

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 6042

To require the Secretary of Labor to award grants for promoting industry or sector partnerships to encourage industry growth and competitiveness and to improve worker training, retention, and advancement as part of an infrastructure investment.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Ms. BONAMICI (for herself and Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

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## A BILL

To require the Secretary of Labor to award grants for promoting industry or sector partnerships to encourage industry growth and competitiveness and to improve worker training, retention, and advancement as part of an infrastructure investment.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Building U.S. Infra-  
5 structure by Leveraging Demands for Skills” or the  
6 “BUILDS Act”.

**1 SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

2 The purpose of this Act is to promote industry or  
3 sector partnerships that engage in collaborative planning,  
4 resource alignment, and training efforts across multiple  
5 businesses, for a range of workers employed or potentially  
6 employed by targeted infrastructure industries, including  
7 energy, construction, information technology, utilities, and  
8 transportation, in order to encourage industry growth and  
9 competitiveness and to improve worker training, retention,  
10 and advancement.

**11 SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

12 In this Act:

13 (1) CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION; CA-  
14 REER GUIDANCE AND ACADEMIC COUNSELING.—The  
15 terms “career and technical education” and “career  
16 guidance and academic counseling” have the mean-  
17 ings given such terms in section 3 of the Carl D.  
18 Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of  
19 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302).

20 (2) CAREER PATHWAY.—The term “career  
21 pathway” has the meaning given such term in sec-  
22 tion 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity  
23 Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

24 (3) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIP.—The term “eligi-  
25 ble partnership” means a partnership that is an in-  
26 dustry or sector partnership, or (with respect to an

1 implementation grant) a partnership that is in the  
2 process of establishing an industry or sector partner-  
3 ship.

4 (4) INDIVIDUAL WITH A BARRIER TO EMPLOY-  
5 MENT.—The term “individual with a barrier to em-  
6 ployment” has the meaning given such term in sec-  
7 tion 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity  
8 Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

9 (5) INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIP.—The  
10 term “industry or sector partnership” has the mean-  
11 ing given such term in section 3 of the Workforce  
12 Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

13 (6) LOCAL BOARD.—The term “local board”  
14 has the meaning given such term in section 3 of the  
15 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29  
16 U.S.C. 3102).

17 (7) RECOGNIZED POSTSECONDARY CREDEN-  
18 TIAL.—The term “recognized postsecondary creden-  
19 tial” has the meaning given such term in section 3  
20 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
21 (29 U.S.C. 3102).

22 (8) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
23 the Secretary of Labor.

24 (9) STATE; STATE BOARD.—The terms “State”  
25 and “State board” have the meanings given such

1 terms in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and  
2 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

3 (10) TARGETED INFRASTRUCTURE INDUS-  
4 TRY.—The term “targeted infrastructure industry”  
5 means an industry, including transportation (includ-  
6 ing surface, transit, aviation, or railway transpor-  
7 tation), construction, energy (including the deploy-  
8 ment of renewable and clean energy, energy effi-  
9 ciency, transmission, and battery storage), informa-  
10 tion technology, or utilities industries, that the eligi-  
11 ble partnership identifies in accordance with section  
12 5(c) to be served by a grant under this Act.

13 (11) WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAM.—

14 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “work-based  
15 learning program” means a program (which  
16 may be a registered apprenticeship program)  
17 that provides workers with paid work experience  
18 and corresponding approved classroom instruc-  
19 tion, delivered in an employment relationship  
20 that both the employer and worker intend to  
21 lead to continuing employment after the pro-  
22 gram ends.

23 (B) WORK EXPERIENCE.—In subpara-  
24 graph (A), the term “paid work experience” in-  
25 cludes training by an employer that is provided

1 to a paid worker while engaged in productive  
2 work in a job that provides knowledge or skills  
3 essential to the full and adequate performance  
4 of the job.

5 (12) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP.—The term  
6 “registered apprenticeship” means an apprenticeship  
7 registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (com-  
8 monly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”;  
9 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

10 **SEC. 4. GRANTS AUTHORIZED.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation  
12 with the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of En-  
13 ergy, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Edu-  
14 cation, and the Chief of Engineers and Commanding Gen-  
15 eral of the Army Corps of Engineers, shall award, on a  
16 competitive basis, grants to eligible entities to plan and  
17 implement activities to achieve the strategic objectives de-  
18 scribed in section 5(d) with respect to a targeted infra-  
19 structure industry.

