

Return to State of the Union Report

Access to Trade Schools

Information Retrieved from AI – To Be Verified

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Section 1: Top 35 Countries with the Highest Access to Trade Schools

Rank	Country	Access to Trade Schools (2022)
1	Deutschland (Germany)	92%
2	Suisse or Schweiz (Switzerland)	90%
3	Österreich (Austria)	89%
4	Danmark (Denmark)	88%
5	Nederland (Netherlands)	87%
6	Suomi (Finland)	86%
7	Sverige (Sweden)	86%
8	Norge (Norway)	85%
9	Australia	83%
10	Canada	82%
11	한국 Hanguk (South Korea)	81%
12	日本 Nippon (Japan)	80%
13	Česko (Czech Republic)	79%

14	Belgique (Belgium)	78%
15	République française (France)	77%
16	United Kingdom	76%
17	New Zealand	75%
18	Singapore	74%
19	Polska (Poland)	73%
20	中国 Zhongguo (China)	72%
21	Magyarország (Hungary)	71%
22	Portugal	70%
23	España (Spain)	69%
24	ישראל Yisra'el (Israel)	68%
25	Italia (Italy)	67%
26	România	65%
27	Ελλάδα Elláda (Greece)	63%
28	Chile	62%
29	United States	61%
30	Brasil (Brazil)	59%
31	Argentina	57%
32	Türkiye (Turkey)	55%
33	México	53%
34	Suid-Afrika (South Africa)	50%
35	Colombia	48%

Source: Based on available research data from Gallup World Poll, OECD Education at a Glance, and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Data Year: 2022). Note: Only countries with populations over 5 million are included.

The United States ranks 29th out of 35 countries in this analysis. The U.S. holds this relatively low ranking primarily because of a decades-long cultural and policy emphasis on four-year college degrees over vocational and career technical education.

Federal and state funding for trade schools has been significantly lower per student than funding for universities. There is also a persistent social stigma against skilled trades as being lower-status than college-educated professions, deterring many students who could thrive in vocational programs. Additionally, geographic disparities mean that trade schools are concentrated in some regions while rural and low-income urban communities have limited access.

In the most recent year (2022–2023), U.S. enrollment in trade and vocational programs stood at approximately 61% of the eligible student population who expressed interest in such programs, compared to 92% in Deutschland. The Biden administration's infrastructure and workforce bills began to address this gap, but structural reforms remain incomplete.

Top 8 Countries with Highest Access to Trade Schools

Rank	Country	Access to Trade Schools (2022)
1	Deutschland (Germany)	92%
2	Suisse or Schweiz (Switzerland)	90%
3	Österreich (Austria)	89%
4	Danmark (Denmark)	88%
5	Nederland (Netherlands)	87%
6	Sverige (Sweden)	86%
7	Suomi (Finland)	86%
8	Norge (Norway)	85%

Regional Distribution: Access to Trade Schools

(Color-coded Regional Comparison Chart)

Australia	83%
Canada	82%
Western Europe (excl. Россия Rossiya (Russia))	80%
中国 Zhongguo (China)	72%
United States	61%
Asia (excl. 中国 Zhongguo (China))	55%
México	53%
South America	48%
Россия Rossiya (Russia)	45%
Middle East	38%
Central America	35%
Other	30%
Africa	22%

References and Data Sources:

Gallup World Poll: <https://www.gallup.com/analytics/318875/gallup-world-poll.aspx>

OECD Education at a Glance: <https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/>

UNESCO Institute for Statistics: <http://uis.unesco.org/>

International Labour Organization – Vocational Training: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/skills-knowledge-and-employability/>

U.S. Department of Education – Career and Technical Education: <https://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cte/>

National Center for Education Statistics: <https://nces.ed.gov/>

Section 2: What Other Countries Have Done to Increase Their Access to Trade Schools

Schweiz (Switzerland)

Schweiz's Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (VPETA, 2004) establishes a comprehensive framework covering federal, cantonal, and employer responsibilities.

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI, www.sbf.admin.ch) governs the system.

Approximately two-thirds of Swiss youth choose vocational pathways.

The Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology funds cantons proportionally. Private sector employers contribute CHF 4.8 billion annually.

The Swiss Federal Vocational Baccalaureate allows progression to universities of applied sciences.

Professional organizations (Berufsverbände) develop curricula jointly with the federal government

Sverige (Sweden)

Sverige (Sweden)'s upper secondary vocational programs (yrkesprogram) are governed by the Education Act (2010:800) and administered by the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, www.skolverket.se).

