[Third Reprint]

SENATE, No. 659

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

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SYNOPSIS
"Manufacturing in Higher Education Act"; requires various State entities to promote manufacturing career pathways for students and provides assistance to manufacturing industry.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As amended by the General Assembly on December 21, 2023.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/8/2024)
AN ACT concerning the promotion of the manufacturing industry in higher education and supplementing Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes, Title 34 of the Revised Statutes, and Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

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

1. [This] Sections 3 through 5 of this [This] act shall be known and may be cited as the “Manufacturing in Higher Education Act.”

2. a. The Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, Secretary of Higher Education, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, the New Jersey Council of County Vocational Schools, and representatives of the business community, shall design a promote and support the implementation of the manufacturing career pathway offered through the county colleges and county vocational school districts New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Initiative operated by the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce Development to provide students interested in pursuing a career in manufacturing with the instruction and skills necessary to gain employment in the manufacturing or advanced manufacturing sectors.

b. The manufacturing career pathway required pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall include traditional and advanced manufacturing processes and methods of production including, but not limited to, the machinery, technology, tools, and equipment used in a wide range of manufacturing industries.

c. The Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development shall adopt rules and regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the purposes of this section.

3. a. The Secretary of Higher Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, shall establish the New Jersey STEM Entrepreneur Fellowship Program in county colleges and four-year institutions of higher education.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
1Senate SBA committee amendments adopted June 6, 2022.
2Assembly AHI committee amendments adopted October 13, 2022.
3Assembly floor amendments adopted December 21, 2023.
b. The secretary shall work in consultation with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development to fund no less than 20 fellowships, administered by the secretary, which focus on supporting entrepreneurs in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The fellowships may be provided to individuals who have proven to the secretary that they have an idea to create, advance or develop a product in the STEM field which will have a beneficial impact on society and will result in a self-sustaining business in the future.

The fellowships shall be issued for three years each and shall be used primarily to support the entrepreneurs in commercializing the idea and developing a well-structured business. Priority will be given to fellowships which are submitted with the support of an incubator supported by the State of New Jersey or any of its public entities.

c. The secretary, in consultation with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, shall conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the New Jersey STEM Entrepreneur Fellowship Program to establish new businesses no later than five years after the approval of the first fellowship.¹

¶4. ³³¹ a. The Secretary of Higher Education shall establish a “Higher Education Manufacturing Grant Program.” The program shall be administered by a three-person commission which shall include: the Secretary of Higher Education, or a designee, who shall serve as chair of the commission; a representative of the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program; and a representative of the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development. The commission shall annually award $10 million to New Jersey institutions of higher education, proprietary institutions, and county vocational school districts for the purpose of establishing or expanding programs in the manufacturing fields, and marketing and promoting current programs in the manufacturing fields¹. The grants shall be allocated on a competitive basis and shall be distributed as follows:

(1) 50 percent of program funding shall be awarded to county colleges;
(2) 25 percent of program funding shall be awarded to four-year institutions of higher education and proprietary institutions; and
(3) 25 percent of program funding shall be awarded to county vocational school districts.

b. A grant recipient shall use the funds to establish or expand programs and curricula in the fields of manufacturing, manufacturing engineering, or advanced manufacturing. A grant recipient may also use the funds for marketing and promoting current programs in the manufacturing fields.
To be eligible for consideration of a grant award, an institution of higher education, proprietary institution, or county vocational school district shall submit an application to the commission, in accordance with application procedures and requirements prescribed by the secretary. A grant application shall include a complete description of the applicant’s specific plans and objectives for the use of the grant funds and any other information specified by the secretary. A grant application from a county college or county vocational school district may also include a description of how the applicant would integrate their program into existing workforce development programs, including the manufacturing program within the New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Initiative operated by the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development.

d. The commission, in accordance with any rules prescribed by the secretary, shall establish selection criteria for the awarding of grant funds under the program, and shall award grants through a competitive process based upon review of the applications and subject to the availability of funds. The commission shall establish the amount for each grant that is approved.

e. As used in this section, “proprietary institution” shall be limited to proprietary institutions that have received accreditation from an accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education.

a. There is created within the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education a fund to be known as the “Higher Education Manufacturing Grant Fund.” The fund shall be used to provide grants to New Jersey institutions of higher education, proprietary institutions, and county vocational school districts under the “Higher Education Manufacturing Grant Program” established pursuant to section 4 of P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

b. The fund shall be annually credited with money appropriated by the State, any moneys received by the State from corporate donors or other private sector support, and any federal funds which may become available for higher education and manufacturing-related purposes.

The Secretary of Higher Education shall adopt rules and regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the purposes of section 2 through section 5 sections 3 and 4 of P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill).
7. a. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education, the Business Action Center in the Department of State, the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, and representatives of business and industry, shall establish and maintain a State-recognized list of industry-recognized credentials in the advanced manufacturing field to assist county vocational school districts, institutions of higher education, and the workforce development system in developing appropriate educational programs to enable students to more adequately meet the advanced technical training needs in this field.

b. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education, the Business Action Center in the Department of State, the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, and representatives of business and industry, shall identify courses of study for careers in emerging manufacturing industries, including careers in industrial marketing, mechanical engineering, computer science, electronics, and mechatronics.

