A BILL

To promote effective registered apprenticeships, for skills, credentials, and employment, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) Short Title.—This Act may be cited as the “Effective Apprenticeships to Rebuild National Skills Act” or the “EARNS Act”.

(b) Table of Contents.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.
Sec. 2. Findings and purposes.
Sec. 3. Definitions.
TITLE I—PROMOTING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS

Sec. 101. Promoting registered apprenticeship programs.
Sec. 102. Promoting integration with postsecondary education.

TITLE II—PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Sec. 201. Expanding registered apprenticeship programs.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) A highly skilled workforce is necessary to compete in the global economy, support economic growth, and maintain the standard of living of the United States.

(2) The apprenticeship model is a longstanding, on-the-job training and education model that prepares workers for the skill demands of particular occupations and employers while, at the same time, providing the workers with recognized, portable credentials, and wages while in training.

(3) The registered apprenticeship program model has been successful in skilled trade industries, including construction and manufacturing, as well as service industries, such as health care, and holds great potential for expansion into other industries.

(4) Registered apprenticeships are becoming increasingly innovative and diverse in their designs, partnerships, timeframes, and use of emerging concepts such as competency-based learning, and will continue to evolve to meet emerging skill require-
ments, while maintaining high standards and quality.

(5) Registered apprenticeship programs are an essential element of an effective workforce development system and help individuals attain a recognized postsecondary credential, contributing to their personal economic sustainability.

(6) According to a report from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, by 2020 the United States will face a shortage of 5,000,000 workers with recognized postsecondary credentials.

(7) According to a 2012 report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, youth employment in the United States has reached the lowest point since World War II. More than 6,000,000 young people ages 16 through 24 are disconnected from school and work.

(8) A 2012 evaluation of registered apprenticeship programs in 10 States by Mathematica Policy Research found that—

(A) individuals who completed registered apprenticeship programs earned over $240,000 more over their careers than individuals not participating in such apprenticeship programs;
(B) the estimated social benefits of registered apprenticeship programs, including additional productivity of apprentices and the reduction in governmental expenditures as a result of reduced use of unemployment compensation and public assistance, exceeded the costs of the programs by more than $49,000 per program; and

(C) the tax return on every Federal Government dollar invested in registered apprenticeship programs was $27.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to increase the number of highly skilled workers in the United States, particularly in in-demand industry sectors and occupations;

(2) to increase the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials by participants;

(3) to increase awareness about the value of the registered apprenticeship program model as an effective earn-and-learn model for students, workers, and employers;

(4) to support the development and expansion of registered apprenticeship programs with employers, joint labor-management partnerships, trade and professional associations, and other program spon-
sors, that offer jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency;

(5) to support the development and expansion of effective pre-apprenticeship programs that lead to success in a registered apprenticeship program;

(6) to support a closer alignment between registered apprenticeship programs, the workforce development system, career and technical education, and postsecondary education, including institutions of higher education; and

(7) to support innovative models of effective work-based learning.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Office of Apprenticeship appointed under section 101(a).

(2) CAREER PATHWAY.—The term “career pathway” has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

(3) EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY.—The term “educational service agency”—
(A) has the meaning given the term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801); and
(B) includes a collaborative of those agencies.

(4) HIGH SCHOOL.—The term “high school” means a nonprofit institutional day or residential school that—
(A) provides secondary education, as determined under State law;
(B) grants a diploma, as defined by the State; and
(C) includes, at least, grade 12.

(5) IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION.—The term “in-demand industry sector or occupation” means has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

(6) LOCAL AND STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS.—The terms “local workforce development board” and “State workforce development board” have the meanings given the terms “local board” and “State board”, respectively, in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).
(7) National Apprenticeship System.—The term “national apprenticeship system” means the collective group of registered apprenticeship programs and pre-apprenticeship programs in the Nation (including the rules and regulations governing the 2 types of programs).