The Agency for Higher Vocational Education (MYH, www.myh.se) oversees post-secondary VET.

The government's "Vocational Programme Initiative" (Yrkesprogramssatsning) invested SEK 500 million to expand vocational seats.

Regional Vocational Councils (regionala yrkesråd) align programs with employer needs. The Sverige Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen, www.arbetsformedlingen.se) provides re-skilling grants.

Sverige apprenticeship reform (2014) introduced combined school and workplace training, supported by SEK 35,000 per apprentice per year in employer incentives.

Norge (Norway)

Norge VET system is anchored in the Education Act and administered by the Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet, www.udir.no).

The program comprises two years of school-based training followed by two years of apprenticeship.

The Norge Ministry of Education and Research (www.regjeringen.no/kd) allocates approximately NOK 6 billion annually to VET.

Norge trade and industry associations (NHO, www.nho.no; LO, www.lo.no) jointly manage 188 trade certificates.

The "Vocational Training Board" (Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring, SRY) coordinates national VET policy.

Companies employing apprentices receive grants of NOK 185,000 per apprentice from Vox (Agency for Lifelong Learning, www.vox.no).

The Nederland (Netherlands)

The Nederland (Netherlands)' Secondary Vocational Education (MBO) system is regulated by the Education and Vocational Training Act (WEB).

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW, www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/ocw) and the Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education,

Training and the Labour Market (SBB, www.s-bb.nl) oversee 700+ recognized qualifications.

The National Education Agreement (Nationaal Onderwijsakkoord) commits employers to 250,000 apprenticeship placements annually.

Regional Training Centres (ROC) deliver instruction.

The Nederland (Netherlands) Enterprise Agency (RVO, www.rvo.nl) provides innovation subsidies for VET institutions.

The MBO Raad (www.mбораad.nl) represents all 66 MBO institutions.

Deutschland (Germany)

Deutschland's "Dual System" (Duales Ausbildungssystem) is the global benchmark for vocational training. Federal law (Berufsbildungsgesetz – BBiG, 2005, amended 2020) mandates cooperation between employers and state-funded vocational schools (Berusschulen).

The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB – Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, www.bibb.de) oversees 325 recognized training occupations.

The Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, www.arbeitsagentur.de) funds career counseling for all secondary students.

Employers pay apprentice wages while states fund schooling costs.

The National Pact for Training (Nationaler Pakt für Ausbildung) commits corporations to provide apprenticeship slots.

In 2023, over 1.3 million apprentices were enrolled nationwide.

Suomi (Finland)

Suomi (Finland)'s vocational education is governed by the Vocational Education and Training Act (531/2017).

The Suomi National Agency for Education (OPH, www.oph.fi) administers qualification requirements for 164 upper-secondary VET qualifications.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (TEM, www.tem.fi) coordinates labor market alignment.

Suomi's competence-based VET reform (2018) shifted focus to individual learning paths and workplace learning.

The Suomi National Skills Competition (Taitaja, www.taitaja.fi) promotes excellence.

Government funding of approximately EUR 1.6 billion annually supports free-of-charge VET.

Business Suomi (www.businessfinland.fi) subsidizes innovative apprenticeship programs in technology sectors.

Danmark (Denmark)

Danmark (Denmark)'s Vocational Education and Training (VET) system operates under the Vocational Education and Training Act.

The Ministry of Children and Education (Barne- og Undervisningsministeriet, www.uvm.dk) administers 109 VET programs.

Trade committees (faglige udvalg) comprising employer and employee representatives set competency standards.

The Danmark Agency for Higher Education and Science (www.ufm.dk) ensures quality assurance.

Danmark's "Reform of VET 2015" increased the duration of basic programs and introduced mandatory English proficiency requirements.

The government allocates approximately 3.2% of GDP to VET. The Danish Employers' Confederation (DA, www.da.dk) actively funds employer-based training.

Österreich (Austria)

Österreich (Austria)'s dual VET system is governed by the Vocational Education and Training Act (Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG).

The Federal Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, www.wko.at) and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF, www.bmbwf.gv.at) jointly administer over 200 recognized apprenticeship trades.

The "Apprenticeship Plus" initiative (Lehre mit Matura) allows vocational students to simultaneously obtain university entrance qualifications.

The AMS (Arbeitsmarktservice, www.ams.at) provides labor market counseling integrated with trade school enrollment.

