

2022 -- S 2437

LC004882

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- ADULT EDUCATION

Introduced By: Senators Seveney, DiPalma, Valverde, Lombardo, Miller, Kallman, and Anderson

Date Introduced: March 01, 2022

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-63-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-63 entitled "Adult
2 Education [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby
3 amended to read as follows:

4 **16-63-5. Categories of adult education programs and service.**

5 Programs and services constituting adult education, as defined in § 16-58-2, shall be
6 categorized and defined as follows:

7 (1) Category 1. Basic education, which shall consist of efforts to alleviate illiteracy and
8 provide opportunities for academic achievement up to grade twelve (12) and to transition to post-
9 secondary education or training. ~~and which~~ Services shall include instruction in reading, writing,
10 arithmetic, literature, social studies, science, pre-vocational subjects, digital literacy, and other
11 knowledge and skills necessary to ~~cope in contemporary life~~ obtain, retain or advance in
12 employment that pays a family-sustaining wage; courses in ~~Americanization~~ civics and citizenship
13 for immigrants; teaching English to persons with no or limited ability with the language; and
14 preparation for the demonstration of competencies to qualify for the adult high school diploma or
15 for examinations to earn the general educational development or high school equivalency diploma.
16 The department shall support national best practices including the integrated education and training
17 model, known locally as "RI-BEST" to ensure success for lower skilled adults in postsecondary
18 and workforce pathways.

19 (2) Category 2. Vocational training, which shall consist of the imparting of knowledge and

1 skills necessary to become gainfully employed, at least at entry level, in a recognized occupation,
2 and thus attain economic self-sufficiency, and which shall be conveyed by classroom instruction,
3 on the job training, apprenticeships, and other appropriate methods. The department shall support
4 "learn and earn" models that provide stipends to program participants in order that they can meet
5 basic needs during program participation.

6 (3) Category 3. Higher education, consisting of opportunities for adults to enter or re-enter
7 universities and colleges, whether matriculating or nonmatriculating, at undergraduate and graduate
8 levels, and whether part-time or full-time.

9 (4) Category 4. Continuing education in professional and technological occupations, which
10 shall consist of efforts to insure that minimum competencies are maintained by persons who are
11 employed in occupations which bear on the public health, safety, or general welfare, and for which
12 there are licensing, certification, or other credentialing provisions in the general laws, and in which
13 those persons shall participate, individually or in groups, by periodic reviews of fundamental and
14 up to date knowledge and skills, in-service experience, performance assessment, or other systematic
15 and ongoing methods, and which may involve earning continuing education units.

16 (5) Category 5. General personal development, which shall consist of any formal or
17 informal activity in the pursuit and development of avocational, social, cultural, artistic,
18 enrichment, recreational, or other interests.

19 (6) Category 6. Public service education, consisting of efforts, through mass media and by
20 other methods, to inform, educate, and motivate residents of the state on vital and timely subjects,
21 such as health, safety, civic affairs, and social concerns and behavior.

22 (7) Category 7. Supportive services, which shall consist of various accommodations
23 intended to facilitate the pursuit of adult education in any of these specified categories, and which
24 shall include information, counseling, and other guidance services, financial aid, care of children
25 and other dependent persons, transportation, and other services.

26 SECTION 2. Chapter 16-63 of the General Laws entitled "Adult Education [See Title 16
27 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended by adding thereto the
28 following sections:

29 **16-63-19. Strategic plan.**

30 The department shall develop a strategic plan for adult education that includes a needs
31 assessment and lays out an equity-informed roadmap for adult learner services and opportunities.
32 The department shall ensure robust input from adult learners enrolled in current programs, as well
33 as those individuals who may benefit from such services and ensure input from residents in different
34 geographic areas of the state, as well as reflecting Rhode Islanders of different races and ethnicities.

1 The department shall also seek input from members of the governor's workforce investment board.
2 The strategic plan shall be completed by March, 2023, and revised every three (3) years. The
3 department shall use information from the strategic plan to inform the state plan for adult education
4 as required by § 16-63-8.

5 **16-63-20. Establishment of learning, intake, and assessment centers.**

6 (a) The department is authorized and directed to create a network of learning, intake and
7 assessment centers (LIAC) that are designed to support adults along the various stages of the
8 workforce continuum by meeting them where they were at and connecting them to educational and
9 training resources for a job, a better job, or a career.

10 (b) The learning, intake and assessment centers, shall offer reliable intake, just-in-time
11 workforce development services; on-demand assessment; access to digital learning; targeted
12 tutoring; employment readiness and career coaching; and referrals to educational and workforce
13 training.

14 (c) The department shall determine the number of learning, intake and assessment centers
15 that are necessary to meet adult learner needs, and where the centers will be located in order to
16 provide geographic access and access to learners of diverse backgrounds. The centers shall be
17 located at or staffed by current adult education provider organizations.

18 (d) The department shall create an accountability system for the programs housing a LIAC
19 to report on adult learner use of the center and outcomes, but shall not require the program to use
20 federal performance indicators for LIAC accountability purposes.

21 **16-63-21. Appropriation to support and expand access to adult education services.**

22 (a) There is hereby appropriated nine hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$950,000) in funds
23 available from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to enhance the digital literacy skills of adult
24 learners. Such funds may be used to enable providers to increase capacity and proficiency to teach
25 digital literacy skills and to enable learner participation through purchase of laptops or other devices
26 as well as access to broadband services.

27 (b) There is hereby appropriated three million six hundred thousand dollars (\$3,600,000)
28 in ARPA funds for expansion of integrated educational and training programs, as authorized in
29 chapter 102 of title 42 and five million seven hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$5,760,000) to
30 provide stipends for learners participating in "learn and earn" programs to demonstrate the
31 effectiveness of these instructional models in enhancing participants' success in increasing
32 economic security through employment.

33 (c) There is hereby appropriated one hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) in ARPA
34 funds for the development of the strategic plan authorized in §16-63-19.

1 (d) There is hereby appropriated eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000) in ARPA funds
2 for the creation of learning, intake and assessment centers as authorized in § 16-63-20 to
3 demonstrate the effectiveness of this service in assisting adult learners in making progress toward
4 a job, a better job or a career.

5 (e) There is hereby appropriated an additional five hundred forty thousand dollars
6 (\$540,000) in general revenue to allow the department to provide an inflation-adjusted increase in
7 grants to adult education providers to meet the range of services authorized in § 16-63-5. These
8 funds shall supplement and not supplant any other state or federal funds proposed to be appropriated
9 to the department for FY 2023.

10 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- ADULT EDUCATION

1 This act would modernize, expand access and provide additional funds to adult education
2 programs in the state, create a strategic plan for adult education and establish learning, intake and
3 assessment centers.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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