(8) Postsecondary Educational Institution.—The term “postsecondary educational institution” means an institution of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

(9) Pre-apprenticeship Program.—The term “pre-apprenticeship program” means a program or set of strategies that—

(A) is designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program;

(B) is carried out by an eligible entity (meaning an entity described in section 101(b)(2)(C) that has an application approved under section 101(b)(3)) that has a documented partnership with at least 1 sponsor of a registered apprenticeship program; and

(C) includes each of the following elements:
(i) Training (including a curriculum for the training), aligned with industry standards and reviewed and approved annually by sponsors of the registered apprenticeships within the documented partnership, that will prepare individuals by teaching the skills and competencies needed to enter 1 or more registered apprenticeship programs.

(ii) Provision of hands-on training and theoretical education to individuals that—

(I) accurately simulates the industry and occupational conditions of the registered apprenticeship program described in subparagraph (B);

(II) is carried out in a manner that includes proper observation of supervision and safety protocols; and

(III) is carried out in a manner that does not displace a paid employee.

(iii) A formal agreement with a sponsor of a registered apprenticeship program that would enable participants who successfully complete the pre-apprenticeship
program to enter directly into the registered apprenticeship program (if a place in the program is available), and includes agreements concerning earning credit recognized by a postsecondary educational institution for skills and competencies acquired during the pre-apprenticeship program.

(10) Recognized Postsecondary Credential.—The term “recognized postsecondary credential” has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

(11) Registered Apprenticeship Program.—The term “registered apprenticeship program” means a program registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

(12) Secretary.—Except as provided in section 102 or as otherwise modified, the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Labor, acting through the Administrator.

(13) Sponsor.—The term “sponsor” means an employer, joint labor-management partnership, trade
association, professional association, labor organization, or other entity that administers a registered apprenticeship program.

**TITLE I—PROMOTING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS**

**SEC. 101. PROMOTING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.**

(a) Establishment of the Office of Apprenticeship.—

(1) Office.—There is established, in the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor, an Office of Apprenticeship.

(2) Administrator.—The Office shall be headed by an Administrator of the Office of Apprenticeship appointed by the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training. The Assistant Secretary shall appoint an individual who has the demonstrated knowledge of registered apprenticeship programs necessary to serve as the Administrator.

(3) Responsibilities.—The Administrator, through the Office of Apprenticeship, shall carry out responsibilities including—

(A) determining whether an apprenticeship program meets the requirements to become a registered apprenticeship program and main-
contains the standards necessary to remain a registered apprenticeship program;

(B) managing the national apprenticeship system;

(C) carrying out activities under subsection (b) to promote effective pre-apprenticeship programs;

(D) promoting awareness about registered apprenticeship programs, including carrying out activities under subsection (e);

(E) engaging in regular updates of the registration process, ensuring that such process is easily accessible and efficient for use by sponsors of registered apprenticeship programs;

(F) regularly engage with the National Advisory Committee on Apprenticeships and ensure that the required reports of the Committee are submitted to the Secretary and transmitted to Congress;

(G) promoting greater diversity in registered apprenticeship programs and pre-apprenticeship programs, including by promoting outreach to underrepresented populations, youth, and veterans and supporting the development of apprenticeship models;
(H) providing for evaluations and research, as described in subsection (e);

(I) providing technical assistance to sponsors of registered apprenticeship programs, entities who are interested in developing and becoming sponsors of registered apprenticeship programs, and eligible entities carrying out pre-apprenticeship programs; and

(J) coordinating and aligning registered apprenticeship programs with other Federal education and training programs, including those authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).

(b) SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.—

(1) SUPPORT.—The Secretary shall support the development of pre-apprenticeship programs.

(2) GRANTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Using funds available under subsection (f), the Secretary shall make grants on a competitive basis to eligible entities to provide the Federal share of the cost of car-
rying out projects that support that development.

(B) PERIOD.—The Secretary shall make initial grants under this paragraph for periods of not more than 3 years, except that if an eligible entity demonstrates satisfactory performance under paragraph (6) by the end of that third year, the Secretary may extend the grant period up to an additional 1 year for that entity.

