Senate

General Assembly

File No. 171

January Session, 2025

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1260

Senate, March 20, 2025

The Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement reported through SEN. SLAP of the 5th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT EXPANDING MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 4-124mm of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) There is established an account known as the Connecticut Career Accelerator Program Account that is within the Office of Workforce Strategy for the purpose of supporting commercial driver's license training and training for careers identified by the Office of Workforce Strategy, pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section, within the CareerConneCT workforce training program. The account shall contain any moneys required by law to be deposited therein and such moneys shall be held in such account. The account may accept gifts, grants or donations from public or private sources. Any balance remaining in the account at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried forward in the account for the fiscal year next succeeding. The account

may be used for the purposes of the program described in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) (1) Not later than July 1, 2024, the Office of Workforce Strategy shall design a program to support individuals pursuing training to obtain a commercial driver's license, including through the use of income share agreements or equivalent financial instruments. The Office of Workforce Strategy may competitively procure a consultant to support the design and implementation of the program. The program shall be implemented not later than January 1, 2025.

(2) Not later than July 1, 2025, the Office of Workforce Strategy shall identify (A) additional training opportunities, for careers requiring not more than one year of training, to expand the program designed pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, and (B) training providers to use for such additional training opportunities.

(c) The design of the program under subsection (b) of this section shall take into consideration: (1) Developing metrics for identifying qualified training providers, (2) developing incentive-based payments for training providers, such as paying a trainer eighty per cent of a student's tuition prior to providing any training and paying the trainer the remaining tuition upon placement of the student in a job, **[**and**]** (3) developing a method for targeting potential students for the program, and (4) prioritizing the inclusion of women in training opportunities related to manufacturing, including, but not limited to, women who apply to a youth manufacturing training program in the state or a CareerConneCT workforce training program related to manufacturing, whether or not such women participated in such programs. The Office of Workforce Strategy shall notify each woman who participates or applies to participate in the program about the availability of career and financial counseling services through Connecticut State Community College, pursuant to section 3 of this act. The program shall include terms and conditions for the payment obligations undertaken by individuals who obtain tuition assistance from the account. The program shall require an individual who receives a direct tuition

payment from the account to repay such payment if such individual is placed in a job after receiving training through the program that provides the individual with a higher income than such individual received prior to participating in such training. No interest shall be charged on any tuition repayment obligation. The program shall also consider offering wrap-around supports, such as stipends, child care services, counseling and other supports identified by the Office of Workforce Strategy. An individual who receives such supports shall not be required to repay the account for such supports.

(d) The Office of Workforce Strategy shall develop a marketing plan to attract individuals who fit the eligibility criteria for participation in the program, specifically targeted at recruiting individuals who are underserved, disadvantaged, unemployed, underemployed, dislocated workers, receiving temporary assistance for needy families, supplemental nutrition assistance program or any other public assistance benefits, formerly incarcerated or veterans of the armed services. The marketing plan shall include outreach to (1) various state agencies, the regional workforce investment boards, transit authorities, housing authorities, the Office of Early Childhood and other partners as identified by the Office of Workforce Strategy, and (2) women who meet one or more of the qualities of individuals specifically targeted for recruitment.

(e) (1) Not later than July 1, 2025, the Office of Workforce Strategy shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on the design and implementation of the commercial driver's license training program established under this section to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, commerce, education, finance, revenue and bonding, higher education and employment advancement and labor and public employees.

(2) Not later than July 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the Office of Workforce Strategy shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, regarding the identification of additional

training opportunities and training providers pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, commerce, education, finance, revenue and bonding, higher education and employment advancement, and labor and public employees. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, information on the (A) additional training opportunities identified by the Office of Workforce Strategy, (B) number and percentage of individuals participating in such opportunities who are women, by type of training program, and (C) such other demographic information on the individuals who participate in such opportunities as deemed pertinent by the office.

(f) Not later than July 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the Office of Workforce Strategy shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on the commercial driver's license training program established under this section to the Governor and to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, commerce, education, finance, revenue and bonding, higher education and employment advancement and labor and public employees. Such report may include information on the (1) program completion and job placement rate of individuals participating in the program; (2) starting wages, wage gains and wage growth of individuals employed after participating in the program; (3) funds used as payment obligations, grants and wraparound services for individuals participating in the program; (4) percentage of program participants in compliance with repayment obligations; and (5) total repayments received.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Each regional workforce investment board that operates a youth manufacturing training program shall specifically market such program to recruit female students enrolled in a high school in grade eleven or twelve within such board's region. Each board shall notify any female student who participates or applies to participate in such youth manufacturing training program about the availability of (1) manufacturing training

programs through the CareerConneCT workforce training program, (2) interest-free loans through the Connecticut Career Accelerator Program established pursuant to section 4-124mm of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and (3) career and financial counseling services through Connecticut State Community College pursuant to section 3 of this act.

