



## Pass the JOBS Act to Help More Workers Gain Employment

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) strongly supports the Jumpstart Our Businesses by Supporting Students Act of 2019 (JOBS Act), introduced by Sens. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Tim Kaine (D-VA). The JOBS Act extends Pell Grant eligibility to credit and non-credit job training programs at institutions of higher education that are shorter in duration than under current law. The JOBS Act would modernize the Pell Grant program by helping “non-traditional” college students upgrade their skills and get a better job, and enable younger students to begin their path to educational attainment.

Community colleges offer many short-term programs in fields such as nursing and medical assistance, information technology, and commercial truck driving, where opportunities for employment are plentiful. States such as Virginia and Washington have recognized the value of quality short-term training programs by providing strong financial support. The JOBS Act would achieve the same end on a national scale.

Quality short-term job training programs are designed both to respond to immediate employer demand and to create new pathways or career ladders to foster upward mobility. In many cases, students who complete short-term programs receive credit applicable to further programs of study to progress in their careers.

The JOBS Act would establish the Job Training Federal Pell Grant program for non-profit institutions of higher education and postsecondary vocational institutions. A student’s Pell Grant amount would be calculated exactly the same as for other students. In order to be eligible for this program, job training programs must, among other requirements:

- Be at least 150 clock hours (over at least 8, but fewer than 15 weeks) but less than the 600 clock hours currently required by the Higher Education Act (HEA).
- Provide training aligned with high-skill, high-wage or in-demand industry sectors.
- Provide students with a recognized postsecondary credential as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Satisfy any educational prerequisites for occupations that require certification or licensure.

As these requirements show, the JOBS Act is focused on, and limited to, programs that will lead students to gainful employment. The JOBS Act also will provide prospective students with the information they need about a particular program – including student outcomes and earnings – to make informed decisions. The legislation includes strict “guardrails” to ensure that only high-quality programs will be funded. The additional cost to the Pell Grant program is small in relation to its overall size.

The JOBS Act provides greater opportunities to American workers and others aspiring to a better lifestyle in a responsible manner. Congress should include the JOBS Act in a reauthorized HEA.

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