(C) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant from the Secretary under this subsection, an entity shall be a public-private partnership consisting of—

(i) a local educational agency, high school, area career and technical school (as defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302)), educational service agency (as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)), 2- or 4-year postsecondary educational institution, or collaborative of such entities;
(ii) in a State with a State entity recognized by the Secretary of Labor to register apprenticeship programs in that State, that entity;

(iii) an industry or business, consisting of an employer, a group of employers, a trade association, a professional association, or an entity that sponsors a registered apprenticeship program;

(iv) a State workforce development board or local workforce development board; and

(v) to the maximum extent practicable—

(I) a labor organization associated with the industry or occupation related to the pre-apprenticeship program involved; and

(II) a community-based organization that provides pre-apprenticeship programs, as appropriate.

(3) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a grant from the Secretary under this subsection, an entity shall submit an application to the Secretary at
such time, in such manner, and containing such in-
formation as the Secretary may require, including—

(A) a description of the training and cur-
riculum described in section 3(9)(C)(i), and how
the proposed pre-apprenticeship program makes
individuals who successfully complete the pre-
apprenticeship program qualified to enter into
an established registered apprenticeship pro-
gram;

(B) evidence that there are or will be suffi-
cient openings available in the registered ap-
prenticeship program referenced in (A) to en-
able the registered apprenticeship program
sponsor to place into a corresponding registered
apprenticeship those individuals who success-
fully complete the pre-apprenticeship program;

(C) information about the entity that dem-
onstrates the existence of an active, advisory
partnership between the partners described in
paragraph (2)(C) and the capacity, of a train-
ing and education provider in the entity, to pro-
vide the training and education services nec-
essary for a pre-apprenticeship program; and

(D) information about the proposed pre-
apprenticeship program that demonstrates—
(i) that the program is in an in-demand industry or occupation in the region in which the project is located;

(ii) the use of integrated work-based and academic learning that may include training in the workplace;

(iii) the inclusion of career exploration focused activities, such as job shadowing, career information activities, and resume preparation, in the program;

(iv) if the entity carrying out the project includes a high school, that the model to be used for the program leads to a high school diploma for participants without such a diploma;

(v) how the pre-apprenticeship program is aligned with and leverages resources of career and technical education programs, programs and services authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.), or activities of entities that provide supportive services for participants in pre-apprenticeship programs; and
(vi) that the project aligns with an established registered apprenticeship program, including that the model used for the program leads to the attainment of skills and competencies necessary for entrance into the registered apprenticeship program for participants.

(4) USE OF FUNDS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under this subsection shall use the grant funds to carry out a project that implements a pre-apprenticeship program.

(B) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—The eligible entity shall use the grant funds—

(i) to pay for the cost of training or education associated with the pre-apprenticeship program;

(ii) for curriculum development that align with the requirements of the appropriate registered apprenticeship programs and learning assessments;

(iii) to maintain a connection between the pre-apprenticeship program and registered apprenticeship program;
(iv) for assessments of potential participants for, and enrollment of the participants in, the pre-apprenticeship program; and

(v) to conduct evaluations described in paragraph (6)(B).

(C) ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES.—The eligible entity may use the grant funds for—

(i) teacher training, including providing externship opportunities for teachers to learn about the skill needs of the industry or occupation that the pre-apprenticeship program focuses on;

(ii) stipends for participants during work-based training in the program; or

(iii) coordination of activities under this subsection with activities carried out under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) or the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.).

(5) FEDERAL SHARE.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—The Federal share of the cost described in paragraph (2)(A) shall be 75 percent.

(B) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The eligible entity may contribute the non-Federal share of the cost in cash or in kind, fairly evaluated, including plant, equipment, or services.

(6) PERFORMANCE.—

(A) MEASURES.—The Secretary shall identify a set of common measures that, at a minimum, include measures of entry into a registered apprenticeship program and that are aligned with performance accountability measures described in section 116(c) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3141(c)) for the local workforce development area (meaning a local area, as defined in section 3 of that Act) and with corresponding measures under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.), as appropriate.

