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SYNOPSIS:

Existing law does not provide a financial incentive for an adult learner who has earned some college credits to return to college to complete their degree.

This bill would establish the ReEngage Alabama Grant Program, administered through the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, to provide grant award payments to assist eligible adult learners returning to college to complete a degree that is linked to Alabama's high demand workforce needs.

This bill would establish the Alabama Short-Term Credential Scholarship Program to assist Alabama residents in earning short-term credentials that will lead to more in-demand career opportunities.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

To establish the ReEngage Alabama Grant Program; to provide grant award payments to eligible adult learners; to



29 provide eligibility standards, and to provide for  
30 administration by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education;  
31 relating to grants for short-term credentials; to establish  
32 the Alabama Short-Term Credential Scholarship Program to  
33 provide grants to Alabama residents to help them earn  
34 short-term credentials; to determine eligible recipients; to  
35 establish procedures for administering the program; to set  
36 forth the process by which the program will be funded; and to  
37 repeal the Alabama Apprenticeship Tax Credit Act commencing  
38 with Section 40-18-422, Code of Alabama 1975.

39 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

40 Section 1. This article shall be known and may be cited  
41 as the ReEngage Alabama Grant Program.

42 Section 2. The purpose of the ReEngage Alabama Grant  
43 Program is to do all of the following:

44 (1) Increase the number of Alabama adults with college  
45 degrees.

46 (2) Encourage adults who have earned some college  
47 credit hours to return to college, enroll, and complete a  
48 college degree program that is connected with workforce  
49 development needs and aligned with Alabama's high demand  
50 occupations list.

51 (3) Provide financial assistance to adult learners of  
52 the state for postsecondary education in the state.

53 Section 3. For the purposes of this article the  
54 following terms have the following meanings:

55 (1) ACADEMIC TERM. A portion of an academic year, such  
56 as a quarter or semester, during which an institution of



57 higher education holds classes including, but not limited to,  
58 Fall, Winter, Spring, or Summer semesters.

59 (2) ADULT LEARNER. An individual who is 25 years of age  
60 or older and returning to college.

61 (3) ALABAMA RESIDENT. An individual who has been  
62 classified as an in-state resident by an authorized  
63 institution, who has established residency within this state  
64 for at least a 12-month period prior to the beginning of the  
65 term for which financial assistance is requested, and who is  
66 in this state for other than a temporary purpose.

67 (4) APPROVED INSTITUTION. A state-supported institution  
68 of higher education or a private nonprofit institution of  
69 higher education that satisfies all of the following:

70 a. Is accredited by the Southern Association of  
71 Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, or the Council on  
72 Occupational Education.

73 b. Is eligible to receive Title IV federal student aid  
74 program funds.

75 c. Maintains its primary headquarters in Alabama.

76 (5) AUTHORIZED INSTITUTION. An approved institution  
77 that files a signed agreement with the commission to comply  
78 with all rules and procedures of the ReEngage Alabama Grant  
79 Program as provided by the commission.

80 (6) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher  
81 Education.

82 (7) CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT. When an adult learner is  
83 making academic progress toward degree completion without a  
84 stop-out in enrollment of more than one consecutive semester



85 or quarter, such as Fall/Winter to Spring, Spring to  
86 Summer/Fall, or Summer to Fall.

87 (8) ELIGIBLE PROGRAM. A nonsectarian, secular  
88 educational program that is aligned with Alabama's high demand  
89 workforce needs adopted by the Alabama Committee on  
90 Credentialing and Career Pathways.

91 (9) ELIGIBLE STUDENT. An individual who completed the  
92 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), who is in  
93 pursuit of his or her first associate or baccalaureate degree,  
94 who satisfies the criteria set out in this act, and who is  
95 found to be eligible by rules adopted by the commission.

96 (10) GRANT. A financial award by the State of Alabama  
97 to defray the cost of tuition and mandatory fees to an  
98 eligible adult learner who is currently enrolled in an  
99 authorized institution.

100 (11) PROGRAM. The ReEngage Alabama Grant Program  
101 created by this act.

102 (12) YEAR. An academic year that shall be divided into  
103 Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer terms. The term does not mean  
104 calendar or fiscal year.

105 Section 4. (a) The program shall be administered by the  
106 commission, which may adopt any rules necessary for the  
107 administration of the program.

