



## **The Gateway to Careers Act**

Recognizing the importance of work and the need for post-secondary education to fill many of our nation's job openings, the Gateway to Careers Act addresses the challenges nontraditional students face while pursuing postsecondary education and makes education more accessible to a greater number of students. The bill has a history in both the Senate and House. The bill was most recently introduced in the House ([H.R. 5759](#)) on Feb. 5, 2022 by Representative Alma Adams (D-North Carolina), with original co-sponsors Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minnesota) and Rep. Antonio Delgado (D-New York).

### **Bill History**

Senator Maggie Hassan (D-New Hampshire) re-introduced the Gateway to Careers Act in the Senate ([S. 52](#)) on January 26, 2021, with original co-sponsors Sens. Todd Young (R-Indiana), Tim Kaine (D-Virginia), and Susan Collins (R-Maine). Senator Hassan had previously introduced the bipartisan bill in 2019 during the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.

### **The Challenge**

About 80 percent of today's jobs require post-secondary education. Middle-skill jobs are defined as jobs that require more education than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree. Middle-skill jobs currently represent about [52 percent](#) of the available jobs in the U.S. workforce. Unemployment rates are falling and in several states are at [record lows](#), and more middle-skill jobs exist than [middle-skilled workers](#) to fill them.

As our economy begins to recover from COVID-19, there are already far more job openings than people pursuing work. In fact, it is estimated that there are currently [millions](#) more job openings than people looking for work. It is essential that both U.S.-born and immigrant students complete the education they need to fill the growing skills gap, and unfilled job openings. The community college completion rate for full time students is 57 percent, and even less, 39 percent, for all full and part time students.

Today, U.S. undergraduate students are more diverse than in the past. They are older, more racially and ethnically diverse, more likely to work, and more likely to be parents. As their profile changes, today's undergraduate student cohort faces new challenges and barriers to entering and completing post-secondary education.

## **The Solution**

The Gateway to Careers Act would create a competitive grant program administered by the Department of Education (ED). ED would provide career pathway grants to eligible institutions, primarily certain public institutions of higher education, career and technical schools, and create partnerships among educational institutions or agencies, community-based organizations, workforce development partners, and industry associations.

The grants would fund programs specifically designed to develop and implement career pathways, and provide student support services that are identified by institutions as most beneficial to their students' academic success. Some of the support services these grants could cover are childcare, transportation support, substance abuse treatment, career-pathway navigation services, and emergency grants for financial hardships.

## **The Role of Immigrants**

Since nearly 25 percent of all community college students are immigrants, the Gateway to Careers Act would serve a large number of immigrants. It has the potential to move individuals and families out of entry-level positions and into careers that are economically self-sustaining.

The Gateway to Careers Act would benefit immigrants in reaching their full potential, help address businesses' demand for workers, and contribute to the recovery and success of the U.S. economy.