

Aim Higher

Access | Affordability | Completion

The Jumpstart on College Act

Section 1. Short Title.

This Act may be cited as the “Jumpstart to College Act”

Section 2. Purpose.

The purpose of this Act is to increase the percentage of students, particularly low-income students and other students traditionally underrepresented in higher education, who complete a recognized postsecondary credential within 100 percent of normal time for the completion of such credential.

Section 3. Definitions.

Defines an eligible entity as a public or private non-profit institution of higher education (IHE) partnered with one or more local educational agencies (LEAs). Non-profit organizations and businesses can also be included in that partnership. This section also aligns definitions of dual or concurrent enrollment and early college high school, along with other definitions, with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA). The term recognized postsecondary credential is defined as “a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree,” which is aligned to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Section 4. Authorization of Appropriations; Reservations.

Authorizes \$250,000,000 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 and such sums as needed thereafter through 2028. This section reserves 40 percent of funds to the partnerships established between and IHEs and LEAs, 55 percent of funds for state grants, and 5 percent for national activities.

Section 5. Grants to Eligible Entities.

Creates a six-year competitive grant competition for eligible entities to establish or support a dual or concurrent enrollment program or early college high school, and limits each grant to no more than \$2,000,000. Grantees must provide a match that starts at 20 percent of the grant award and increases over time to 50 percent by year six. In-kind contributions can be used to meet the match requirement.

This section allows the Secretary to give priority to applicants that propose to establish or support a quality program serving low-income students. Preference is also given to applicants that are located in states that provide state support for dual enrollment or early college. The Secretary shall also ensure that awardees are geographically diverse and represent both two- and four-year institutions.

The application must include a description of the partnership, intended students, transferability of credits to IHEs in the state, determination of student eligibility, sustainability plan, and coordination between the IHE and LEA to develop and implement all the mandatory activities. Applicants must provide several assurances, including that students participating in a grant funded through this program will not be required to pay tuition or fees.

This section also outlines the mandatory and allowable activities.

Section 6. Grants to States.

Creates a six-year competitive grant competition for states to assist them in supporting or establishing early college high schools or dual or concurrent enrollment programs. There is no set limit on the maximum award given to any one state. States must match at least 50 percent of the grant award with non-federal funds.

This section outlines the mandatory and allowable activities, and the application must include how the state will engage in the mandatory activities. Additionally, applicants must provide information on how the state will do the following:

- Ensure that programs funded by this grant are aligned with Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act, WIOA, and ESSA;
- Align their application to the statewide accountability system designed under ESSA to address achievement gaps for traditionally underserved students;
- Access and leverage resources necessary to sustain the programs; and
- Identify and eliminate barriers to program sustainability.

Section 7. Reporting and Oversight.

Requires all grantees to submit annual reports to the Department of Education (ED). Information requested includes the number of students enrolled in these programs, the number and percentage of students who earn a recognized postsecondary credential when they graduate high school, the number of postsecondary credits students earn, and other outcome data. These metrics must be disaggregated by various student demographics.

Section 8. National Activities.

Requires ED must provide technical assistance to grantees and disseminate best practices. ED must also submit an annual report to Congress that analyzes the information received from the grantees. Further, this section requires ED to contract with an independent entity to evaluate the grants. Such sums as may be needed for the direct administrative costs of carrying out the grant are reserved in this section.

Section 9. Rules of Construction.

Nothing in this Act impacts the rights, remedies, and procedures available to employees of LEAs or IHEs. Additionally, this section instructs that a student who graduates from an early college high school supported by a grant in this Act within 100 percent of the normal time for completion shall be counted in the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for that high school.