

# WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

## 2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

### House Bill 5435

FISCAL  
NOTE

By Delegates Rohrbach, Ellington, Worrell, Criss,  
Statler, Maynor, Green, Moore, T. Clark, Winzenreid,  
and Campbell

[Introduced February 02, 2024; Referred to the  
Committee on Education then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,  
 2 designated §18B-3D-7, establishing the registered apprenticeship to associate of applied  
 3 science program to be administered by the Council for Community and Technical College  
 4 Education.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 3D. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE.**

**§18B-3D-7. Registered apprenticeship to associate in applied science degree program established; definitions; funding; annual reporting.**

1 (a) Purpose and Intent. – The purpose of this section is to create a comprehensive  
 2 registered apprenticeship to associate of applied science degree program to provide apprentices  
 3 or journeyworkers with the opportunity to obtain associate degrees in applied science while  
 4 gaining practical skills and on-the-job training through federally recognized apprenticeship  
 5 programs. The registered apprenticeship to associate of applied science degree program aims to  
 6 bridge the gap between postsecondary education and the apprenticeship learning experience,  
 7 fostering a skilled workforce that meets the demands of varied and evolving industries.

8 (b) Definitions. – As used in this section, unless used in a context that clearly requires a  
 9 different meaning, the term:

10 "Apprenticeship" or "apprenticeship program" means an apprenticeship program  
 11 registered under the federal National Apprenticeship Act, 29 U.S.C. 50, et seq., or another federal  
 12 apprenticeship program administered by the United States Department of Labor's Office of  
 13 Apprenticeship.

14 "Associate of applied science degree" means an associate-level college degree with a  
 15 focus on a particular applied science or technical skill designed for students planning to enter the  
 16 workforce upon degree completion.

17 "Eligible course" means any class or program of instruction offered at a public community  
 18 and technical college for which the eligible student receives credit toward the general education

19 requirements that lead to an associate of applied science degree. Applied academics for adult  
20 education instruction, developmental education, physical education courses, and recreation and  
21 leisure studies courses are not eligible courses for purposes of this program.

22 "Eligible student" means any person who has graduated from high school or has obtained  
23 a general equivalency diploma or other approved equivalency-based test, is 18 years of age or  
24 older, and is an apprentice or participating in an apprenticeship program as verified by the  
25 registered apprenticeship program who registers to participate in the program. "Eligible student"  
26 also includes journeyworkers who have received a certificate recognized by the United States  
27 Department of Labor.

28 "Student-apprentice" means a student who has been accepted into and is participating in  
29 the program created in this section.

30 (b) *Apprenticeship to associate of applied science degree program established.* – Under  
31 the supervision of the council, the chancellor shall establish a program whereby the state's public  
32 community and technical colleges may offer general education courses to eligible students in a  
33 manner and on a timeline that will allow the eligible student to earn at least 15 credit hours of  
34 general education courses toward an associate of applied science degree.

35 (1) To be eligible for the program, an individual must be enrolled in an apprenticeship  
36 program recognized by the United States Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship or must  
37 have received a United States Department of Labor Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship.

38 (2) An apprentice or journeyworker may apply for enrollment in the program at the next  
39 available program offering.

40 (3) Student-apprentices shall complete and pass all general education coursework within  
41 six years from the initial date of enrollment in the program or within two years after completing the  
42 apprentice program, whichever is longer. Journeyworkers shall complete and pass all general  
43 education coursework within six years from the initial date of enrollment.

44 (c) *Funding.* – From appropriations to the council for the purposes of implementing and

45 administering the program established in this section, the council shall pay directly to the  
46 participating public community and technical colleges from such appropriations the cost of the  
47 tuition and academic fees incurred by eligible students taking courses through the program. This  
48 funding may not be used to pay for any of the costs associated with the apprenticeship program or  
49 otherwise incurred by the apprenticeship program in conducting such training.

50 (d) *Rulemaking.* – The council may propose emergency and legislative rules pursuant to  
51 §29A-3A-1 *et seq.* of this code to implement the provisions of this section.

52 (e) *Annual reports.* – By December 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the chancellor shall  
53 report to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability on: the number of  
54 student-apprentices and journeyworkers participating in the program; the number of associate of  
55 applied science degrees earned by students who have participated in the program; projected  
56 growth in the program and funding needs for the next year; and any issues with the program  
57 reported by students, the registered apprenticeship program, and the community and technical  
58 colleges, how these issues are being addressed, and whether the issues require legislative action.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish the apprenticeship to associate of applied science degree program to be administered by the Council for Community and Technical College Education.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.