is determined to exceed 20% of the amount of contributions collected for deposit in the account pursuant to this subsection during the fiscal year then ended, the excess shall be deposited into the Workforce Development Partnership Fund account reserved for the Office of Customized Training.

4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire on July 1, 2023.

Approved August 23, 2019.