8. The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, shall designate an existing or newly hired employee of the Business Action Center in the Department of State to act as a liaison between the State and manufacturing businesses located in this State. The duties of the liaison shall be to assist manufacturing businesses by:

a. advertising manufacturing businesses’ products or services nationally and internationally through the Business Action Center in the Department of State;

b. establishing a business referral service where manufacturing businesses may be referred to other State, federal, or private business resource organizations, such as the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, the State’s Small Business Development Centers, and other business organizations that provide specialized business development assistance, technology information, consulting management, and customized one-to-one counseling concerning business plans and technical assistance with significant business topics and issues; and

c. identifying and promoting opportunities throughout the State for postsecondary pathway programs to actively reskill and upskill the current workforce to better meet the needs of manufacturing fields.

9. a. The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, and other State departments, agencies, boards, commissions, and authorities, shall direct resources, create incentives, and provide technological,
financial, and workforce development opportunities for manufacturing businesses.

b. The Secretary of State may call upon any department, authority, commission, board, office, division, or agency of the State to provide any information, resources, or other assistance deemed necessary to carry out the provisions of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). This may include, but not be limited to: the New Jersey Economic Development Authority for assistance with manufacturing business funding assistance programs; the Department of Labor and Workforce Development for assistance with developing workforce development strategies for manufacturing businesses; the Department of Transportation and the New Jersey Transit Corporation for assistance with enhancing public transportation operations for employees of manufacturing businesses; the Business Action Center in the Department of State for assistance with manufacturing business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts and advising on smart growth development strategies; and the Department of Community Affairs for assistance to manufacturing businesses participating in the urban enterprise zone program established by P.L.1983, c.303 (C.52:27H-60 et al.).

10. a. The New Jersey Economic Development Authority, in consultation with the Business Action Center created in the Department of State and an institution of higher education, may designate an institution of higher education or other entity as a manufacturing and production business resource center to provide services and assistance to manufacturing businesses to assist them to modernize, maximize their efficiency, and expand their production through the development and commercialization of innovative products.

   b. The authority shall grant this designation to any institution of higher education or other entity that meets qualifications established by the authority. The authority shall base the qualifications upon the ability of the institution or entity to provide specialized services and information to manufacturing and production facilities, which may include specialization in discrete aspects of the manufacturing and production process, or to provide more comprehensive services.

   c. The authority shall refer a manufacturing business deemed eligible by the authority to a manufacturing and production business resource center or other organization qualified to provide services to small and mid-sized manufacturing businesses, which services shall include, but not be limited to:

      (1) assistance with product development, including:

      (a) a preliminary technical evaluation of a product and any design and materials issues,
(b) assistance in providing a connection with available research and development resources, prototype development resources, and product evaluation and testing resources, and (c) the selection, implementation and optimization of available technologies;

(2) assistance in production planning and inventory control;
(3) assistance in identifying appropriate factory and office automation and modernizing production capacity;
(4) assistance in identifying sources of supply, including any Internet-based listing of New Jersey-based suppliers of goods and services;
(5) assistance in establishing a quality assurance program;
(6) assistance with market analysis and development, including assistance in identifying export opportunities, provided by the Business Action Center;
(7) assistance with distribution issues;
(8) assistance in developing the skills of the existing workforce or procuring skilled workers;
(9) referral to financing resources; and
(10) assistance in preliminary patent and trademark searches.

11. a. There is created in the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission, established pursuant to section 5 of P.L.1989, c.293 (C.34:15C-2), the New Jersey Advanced Manufacturing Council.
   b. The council shall consist of 11 members who are individuals with experience in the fields of labor, education, or workforce development or training. The Governor shall appoint nine members as follows: two members shall be recommended by the Senate President; one member shall be recommended by the Speaker of the General Assembly; one member shall be recommended by the Minority Leader of the Senate; one member shall be recommended by the Minority Leader of the General Assembly; and, five members shall be recommended by the Governor. The co-chairs of the Legislative Manufacturing Caucus shall serve as ex officio members of the council. The members appointed by the Governor shall be appointed for five-year terms, except, of the members first appointed, four members shall be appointed for five-year terms, three members shall be appointed for three-year terms, and three members shall be appointed for four-year terms. Each member shall hold office for the term of appointment and until a successor is appointed and qualified. A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring in the membership of the council for any reason other than the expiration of the term shall have a term of appointment for the unexpired term only. Vacancies shall be filled...
in the same manner as the original appointment. A member may be appointed for any number of successive terms. Any member appointed may be removed from the council by the appointing authority, as the case may be, for cause, after a hearing and may be suspended by the appointing authority pending the completion of the hearing.

c. Members of the council shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as members. Action may be taken and motions and resolutions may be adopted by the council at a council meeting by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members. The council shall elect from its members a chairperson. The council shall elect from its members a chairperson. Advanced notification for, and copies of the minutes of, each meeting of the council shall be filed with the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the General Assembly.

The council shall:

a. convene and enable industry-led, private-public partnerships focused on engaging New Jersey institutions of higher education in manufacturing innovation;

b. design and implement an advanced manufacturing initiative to facilitate collaboration and information sharing across State departments and agencies;

c. assist private companies to enhance technological transfer in New Jersey manufacturing industries to help companies overcome technical obstacles to scaling up production of new technologies; and

d. submit an annual report to the Governor, to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), and to the State Employment and Training Commission, of its assessments and recommendations to enhance State policy related to the advanced manufacturing industry in New Jersey.

The council is authorized to:

a. hold public hearings;

b. employ staff, responsible to the Executive Director of the State Employment and Training Commission, to assist the council to implement the purposes of this act; and

c. avail itself of the services of the employees and have access to the records of any instrumentality of the State, as necessary or useful to implement the purposes of this act.

This act shall take effect immediately.