(B) EVALUATIONS.—Each eligible entity that receives a grant to carry out a project under this subsection shall arrange for another qualified entity to conduct an evaluation, or
shall participate in a Department of Labor sponsored evaluation, of the project using the identified common measures, and shall, to the extent practicable, cooperate with the evaluator in any evaluations of activities carried out under this section.

(C) EXTENSIONS.—The Secretary shall use the results of an evaluation for a project to determine whether to extend the grant period, or renew a grant, for the project under paragraph (2)(B).

(c) PROMOTING AWARENESS OF REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To promote awareness about registered apprenticeship programs, the Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Commerce, shall ensure that timely, current information about the value of registered apprenticeship programs in the labor market is made available through a range of widely accessible formats and venues. The information shall be made available to businesses, trade associations, professional associations, students, parents, workers, educational institutions, workforce and economic devel-
opment organizations, and State and local elected officials.

(2) INFORMATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS.—To promote awareness about registered apprenticeship programs within the workforce development system, the Secretary shall disseminate information on the value of registered apprenticeship programs, to State and local workforce development boards described in subsection (b)(2)(C)(iv), which information shall include—

(A) a list of registered apprenticeship programs in the State involved;

(B) guidance for training staff of the workforce development system within the State on the value of registered apprenticeship programs, including relevant placement, retention and earnings information, as a training option for participants;

(C) guidance on how individual training accounts under section 134(c)(3) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3174(e)(3)) could be used by participants for a registered apprenticeship program; and
(D) guidance on how performance accountability measures under section 116 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3141) apply to participants in registered apprenticeship programs, including relevant placement, retention and earnings information.

(3) INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS, TRADE ASSOCIATIONS, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, INDUSTRY GROUPS AND LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.—To promote awareness about registered apprenticeship programs to workers and employers, the Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of Commerce, shall provide information about the value of registered apprenticeship programs, including relevant placement, retention and earnings information, through the one-stop delivery systems described in section 121 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3151), to employers, trade associations, professional associations, industry groups, and labor organizations, which information shall include, at a minimum—

(A) a list of registered apprenticeship programs in the State;

(B) information on how to develop a registered apprenticeship program; and
(C) information on financial resources available to assist with the establishment and implementation of registered apprenticeship programs.

(4) INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS.—To promote awareness about registered apprenticeship programs among students and school staff, the Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of Education, shall disseminate information on the value of registered apprenticeship programs, including relevant placement, retention and earnings information, to high schools, area career and technical education schools (as defined in subsection (b)(2)(C)(i)), 2- and 4-year postsecondary educational institutions, and educational service agencies, to enable, at a minimum—

(A) parents to understand registered apprenticeship programs and their value in postsecondary education and career pathways;

(B) students to understand registered apprenticeship programs and their value in career pathways;

(C) career and academic counselors to understand registered apprenticeship programs as a valuable postsecondary education option for
students leading to job placement in in-demand industries and occupations; and

(D) school administrators, workforce and economic development coordinators, and teachers and faculty to assist with the development, implementation, and continuation of registered apprenticeship programs.

(d) Secretary’s National Advisory Committee on Apprenticeships.—

(1) Establishment.—

(A) In general.—There is established in the Department of Labor a National Advisory Committee on Apprenticeships, referred to in this section as the “Advisory Committee”.

(B) Composition.—The Advisory Committee shall have—

(i) 20 voting members appointed by the Secretary, composed of—

(I) 10 representatives of employers who participate in a registered apprenticeship program;

(II) 6 representatives of labor organizations who have responsibility for the administration of a registered
apprenticeship program sponsored by a joint labor-management partnership;

(III) 4 representatives of State apprenticeship agencies (or representatives of Governors), community organizations with significant experience with a registered apprenticeship program, area career and technical schools (as defined in subsection (b)(2)(C)(i)), local educational agencies, and 2- or 4-year postsecondary educational institutions with at least 1 articulation agreement with the entity administering a registered apprenticeship program; and

(ii) members who are ex officio non-voting representatives from the Departments of Labor, Commerce, Education, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services.

