ASSEMBLY, No. 1311

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD
District 6 (Burlington and Camden)
Assemblywoman ANNETTE CHAPARRO
District 33 (Hudson)
Assemblyman WILLIAM F. MOEN, JR.
District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblymen Conaway and Benson

SYNOPSIS
Establishes healthcare careers pilot program for certain institutions of higher education and proprietary schools.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.
AN ACT establishing a healthcare careers pilot program for certain institutions of higher education and proprietary institutions and supplementing chapter 6 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

1. a. As used in this section:

“Employer engagement” means engagement in which employers provide students with opportunities to learn and grow through real-life learning experiences and opportunities to explore careers paths;

“Project-based learning” means learning in which students build communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills through long-term projects that often include local employers;

“Proprietary institution” means a postsecondary institution licensed to confer academic degrees by the Secretary of Higher Education;

“Trauma-informed instruction” means instruction that addresses student stress and trauma to remove barriers to student success that arise outside of school; and

“Underserved high school” refers to a high school with a graduation rate of less than 85 percent.

b. There is established in the Department of Education a four-year healthcare careers pilot program to encourage institutions of higher education and proprietary institutions within the State to partner with the Jobs for America’s Graduates New Jersey program, a dropout prevention program of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Foundation which promotes academic achievement and employability skills attainment among at-risk youth. The purpose of the pilot program shall be to help high school students in underserved high schools complete high school and pursue career or postsecondary education opportunities in the healthcare field.

c. The Commissioner of Education shall develop program criteria defining which healthcare fields shall be included in the program. In defining which healthcare fields shall be included, the commissioner shall emphasize those that are critical to a COVID-19 recovery. The commissioner shall issue a request for proposals within 30 days of the effective date of this section to all institutions of higher education and proprietary institutions detailing the purpose of the program, required documents, evaluation criteria, and the submission timeline.

The commissioner shall award grants, within the limits of available appropriations, to selected institutions of higher education and proprietary institutions to be used to support the development and implementation of a Jobs for America’s Graduates New Jersey pilot program with a focus on healthcare in participating school districts. The commissioner shall determine the amount of each grant awarded under the program and may award multi-year grants.
An institution of higher education or proprietary institution that wishes to participate in the program shall submit an application to the commissioner on such forms and in such a manner as required by the commissioner. The commissioner shall create the application in consultation with Jobs for America’s Graduates New Jersey and establish application deadlines for each school year. The application shall include:

1. A memorandum of understanding between the institution of higher education or proprietary institution, participating high school, and the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Foundation including, at minimum, a description of the relationship between the partners, roles and responsibilities, funding arrangements, and expenses to be incurred by each partner;

2. A description of the institution of higher education or proprietary institution’s current healthcare programs, or, if such programs are not currently offered, a description of how the institution will create such a program.

3. Demographic data and graduation rates of the students enrolled in the participating high schools;

4. A commitment from the institution to provide training and technical support to the Jobs for America’s Graduates New Jersey specialists who will provide the curriculum at participating high schools;

5. A description of the elective courses to be provided at the participating high schools through the pilot program, including information on how the curriculum will incorporate project-based learning, employer engagement, and trauma-informed instruction;

6. Information on the teaching certifications and other qualifications of the Jobs for America’s Graduates New Jersey specialists who will provide the curriculum at the participating high schools;

7. Information on how the elective courses will prepare participating students for careers in the healthcare field;

8. The application process for students who want to enroll in the pilot program and the number of students expected to be accepted into the pilot program;

9. A letter in support of the application from the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Foundation;

10. Any other information specified by the commissioner.

Priority status shall be given to institutions of higher education and proprietary institutions that demonstrate grant funds will be used to expand the Jobs for America’s Graduates New Jersey program to more underserved high schools Statewide. Priority status shall also be given to those institutions of higher education and proprietary institutions that demonstrate they will provide subject matter experts to participating high schools for classroom instruction or to assist students in obtaining professional credentials or certifications prior to graduation. To the maximum extent
possible, the department shall select institutions of higher education
and proprietary institution in each of the northern, central, and
southern regions of the State and shall seek a cross section of
institutions and proprietary institution in urban, suburban, and rural
areas.

d. An institution of higher education or proprietary institution
selected to participate in the pilot program shall hire an individual
or designate an existing employee to serve as a Jobs for America’s
Graduates New Jersey liaison. The liaison shall work in
collaboration with Jobs for America’s Graduates New Jersey to
develop and train professionals in the Jobs for America’s Graduates
model.