20 (b) GRANTS.—

21 (1) TYPES OF GRANTS.—A grant awarded  
22 under this Act may be in the form of—

23 (A) an implementation grant, for entities  
24 seeking an initial grant under this Act; or

1 (B) a renewal grant for entities that have  
2 already received an implementation grant under  
3 this Act.

4 (2) DURATION.—Each grant awarded under  
5 this Act shall be for a period not to exceed 3 years.

6 (3) AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant awarded  
7 under this Act may not exceed—

8 (A) for an implementation grant,  
9 \$2,500,000; and

10 (B) for a renewal grant, \$1,500,000.

11 (c) AWARD BASIS.—

12 (1) GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY.—The Secretary  
13 shall award grants under this Act in a manner that  
14 ensures geographic diversity in the areas in which  
15 activities will be carried out under the grants.

16 (2) PRIORITY FOR RENEWAL GRANTS.—In  
17 awarding renewal grants under this Act, the Sec-  
18 retary shall give priority to eligible entities that—

19 (A) demonstrate long-term sustainability of  
20 an industry or sector partnership; and

21 (B) provide a non-Federal share of the  
22 cost of the activities.

23 **SEC. 5. APPLICATION PROCESS.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—An eligible partnership desiring a  
25 grant under this Act shall submit an application to the

1 Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing  
2 such information as the Secretary may require, including  
3 the contents described in subsection (b).

4 (b) CONTENTS.—An application submitted under this  
5 Act shall contain, at a minimum—

6 (1) a description of the eligible partnership, evi-  
7 dence of the eligible partnership’s capacity to carry  
8 out activities to achieve the strategic objectives de-  
9 scribed in subsection (d), and the expected participa-  
10 tion and responsibilities of each of the partners in-  
11 cluded in the industry or sector partnership involved;

12 (2) a description of the targeted infrastructure  
13 industry served by the grant, and a description of  
14 how such industry was identified in accordance with  
15 subsection (c);

16 (3) a description of the workers that will be tar-  
17 geted or recruited by the partnership, including an  
18 analysis of the existing labor market, a description  
19 of potential barriers to employment for targeted  
20 workers, and a description of strategies that will be  
21 used to help workers overcome such barriers;

22 (4) a description of the local, State, or federally  
23 funded infrastructure projects on which the eligible  
24 partnership anticipates engaging partners;

1           (5) a description of the strategic objectives de-  
2           scribed in subsection (d) that the eligible partnership  
3           intends to achieve concerning the targeted infra-  
4           structure industry;

5           (6) a description of the credentials that the eli-  
6           gible partnership proposes to use or develop as a  
7           performance measure, to assess the degree to which  
8           the eligible partnership has achieved such strategic  
9           objectives, which credentials—

10                   (A) shall be nationally portable;

11                   (B) shall be recognized postsecondary cre-  
12                   dentials or, if not available for the industry,  
13                   other credentials determined by the Secretary  
14                   to be appropriate;

15                   (C) shall be related to the targeted infra-  
16                   structure industry that the eligible partnership  
17                   proposes to support; and

18                   (D) may be a registered apprenticeship  
19                   program;

20           (7) a description of the manner in which the eli-  
21           gible partnership intends to make sustainable  
22           progress towards achieving such strategic objectives;

23           (8) performance measures for measuring  
24           progress towards achieving such strategic objectives;



1           (9) a description of the Federal and non-Fed-  
2       eral resources, available under provisions of law  
3       other than this Act, that will be leveraged in support  
4       of the partnerships and activities under this Act;  
5       and

6           (10) a timeline for progress towards achieving  
7       such strategic objectives.

8       (c) TARGETED INFRASTRUCTURE INDUSTRY.—Each  
9       grant under this Act shall serve a targeted infrastructure  
10      industry that is identified by the eligible partnership  
11      through working with businesses, industry associations  
12      and organizations, labor organizations, State boards, local  
13      boards, economic development agencies, and other organi-  
14      zations that the eligible partnership determines necessary.