(C) QUALIFICATIONS.—The members shall be selected upon the basis of their experience, competence, innovation, and demonstrated performance concerning registered apprenticeships.
(D) TERMS.—The Secretary shall appoint
the voting members for terms of 4 years.

(2) CHAIRPERSON.—The Secretary shall des-
ignate 1 of the members of the Advisory Committee
to serve as Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.

(3) MEETINGS.—The Advisory Committee shall
hold not fewer than 2 meetings during each calendar
year. All meetings of the Advisory Committee shall
be open to the public. A transcript shall be kept of
each meeting and made available for public inspec-
tion.

(4) DUTIES.—The Advisory Committee shall, at
a minimum—

(A) advise, consult with, and make rec-
ommendations to the Secretary on matters re-
lating to the administration of this title and the
Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as
the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat.
664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.);

(B) annually prepare a set of recommenda-
tions to the Administrator and the Secretary to
streamline the registration process, to make the
process easily accessible and efficient for use by
sponsors, while maintaining high standards; and
(C) every two years, disseminate a collection of best practices for engaging youth and underemployed individuals in pre-apprenticeship programs and registered apprenticeship programs.

(5) PERSONNEL.—

(A) PROCUREMENT.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee may procure the temporary and intermittent services of voting members of the Advisory Committee under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(ii) OFFICERS OR EMPLOYEES OF THE UNITED STATES.—All members of the Advisory Committee who are officers or employees of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for their services as officers or employees of the United States.
(B) STAFF.—The Secretary shall supply the Committee with an executive secretary and provide such secretarial, clerical, and other services as the Secretary determines to be necessary to enable the Advisory Committee to conduct its business.

(6) PERMANENT COMMITTEE.—Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the advisory committee.

(c) EVALUATIONS AND RESEARCH.—

(1) EVALUATIONS OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT UNDER THIS TITLE.—For the purpose of improving the management and effectiveness of the programs and activities carried out under this title, the Secretary shall provide for the continuing evaluation, by an independent entity, of the programs and activities, including activities carried out under subsection (a)(3)(C). Such evaluations shall address—

(A) the general effectiveness of such programs and activities in relation to their cost, including the extent to which the programs and activities—

(i) improve the skill and employment competencies of participants in comparison
to comparably-situated individuals who did not participate in such programs and activities; and

(ii) to the extent feasible, increase the level of total employment and recognized postsecondary credential attainment over the level that would have existed in the absence of such programs and activities;

(B) the impact of the programs and activities for the participants, sponsors, and employers;

(C) the return on investment of Federal, State, local, sponsor, employer, and other funding for registered apprenticeships to capture the full level of investment in, and impact of, registered apprenticeships;

(D) the longitudinal outcomes for participants in the programs and activities; and

(E) the impact of specific policies on the general effectiveness of such programs and activities.

(2) RESEARCH.—The Secretary may conduct, through an independent entity, research on best practices in registered apprenticeship programs and
pre-apprenticeship programs and other issues relating to such programs.

(3) TECHNIQUES.—Evaluations and research conducted under this subsection shall utilize appropriate methodology and research designs.

(4) REPORTS.—The independent entity carrying out the evaluations described in paragraph (1) or research described in paragraph (2) shall prepare and submit to the Secretary a final report containing the results of the evaluations or research, respectively, and including policy recommendations. The final report shall be made available for public inspection. Not later than 36 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall produce a final report related to the return on investment described in paragraph (1)(C).

(5) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 60 days after the completion of all the final reports described in paragraph (4), the Secretary shall transmit the final reports to the Committee on Education and Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

(6) PUBLIC ACCESS.—The Secretary shall develop a mechanism to make research developed
under this title publically available in a timely man-
ner.