(b) The Office of Workforce Strategy shall (1) specifically market each CareerConneCT workforce training program related to manufacturing to recruit women who are (A) underserved, (B) disadvantaged, (C) unemployed, (D) underemployed, (E) dislocated workers, (F) receiving temporary assistance for needy families, supplemental nutrition assistance program or any other public assistance benefits, (G) formerly incarcerated, or (H) veterans of the armed services, and (2) prioritize the participation of such women in such workforce training program. The office shall notify each woman who participates or applies to participate in the CareerConneCT workforce training program about the availability of (A) interest-free loans through the Connecticut Career Accelerator Program established pursuant to section 4-124mm of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and (B) career and financial counseling services through Connecticut State Community College pursuant to section 3 of this act.

(c) Not later than January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the Office of Workforce Strategy and each regional workforce investment board shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and employment advancement on the demographic information of the individuals who participate in any manufacturing training program operated by said office and each board, respectively.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The Connecticut State Community College, in consultation with each regional workforce investment board and the Office of Workforce Strategy, shall offer career and financial counseling services to each woman who applies to

participate in a youth manufacturing training program, a CareerConneCT workforce training program related to manufacturing or the Connecticut Career Accelerator Program established pursuant to section 4-124mm of the general statutes, as amended by this act, whether or not such woman participated in such programs. Such counseling services shall include, but need not be limited to, the financial aid and certificate and degree programs applicable to such woman's academic and career goals.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*July 1, 2025*	4-124mm
Sec. 2	*July 1, 2025*	New section
Sec. 3	*July 1, 2025*	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:
In Section 1(c), "notify any woman" was changed to "notify each woman", in Section 2(b)(1), subparagraph designators (A) to (H), inclusive, were added, in Section 2(b)(2), "notify any woman" was changed to "notify each woman", and in Section 3, "career and financial counseling services" and "or not" were moved earlier in the sentence, for clarity.

HED *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 $	FY 27 $
Treasurer, Debt Serv.	GF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill is anticipated to increase marketing costs to the Career Accelerator program, which is supported by General Obligation (GO) bond funds, by requiring the program to prioritize eligible women and to include outreach to such candidates in the program's marketing plan.

Future General Fund debt service costs may be incurred sooner under the bill to the degree that it causes authorized GO bond funds to be expended more rapidly than they otherwise would have been.

As of March 1, 2025, there is $5 million in unallocated bond balance available for the Career Accelerator program under the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS). OWS intends to use $300,000 of these funds to establish the Career Accelerator program as required under current law.

The bill does not change GO bond authorizations relevant to the program.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis

SB 1260

AN ACT EXPANDING MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN.

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes designed to expand opportunities for women in the manufacturing workforce. These changes include requiring (1) the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) to prioritize the inclusion of, and outreach to, women in their Career Accelerator Program; (2) regional workforce investment boards that operate a youth manufacturing training program to market to female high school students; and (3) the Connecticut State Community College (CT State) to offer career and financial counseling services to all women who apply to participate in a manufacturing training program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

OWS PROGRAM OPPORTUNITY EXPANSION FOR WOMEN

The bill expands upon the OWS's Career Accelerator Program which supports, among others, individuals pursuing training opportunities for careers that require no more than one year of training.

The bill requires the program's design to consider prioritizing the inclusion of women in manufacturing-related training opportunities. This includes women who apply to a youth manufacturing training program or CareerConneCT manufacturing workforce training program (regardless of whether they participated).

The bill requires OWS to:

1. notify any woman who participates or applies to participate in the program about the availability of career and financial counseling services through CT State (see below), and

2. include outreach to qualified women in the program's marketing plan.

Existing law requires OWS, by July 1, 2026, to report to several legislative committees on identifying additional training opportunities and training providers for the program. The bill requires OWS to report annually and adds to the required contents information on the (1) number of women participating in each type of training program, percentage of participants who are women, and other demographic details and (2) additional training opportunities identified.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS AND OWS MARKETING TO WOMEN

The bill requires each regional workforce investment board that operates a youth manufacturing training program to specifically market the program to female 11th and 12th grade students. It also requires OWS to (1) specifically market each CareerConneCT manufacturing workforce training program to several categories of women, such as those who are underserved or disadvantaged, unemployed, formerly incarcerated, veterans, or on certain public assistance programs and (2) prioritize their participation.

The bill requires regional workforce investment boards to notify these students, once they apply or choose to participate, about the CareerConneCT workforce training program, interest-free loans through the Career Accelerator Program, and career and financial counseling services. Similarly, it requires OWS to notify these women, once they apply or choose to participate, about these loans and counseling services.

Under the bill, these boards, as well as OWS, must each submit a report with the demographic information of those participating in their manufacturing training programs to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee by January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter.

CAREER AND FINANCIAL COUNSELING SERVICES TO WOMEN AT CT STATE

The bill requires CT State, in consultation with OWS and each regional workforce investment board, to offer career and financial counseling services to all women who apply to participate in a youth manufacturing training program, a CareerConneCT workforce training program related to manufacturing, or the Connecticut Career Accelerator Program. The counseling services must address financial aid and certificate and degree program guidance.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 15 Nay 3 (02/27/2025)