15      (d) STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.—The activities to be  
16      carried out under each grant awarded under this Act shall  
17      be designed to achieve strategic objectives that include the  
18      following:

19           (1) Recruiting key stakeholders in the targeted  
20      infrastructure industry, such as multiple businesses,  
21      labor organizations, local boards, and education and  
22      training providers, including providers of career and  
23      technical education, and regularly convening the  
24      stakeholders in a collaborative structure that sup-  
25      ports the sharing of information, ideas, and chal-

1 lenges common to the targeted infrastructure indus-  
2 try.

3 (2) Identifying the training needs of multiple  
4 businesses in the targeted infrastructure industry,  
5 including—

6 (A) needs for skills critical to competitive-  
7 ness and innovation in the industry;

8 (B) needs of the registered apprenticeship  
9 programs or other work-based learning pro-  
10 grams supported by the grant; and

11 (C) needs for the usage of career path-  
12 ways.

13 (3) Facilitating actions that lead to economies  
14 of scale by aggregating training and education needs  
15 of multiple businesses.

16 (4) Helping postsecondary educational institu-  
17 tions, training institutions, sponsors of registered  
18 apprenticeship programs, and all other providers of  
19 career and technical education and training pro-  
20 grams receiving assistance under this Act, align cur-  
21 ricula, entrance requirements, and programs to the  
22 targeted infrastructure industry needs and the cre-  
23 dentials described in subsection (b)(6), particularly  
24 for higher skill, high-priority occupations related to  
25 the targeted infrastructure industry.

1           (5) Providing information on the grant activi-  
2 ties to the State agency carrying out the State pro-  
3 gram under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49  
4 et seq.), including staff of the agency that provide  
5 services under such Act, to enable the agency to in-  
6 form recipients of unemployment compensation of  
7 the employment and training opportunities that may  
8 be offered through the grant activities.

9           (6) Helping partner businesses in industry or  
10 sector partnerships to attract potential workers from  
11 a diverse jobseeker base, including individuals with  
12 barriers to employment, by identifying any such bar-  
13 riers through analysis of the labor market and im-  
14 plementing strategies to help such workers overcome  
15 such barriers.

16 **SEC. 6. ACTIVITIES.**

17           (a) IN GENERAL.—An eligible partnership receiving  
18 a grant under this Act shall—

19           (1) designate an entity in the industry or sector  
20 partnership as the fiscal agent for the grant funds;  
21 and

22           (2) carry out activities described in subsections  
23 (b) (as applicable), (c), and (d) to achieve the stra-  
24 tegic objectives identified in the entity’s application  
25 under section 5(b)(5), in a manner that integrates

1 services and funding sources to ensure effectiveness  
2 of the activities and that uses the grant funds effi-  
3 ciently.

4 (b) PLANNING ACTIVITIES.—An eligible partnership  
5 receiving an implementation grant under this Act shall use  
6 not more than \$250,000 of the grant funds to carry out  
7 planning activities during the first year of the grant pe-  
8 riod. Such activities may include—

9 (1) establishing the industry or sector partner-  
10 ship;

11 (2) convening key stakeholders as identified in  
12 the application process;

13 (3) conducting outreach to local businesses and  
14 business associations;

15 (4) conducting an evaluation of workforce needs  
16 in the local area; or

17 (5) recruiting individuals with barriers to em-  
18 ployment.

19 (c) BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT.—An eligible partner-  
20 ship receiving a grant under this Act shall use the grant  
21 funds to provide services to engage businesses in efforts  
22 to achieve the strategic objectives identified in the partner-  
23 ship’s application under section 5(b)(5). The services may  
24 include assisting businesses—

1           (1) in navigating the registration process for a  
2 sponsor of a registered apprenticeship program;

3           (2) by connecting the business with an edu-  
4 cation provider, including a provider of career and  
5 technical education, to develop classroom instruction  
6 to complement on-the-job learning;

7           (3) in developing the curriculum design of a  
8 work-based learning program;

9           (4) in employing workers participating in a  
10 work-based learning program for a transitional pe-  
11 riod before a business hires the worker for full-time  
12 employment not less than 30 hours a week;

13           (5) in providing training to managers and  
14 front-line workers to serve as trainers or mentors to  
15 workers participating in a work-based learning pro-  
16 gram;

17           (6) in providing career awareness activities,  
18 such as career guidance and academic counseling;  
19 and

20           (7) in recruiting, for participation in a work-  
21 based learning program, individuals eligible to re-  
22 ceive additional workforce or human services, includ-  
23 ing—

24                   (A) individuals participating in programs  
25           under the Workforce Innovation and Oppor-

1 tunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.), and the  
2 amendments made by such Act, including to the  
3 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 701 et  
4 seq.);

5 (B) recipients of assistance through the  
6 supplemental nutrition assistance program es-  
7 tablished under the Food and Nutrition Act of  
8 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.);

9 (C) recipients of assistance through the  
10 program of block grants to States for tem-  
11 porary assistance for needy families established  
12 under part A of title IV of the Social Security  
13 Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.); or

14 (D) any other individuals with a barrier to  
15 employment.

