General Assembly

Raised Bill No. 1260

January Session, 2025

LCO No. **4239**

Referred to Committee on HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT

Introduced by:
(HED)

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 Section 4-124mm of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):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 any 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 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, and (2) prioritize the participation of such women in such workforce training program. The office shall notify any 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 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 such woman participated in such programs or not, career and financial counseling services. 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 Purpose:

To (1) prioritize the participation of women in youth manufacturing workforce training programs, CareerConneCT workforce training programs related to manufacturing and the Connecticut Career Accelerator Program, and (2) require Connecticut State Community College to offer financial and career counseling services to such women.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]