108 (b) The commission shall adopt standards for awarding  
109 grant payments to an eligible adult learner who satisfies all  
110 of the following:

111 (1) Is a citizen or a lawful permanent resident of the  
112 United States.



113 (2) Is a resident of Alabama.

114 (3) Has not attended a postsecondary education  
115 institution for at least two years prior to their current  
116 enrollment.

117 Section 5. To be eligible for the grant award, an  
118 applicant shall satisfy all of the following:

119 (1) Be classified as an undergraduate student with the  
120 completion of at least 36 credit hours for an associate degree  
121 or at least 72 credit hours for a baccalaureate degree of a  
122 college degree program that is connected with workforce  
123 development needs and aligned with Alabama's high demand  
124 occupations list adopted by the Alabama Committee on  
125 Credentialing and Career Pathways.

126 (2) Show proof of residency.

127 (3) Have good academic standing as defined by the  
128 institution.

129 (4) Has been accepted to or is enrolled as a full-time  
130 or part-time student in an eligible program in an authorized  
131 institution leading to an associate or baccalaureate degree  
132 and has not attended a postsecondary education institution at  
133 least two years prior.

134 (5) Satisfies continuing eligibility each term by  
135 enrolling in six hours or more per term continuously as  
136 established by the commission.

137 Section 6. (a) The program shall be used to provide  
138 grant award payments for eligible adult learners up to the  
139 maximum award amount of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for  
140 universities and one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500)



141 for community colleges per academic semester for a full-time  
142 student. Proportional awards shall be given for students  
143 taking six to 11 hours and students enrolled in less common  
144 academic terms, such as quarters, Summer terms, and  
145 intersessions.

146 (b) Each grant shall be renewable for the number of  
147 terms normally required by the institution for the course of  
148 study in which the adult learner is enrolled as long as the  
149 student is continuously enrolled until the student receives an  
150 associate degree or a baccalaureate degree. The commission  
151 shall grant a renewal upon verification that the student  
152 remains an eligible student.

153 (c) Grant award payments shall be distributed directly  
154 to the approved institution on behalf of the student during  
155 the applicable year.

156 (d) The requirements of this act are contingent upon  
157 available funding for the program.

158 (e) The commission shall determine the necessary  
159 procedures for awarding grant award payments if the number of  
160 eligible applicants and recipients exceeds available funding.

161 (f) Any funds appropriated to the program shall be  
162 nonreverting.

163 (g) A percentage of the grant program's appropriations  
164 may be expended for the operation and maintenance of the  
165 program.

166 (h) Each authorized institution that enrolls an adult  
167 learner who is eligible for the tuition and mandatory fees  
168 benefits provided by this program shall take necessary action



169 to ensure that the student is aware of all other benefits that  
170 he or she may be entitled to under any other federal and state  
171 educational benefits, and any student grant or scholarship. In  
172 order to receive the benefits provided by this program, the  
173 student shall take the necessary steps to utilize all of the  
174 above benefits.

175 Section 7. (a) The commission shall provide an annual  
176 report to the Chair of the House Ways and Means Education  
177 Committee and the Chair of the Senate Finance and Taxation  
178 Education Committee to account for the use of funds and the  
179 effectiveness of the grant program established under this  
180 article.

181 (b) The commission shall consult with the Alabama  
182 Commission on the Evaluation of Services to develop  
183 performance metrics and other measures of success to include  
184 in the annual report required pursuant to subsection (a).  
185 During the 2027 Fiscal Year, the program shall undergo an  
186 evaluation by the Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of  
187 Services to determine whether the program is impacting the  
188 determined measures of success.

189 Section 8. This article shall be known and may be cited  
190 as the Alabama Short-Term Credential Scholarship Program.

191 Section 9. The following words used in this article  
192 have the following meanings.

193 (1) ELIGIBLE STUDENT. An Alabama resident who is  
194 registered for or intends to register to take a short-term  
195 credential program at an institution within the Alabama  
196 Community College System.



197           (2) GRANT. A payment made to an institution within the  
198 Alabama Community College System to be applied toward an  
199 eligible student's qualifying educational expenses for a  
200 short-term credential program.

201           (3) QUALIFYING EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES. Tuition, fees,  
202 books, materials, and supplies required for or on behalf of an  
203 eligible student by the Alabama Community College System  
204 institution for participation in a short-term credential  
205 program.