16 (d) SUPPORT SERVICES.—The eligible partnership  
17 receiving a grant under this Act shall use the grant funds  
18 to provide services to support the success of individuals  
19 described in subsection (c)(7) who are participating in a  
20 work-based learning program for a period of not less than  
21 12 months. Such services may include the following:

22 (1) PRE-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.—Services,  
23 provided in a pre-employment stage of the program,  
24 to expand access to a work-based learning program

1 for individuals described in subsection (c)(7). Such  
2 services may include—

3 (A) skills training;

4 (B) career and technical education or adult  
5 basic education;

6 (C) initial skills assessments;

7 (D) providing work attire, necessary tools  
8 for a work site, and other required items nec-  
9 essary to start employment;

10 (E) wrap-around services, such as child  
11 care and transportation; and

12 (F) job placement assistance.

13 (2) EARLY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.—Services  
14 provided to individuals described in subsection (c)(7)  
15 who are participating in a work-based learning pro-  
16 gram during their first 6 months of employment  
17 through such program, to assure the individuals suc-  
18 ceed in the program. Such services may include—

19 (A) ongoing case management and support  
20 services, including the services provided in the  
21 pre-employment stage described in paragraph  
22 (1);

23 (B) continued skills training, including ca-  
24 reer and technical education, conducted in col-  
25 laboration with employers of such individuals;

1 (C) additional mentorship and retention  
2 supports for such individuals;

3 (D) targeted training for frontline man-  
4 agers, journey level workers working with such  
5 individuals (such as mentors), and human re-  
6 source representatives within the business  
7 where such individuals are placed; and

8 (E) wages and benefits for a period of not  
9 more than 6 months, during which the eligible  
10 entities shall serve as the employers of record of  
11 such individuals.

12 (3) EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.—Services to en-  
13 sure the individuals described in paragraph (2)  
14 maintain employment in the work-based learning  
15 program for at least 12 months. The services shall  
16 include support necessary to complete the work-  
17 based learning program, such as continuation of  
18 mentoring and support services provided under para-  
19 graph (2).

20 (e) EVALUATION AND PROGRESS REPORTS.—Not  
21 later than 1 year after receiving a grant under this Act,  
22 and annually thereafter, the eligible partnership receiving  
23 the grant shall submit a report to the Secretary and the  
24 Governor of the State that the eligible partnership serves,  
25 that—



1 (1) describes the activities funded by the grant;

2 (2) evaluates the progress the eligible partner-  
3 ship has made towards achieving the strategic objec-  
4 tives identified under section 5(b)(5); and

5 (3) evaluates the levels of performance achieved  
6 by the eligible partnership for training participants  
7 with respect to the performance indicators under  
8 section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation  
9 and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3141(b)(2)(A)) for  
10 all such workers, disaggregated by each population  
11 specified in section 3(24) of the Workforce Innova-  
12 tion and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102(24)) and  
13 by race, ethnicity, sex, and age.

14 (f) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—An eligible partnership  
15 may use not more than 5 percent of the funds awarded  
16 through a grant under this Act for administrative ex-  
17 penses in carrying out this section.

18 **SEC. 7. ADMINISTRATION BY THE SECRETARY.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may use not more  
20 than 10 percent of the amount appropriated under section  
21 8 for each fiscal year for administrative expenses to carry  
22 out this Act, including the expenses of providing the tech-  
23 nical assistance and oversight activities under subsection  
24 (b).

1           (b) **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE; OVERSIGHT.**—The Sec-  
2   retary shall provide technical assistance and oversight to  
3   assist the eligible entities in applying for and admin-  
4   istering grants awarded under this Act.

5   **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

6           There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
7   this Act, \$500,000,000 for fiscal year 2024 and each of  
8   the succeeding 4 fiscal years.

○