e. The program shall be funded using Basic State Grants
provided pursuant to the “Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical
Education Act of 2006” (20 U.S.C. s.2301 et seq.), along with any
other annual appropriation made to effectuate the purposes of this
section. Grants shall be awarded on an annual basis to institutions
of higher education and proprietary institutions selected to
participate in the program based on review of the applications and
subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made
available for the program. Eighty-five percent of all funds received
by institutions of higher education and proprietary institutions shall,
at minimum, be used for direct student services. Funds shall be
used by the recipient institution of higher education or proprietary
institution to:

(1) fund positions for Jobs for America’s Graduates New Jersey
specialists to provide elective classes for high school students and
offer guidance to recent graduates for twelve months following
graduation;

(2) subsidize a portion of the tuition for program graduates who
decide to pursue educational opportunities in healthcare at the
institution of higher education or proprietary institution;

(3) distribute stipends to the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce
Foundation to help implement the Jobs for America’s Graduates
New Jersey program in high schools by providing administrative
support, program planning, and marketing of the program to
increase participation; and

(4) for such other resources, events, and purposes as may be
approved by the commissioner to meet the program’s objectives.

f. The commissioner shall annually enter into a contract with
an independent entity to audit the implementation of the pilot
program. The audit for the prior school year shall be submitted to
the commissioner no later than December 1 of each year. A copy of
the audit shall be transmitted to institutions of higher education and
proprietary institutions receiving program funds.

g. Upon conclusion of the pilot program, the Commissioner of
Education shall report to the Governor, and to the Legislature
pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), concerning:

(1) the number of new and current partnerships created with underserved high schools by each institution of higher education and proprietary institution that participated in the pilot program;

(2) the total number of high school students that received services under the pilot program;

(3) student graduation outcomes, along with the healthcare specialties pursued by participating students after graduation;

(4) the amount of money used for direct student services;

(5) the amount of money used for tuition assistance at institutions of higher education and proprietary institutions;

(6) the results of annual audits;

(7) the advisability of the establishment of similar programs on a permanent basis; and

(8) any other information deemed relevant by the commissioner.

2. This act shall first take effect six months from the date of enactment, but the Department of Education may take such anticipatory administrative action in advance thereof as may be deemed necessary for the timely implementation of this act.

STATEMENT

This bill would establish a four-year healthcare careers pilot program to encourage institutions of higher education and proprietary institution to partner with the Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) program. JAG is a nationwide dropout prevention program which helps young people build professional skills, earn credentials, gain employment, and enter postsecondary education. Students are placed on pathways to academic and economic success through classroom learning, coaching, leadership development, and job placement. These student-centered services help young people achieve their fullest potential and gain an advantage in today’s emerging workforce. Since 1980, Jobs for America’s Graduates has helped over 1.4 million students nationwide complete high school, pursue a postsecondary education, and secure quality entry-level jobs that provide opportunities for career advancement. Studies have shown that those who graduate from high school are more likely to earn more over the course of their lifetimes while greatly benefitting the local economy. Currently, the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Foundation serves as the managing unit for the JAG program here in the State and operates as “Jobs for America’s Graduates New Jersey” (JAGNJ).

The pilot program would help create programs that encourage students in underserved high schools to pursue career opportunities in the healthcare field. Funding would be used to fund JAGNJ
specialist positions to provide elective courses for high school students and offer guidance to recent graduates for the twelve months following graduation. Funds would also be used to subsidize a portion of the tuition for program graduates who decide to pursue educational opportunities in healthcare at the recipient institution of higher education or proprietary institution, fund stipends to help JAGNJ with certain implementation costs, and for any other resources, events, and purposes approved by the Commissioner of Education to meet program objectives. In awarding grants, priority status would be given to institutions of higher education and proprietary institution that demonstrate grant funds will be used to expand the JAGNJ program to more underserved high schools Statewide and to those that demonstrate they will provide subject matter experts to participating high schools for classroom instruction or to help students obtain professional credentials or certifications prior to graduation. To the maximum extent possible, the department will select institutions of higher education and proprietary institution in the northern, central, and southern regions of the State and shall seek a cross section of institutions in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Upon conclusion of the pilot program, the Commissioner of Education will report to the Governor and Legislature regarding the program’s effectiveness.