(f) RESERVATION.—The Secretary shall reserve not
less than 10 percent of the funds appropriated under sub-
section (g) for each fiscal year for grants to States. A
State that receives such a grant shall use the grant funds
for the purpose of assisting the Administrator in carrying
out the activities under this section, and may use the grant
funds to support the voluntary establishment of a State
apprenticeship office, if no such office exists in the State.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
$75,000,000 for fiscal year 2017 and each subsequent
year.

SEC. 102. PROMOTING INTEGRATION WITH POSTSEC-
ONDARY EDUCATION.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COLLABORATIVE.—The term “Collabo-
rative” means the Registered Apprenticeship-College
Collaborative established under subsection (b)(1).

(2) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”
means the Secretary of Labor, acting through the
Administrator, working jointly with the Secretary of
Education, acting through the Assistant Secretary
for the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.

(b) COLLABORATIVE WITH 2- AND 4-YEAR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretaries shall establish and maintain a voluntary Registered Apprenticeship-College Collaborative. The Collaborative shall consist of the sponsors carrying out registered apprenticeship programs, 2- or 4-year postsecondary educational institutions, and organizations that represent such programs or institutions, that agree to meet certain criteria in order to support the purposes described in paragraph (2).

(2) PURPOSES.—The Collaborative shall support the purposes of—

(A) promoting stronger connections between the registered apprenticeship programs involved and participating 2- and 4-year postsecondary educational institutions;

(B) promoting the translation of experience in a registered apprenticeship program to academic credit at participating 2- and 4-year postsecondary educational institutions;

(C) facilitating the enrollment of an individual who has completed a registered appren-
tieship program (referred to in this section as an “apprentice”) at a participating 2- or 4-year postsecondary educational institution for the purpose of attaining academic credit toward an associate’s or more advanced degree;

(D) advancing the attainment of associate’s and more advanced degrees by apprentices;

(E) promoting the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials with value in the labor market; and

(F) expanding awareness about the value of registered apprenticeship programs as a postsecondary education option.

(3) PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretaries shall establish criteria that any interested 2- or 4-year postsecondary educational institution or sponsor shall meet in order to participate in the Collaborative, which criteria shall include, at a minimum—

(A) for a 2- or 4-year postsecondary educational institution—

(i) agreement to recognize and accept the academic credit (as assessed under subparagraph (B)(i)) earned by an appren-
tice for, and the assessment of the apprentice’s learning in, a registered apprenticeship program at another participating institution;

(ii) agreement to have a formal articulation agreement with a participating sponsor of a registered apprenticeship program, other than a 2- or 4-year postsecondary educational institution; and

(iii) agreement to provide certain information, as determined by the Secretaries, to the Collaborative; and

(B) for a sponsor—

(i) agreement to participate in third-party evaluations of the quality and rigor of the program offerings in order to determine the value of academic credit for learning during a registered apprenticeship program;

(ii) agreement to have a formal articulation agreement with a participating 2- or 4-year postsecondary educational institution; and
(iii) agreement to provide certain information, as determined by the Secretaries, to the Collaborative.

(4) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In order to participate in the Collaborative, interested 2- or 4-year postsecondary educational institutions and sponsors shall agree to meet certain conditions determined by the Secretaries.

(B) CONDITIONS.—Such conditions shall address, at a minimum—

(i) how learning during a registered apprenticeship program, including related instruction and on-the-job training, will be assessed for academic credit;

(ii) how programs and procedures, especially those related to admissions, credit transfer, and recognition of such learning will be structured to support accessibility for apprentices;

(iii) how the structure and scheduling of courses will be developed in a way that supports the matriculation of apprentices; and
(iv) how residency requirements will support the transferability of credit earned by apprentices.

(5) PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION.—The Secretaries shall maintain a publicly accessible website identifying, at a minimum—

(A) the participating members of the Collaborative in each State;

(B) a model for articulation agreements, and copies of some exemplary articulation agreements for illustrative purposes; and

(C) such other information as the Secretaries determine to be necessary to promote awareness of the Collaborative and its members.

