

ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION - 2012
COMMITTEE STATEMENT
LB1079

Hearing Date: Monday February 06, 2012
Committee On: Education
Introducer: Mello
One Liner: Provide grants for educational bridge programs for low-income adults

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

Vote Results:

Aye:	5	Senators Council, Haar, Howard, Seiler, Sullivan
Nay:	1	Senator Adams
Absent:		
Present Not Voting:	2	Senators Avery, Cornett

Proponents:

Senator Heath Mello
Virginia Powell
Karrie Jimenez
Kate Bolz
Michael Grant
Larry Kronick
Dennis Baack
Jay Sears

Representing:

Introducer
Goodwill Industries
Self
Nebraska Appleseed
Goodwill Industries
Self
Nebraska Community College Association
Nebraska State Education Association

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Representing:

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

Legislative Bill 1079 would require the appropriation of funding to the State Department of Education (Department) from the Education Innovation Fund to provide grants to community colleges to establish bridge programs.

The bill defines a bridge program as a structured career pathway program, developed in partnership between the provider of the Adult Education Program established pursuant to section 79-11,133 and a community college, which assists students in obtaining academic, employability, and technical skills needed to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training and the labor market. The bill would require bridge programs to:

- (1) Provide English reading and writing and math skills required to succeed in a postsecondary credentialing or degree program;
- (2) Involve a partnership among a provider of basic skills education and training under the Adult Education Program, a nonprofit social services organization, and a community college in Nebraska;
- (3) Lead to the attainment of college credit and a recognized postsecondary educational credential or an industry-recognized credential;
- (4) Be open only to low-income participants who are co-enrolled in adult-education, developmental education, or English as a second language and in a community college;
- (5) Target the specific workforce needs of an occupational sector within the state and provide services aimed at

improving education, skills, and employment prospects for low-income adults;

(6) Use educational best practices, including, but not limited to, contextualized instructional strategies, team teaching, modularized learning, or reduced student-teacher ratios; and

(7) Provide for supportive services needed for student educational and employment success, including, but not limited to, job coaching and personal needs.

The Department would be required to establish an application process for awarding grants for bridge programs which meet the requirements listed above. In awarding such grants, the Department would be required to give priority to:

(1) Community college applicants which leverage additional funding through local, philanthropic, or federal funding, including, but not limited to, participation in the state Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training plan, funding under the federal Workforce Investment Act, funding under the College Access Challenge Grant program, funding under the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, and funding under the aid to dependent children program; and

(2) Programs serving recipients of public assistance.

The bill would require recipients of a bridge program grant to collect and provide to the Department data illustrating the outcomes of participants, including:

(1) Participants' education levels, income, and employment status upon entry into the bridge program;

(2) The total number of participants beginning the program, earning college credit, earning industry-recognized credentials, and earning recognized postsecondary credentials;

(3) The employment rates of participants six months, twelve months, and twenty-four months after leaving the program; and

(4) The number of participants pursuing additional education six months, twelve months, and twenty-four months after leaving the program.

The Department of Health and Human Services would be required to cooperate with bridge program grant applicants and recipients which are pursuing funding under the state Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training plan, the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, and the aid to dependent children program.

Explanation of amendments:

The committee amendment would limit transfers from the Education Innovation Fund for purposes of providing grants to establish bridge programs to \$200,000 annually for fiscal years 2012-13 through 2014-15. Section 9-812 would be amended to provide the requisite transfers from the Education Innovation Fund to provide such grants for the aforementioned fiscal years. The \$200,000 transfer authorized in section 9-812 to provide grants for establishing bridge programs would be the second-to-last amount allocated for each of the three fiscal years for which the act is operative. The allocation of the Education Innovation Fund for fiscal year 2015-16 would be set forth in a new subdivision due to the inclusion of the bridge program grant allocation for fiscal year 2014-15.

The amendment would expand eligibility for grants under the act to other entities, in addition to community colleges. Community colleges were the only entities eligible for grants in the original bill. The amendment would change the definition of bridge program to reference providers of basic skills education and training rather than community colleges. The amendment would also remove community colleges from a requirement in the original bill that bridge programs involve a partnership between a provider of basic skills education and training under the Adult Education Program, a nonprofit social services organization, and a community college in Nebraska. The amendment would require the process established by the State Department of Education for awarding grants to be competitive.

The amendment would add the emergency clause and provide a termination date for the act of June 30, 2015.