206           (4) SHORT-TERM CREDENTIAL PROGRAM. A program at an  
207 Alabama Community College System institution that can be  
208 completed in two semesters or less and that will lead to  
209 in-demand career opportunities in the region in which the  
210 community college where the course is taken is located. In  
211 developing the short-term credential program, each community  
212 college shall work with local businesses and regional  
213 workforce councils and consult the regional and statewide  
214 lists of in-demand occupations to determine the in-demand  
215 careers and applicable curriculum.

216           Section 10. (a) There is hereby established a  
217 short-term credential program that will provide grants to help  
218 pay for qualifying educational expenses for eligible students  
219 at any Alabama Community College System institution.

220           (b) An eligible student may receive a grant of up to  
221 four thousand five hundred dollars (\$4,500) that shall be paid  
222 to the Alabama Community College System institution where the  
223 eligible student enrolls in a short-term credential program  
224 and shall be applied toward the eligible student's qualifying





225 educational expenses required to complete a credit or  
226 non-credit short-term credential program that provides  
227 training for in-demand careers in the relevant region.

228 (c) One-half of the grant shall be paid to the Alabama  
229 Community College System institution within five days after  
230 the eligible student's first day of class in the short-term  
231 credential program, and the other one-half of the grant shall  
232 be paid within five days after the eligible student's  
233 completion of the short-term credential program. The second  
234 one-half of the grant shall not be paid if the eligible  
235 student does not complete the course, and in such a situation,  
236 the eligible student shall be responsible for paying the  
237 outstanding balance of any tuition or other fees owed to the  
238 Alabama Community College System institution at which the  
239 course was taken. If the eligible student does not complete  
240 the short-term credential program within one calendar year  
241 from the first day of the program's commencement, that  
242 individual must repay the State of Alabama the initial  
243 one-half of the grant that was paid to the Alabama Community  
244 College System institution on his or her behalf.

245 (d) An eligible student who receives a grant under this  
246 article may not receive another grant until one calendar year  
247 after he or she completes the short-term credential program  
248 for which the prior grant was awarded.

249 Section 11. The Alabama Community College System shall  
250 do all of the following:

251 (1) Adopt any policies and procedures necessary to  
252 implement and administer this article.



253 (2) Establish standards for participation and  
254 eligibility to receive a grant under this article.

255 (3) Establish the process by which eligible students  
256 will apply for a grant.

257 (4) Ensure that grants provided under this article are  
258 awarded in a manner that does not discriminate based on  
259 gender, race, or disability status of the applicant.

260 (5) Ensure that all grant applicants are residents of  
261 the State of Alabama.

262 (6) Ensure that all funding provided under this article  
263 is expended for the sole purpose of helping to pay the  
264 eligible student's qualifying educational expenses.

265 Section 12. (a) There is created within the State  
266 Treasury a fund to be known as the Short-Term Credential  
267 Scholarship Fund, which is authorized to accept funds  
268 appropriated by the Legislature in the general appropriations  
269 act or other appropriations acts.

270 (b) The grants provided under this article shall be  
271 effective on January 1, 2024, and shall continue through  
272 December 31, 2028, unless extended by an act of the  
273 Legislature.

274 Section 13. (a) The Alabama Community College System  
275 shall provide an annual report to the Chair of the House Ways  
276 and Means Education Committee and the Chair of the Senate  
277 Finance and Taxation Education Committee to account for the  
278 use of funds and the effectiveness of the grant program  
279 established under this article.

280 (b) The Alabama Community College System shall consult



281 with the Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services to  
282 develop performance metrics and other measures of success to  
283 include in the annual report required pursuant to subsection  
284 (a). During the 2027 Fiscal Year, the program shall undergo an  
285 evaluation by the Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of  
286 Services to determine whether the program is impacting the  
287 determined measures of success.

288           Section 14. The Apprenticeship Tax Credit, Chapter 18  
289 of Title 40, commencing with Section 40-18-422, Code of  
290 Alabama 1975, is repealed effective December 31, 2024, unless  
291 extended by an act of the Legislature prior to that date for  
292 no more than five additional years.

293           Section 15. This act shall become effective on the  
294 first day of the third month following its passage and  
295 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.