(6) USE OF FUNDS.—

(A) ADMINISTRATIVE.—The Secretaries shall use 30 percent of the funds appropriated under subsection (c) to establish and maintain the Collaborative and the website referred to in paragraph (5), to support the advisory committee referred to in paragraph (6), and for technical assistance, evaluation, and research activities.

(B) FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.—The Secretaries shall use 70 percent of the appro-
appropriated funds to carry out, directly or by grant or contract with an eligible entity, activities consisting of—

(i) providing funding to Collaborative participants to support the development of articulation agreements with other Collaborative participants;

(ii) providing funding to the Collaborative to support the assessment of learning during a registered apprenticeship program, for academic credit;

(iii) providing funding to the Collaborative to support third-party evaluations of the quality and rigor of program offerings, referred to in paragraph (3)(B)(i), which evaluations shall be conducted by an entity that meets minimum criteria as established by the Secretaries;

(iv) providing curriculum development, for participating institutions and sponsors; and

(v) carrying out other purposes that will help participating 2- and 4-year post-secondary educational institutions and
sponsors meet the requirements of paragraphs (3) and (4).

(C) Eligible Entities.—To be eligible to receive a grant or contract under subparagraph (B), an entity shall be a partnership comprised of—

(i) at least 1, 2-, or 4-year postsecondary educational institution participating in the Collaborative; and

(ii) at least 1 sponsor of a registered apprenticeship program participating in the Collaborative.

(e) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $5,000,000 for fiscal year 2017 and each subsequent year.

TITLE II—PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

SEC. 201. EXPANDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.

(a) In General.—The Secretary shall provide payments of assistance for eligible sponsors of new (as of the date of submission of an application under subsection (b)) registered apprenticeship programs, or for eligible sponsors of existing registered apprenticeship programs that add employers as new (as of such date) partners, which
may include joint labor-management registered apprenticeship programs.

(b) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive payments under this section for a registered apprenticeship program, a sponsor shall submit an application to the Secretary including information demonstrating that (as of the date of submission)—

(1)(A) for a new registered apprenticeship program, the program received recognition as a registered apprenticeship program within the 36 months preceding that date; or

(B) for an existing registered apprenticeship program (which may include joint labor-management registered apprenticeship programs), employers were added as new partners within the 36 months preceding that date;

(2) the sponsor offered jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, as determined by a local workforce development board located in the same local workforce development area (meaning a local area, as defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102));

(3) the sponsor has demonstrated success in enrolling, instructing, advancing, and graduating individuals in the relevant registered apprenticeship pro-
gram, and in the employment of such individuals
after completion of the program; and

(4) the sponsor had not received a payment
under subsection (d) for that registered apprentice-
ship program.

(c) USE OF FUNDS.—In providing assistance under
this section, the Secretary shall arrange to provide pay-
ments as described in subsection (a) for eligible sponsors,
as funds are available under this section. Funds made
available through such a payment shall be used to reim-
burse an eligible sponsor for the allowable costs of estab-
lishing or expanding the registered apprenticeship pro-
gram involved. The maximum total payment to any one
sponsor may not exceed $25,000 or 50 percent of the al-
lowable costs.

(d) DISBURSEMENT.—The Secretary shall enter into
arrangements with State workforce development boards to
make disbursements through the local workforce develop-
ment boards described in subsection (b)(2) to provide the
payments to the eligible sponsors.

(e) EVALUATIONS.—Sponsors receiving grants under
this section shall, to the extent practicable, cooperate with
the Secretary in the conduct of evaluations of the activities
carried out under this section.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
(1) **IN GENERAL.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $20,000,000 for fiscal year 2017 and each subsequent year.

(2) **RESERVATION.**—The Secretary may reserve 5 percent of the amount appropriated under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year for distribution to the State workforce development boards and local workforce development boards, to pay for the costs of the boards associated with making determinations under subsection (b)(2) and disbursements under subsection (d), and as funds remain available, other costs of administration and management, technical assistance, research, and evaluation under this Act.