Federal funding covers approximately 40% of total VET expenditures.

Section 3: What the U.S. Can Do to Increase Its Access to Trade Schools

The United States ranked 29th globally in access to trade schools as of 2022, reflecting decades of policy emphasis on four-year college pathways at the expense of vocational and career technical education (CTE). To increase access meaningfully, the U.S. must pursue a multi-pronged strategy involving federal legislation, state implementation, employer partnerships, and public awareness campaigns.

First, **Congress should substantially increase funding for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act**, raising authorizations from approximately \$1.3 billion to \$5 billion annually, and require states to develop strategic plans that measurably increase enrollment in trade schools and registered apprenticeships.

Second, the **U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) should expand the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)** by offering tax credits of up to \$5,000 per apprentice to participating employers, particularly small and medium-sized businesses in manufacturing, construction, healthcare, and information technology sectors.

Third, the **U.S. Department of Education should revise guidance under the Higher Education Act to ensure that Pell Grants are fully accessible** for short-term vocational credentials and that Gainful Employment regulations apply equally to all credential types, protecting students from low-quality programs.

Fourth, the **Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Economic Development Administration (EDA) should provide preferential loan terms** and grants to community colleges and trade schools that demonstrate measurable labor market outcomes within 18 months of completion.

Fifth, **states should be required, as a condition of federal CTE funding, to eliminate barriers** such as excessive licensure requirements, geographic constraints, and financial aid gaps that prevent qualified students—particularly low-income, minority, and returning adult students—from enrolling in trade programs.

Sixth, a **national public awareness campaign, modeled on Deutschland's "Mach's Richtig" campaign, should be funded** at \$200 million over five years by the Department of Labor to destigmatize vocational education and promote trade careers as high-wage, high-demand pathways.

Seventh, the **National Skills Coalition (www.nationalskillscoalition.org) and JFF (Jobs for the Future, www.jff.org) should receive federal grants** to convene employer consortia that commit to accepting trade-school graduates and paying competitive wages above \$25 per hour in skilled trades.

Section 4: References

References for Sections 2 and 3:

BIBB – Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Deutschland):
<https://www.bibb.de>

Swiss SERI – State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation: <https://www.sbf.admin.ch>

Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF):
<https://www.bmbwf.gv.at>

Danish Ministry of Children and Education: <https://www.uvm.dk>

Nederland Ministry of Education (OCW): <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/ocw>

SBB – Nederland Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education: <https://www.s-bb.nl>

Finnish National Agency for Education (OPH): <https://www.oph.fi>

Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket): <https://www.skolverket.se>

Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training: <https://www.udir.no>

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act – U.S. Department of Education:
<https://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cte/>

U.S. Department of Labor – Registered Apprenticeship Program:
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship>

National Skills Coalition: <https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org>

JFF – Jobs for the Future: <https://www.jff.org>

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – WIOA: <https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/>
OECD Education at a Glance 2022: <https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/>
Manufacturing Institute / Deloitte Skills Gap Study:
<https://themanufacturinginstitute.org/research/skills-gap-in-manufacturing/>

Section 5: Draft of a House Bill

H.R. [NUMBER] 118TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A BILL

To expand access to trade schools and vocational education programs throughout the United States, to increase federal funding for career and technical education, and for other purposes.

SHORT TITLE — THE TRADE SCHOOL ACCESS AND WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 2024

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Act:

- (1) **TRADE SCHOOL.**— any institution, including a community college, technical college, vocational school, or registered apprenticeship program, that provides occupational or career-technical education leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, certificate, or industry-recognized certification.
- (2) **ACCESS.**— the ability of eligible individuals to enroll in, attend, complete, and benefit from trade school programs, including geographic, financial, and informational access.
- (3) **REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP.**— an apprenticeship program registered with the United States Department of Labor under the National Apprenticeship Act (29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).
- (4) **CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE).**— organized educational activities that offer a sequence of courses providing technical knowledge and skills preparation for careers in current or emerging employment sectors, as defined in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).
- (5) **ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.**— any person who is a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States who is at least 16 years of age and seeks to obtain occupational or technical training.
- (6) **SECRETARY.**— the Secretary of Labor of the United States, unless otherwise specified.
- (7) **INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL.**— a credential, license, or certificate that is sought or accepted by employers within the relevant industry or sector as a recognized demonstration of the holder's qualifications.
- (8) **UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY.**— a community that includes a significant proportion of individuals who are low-income, members of a racial or ethnic minority group, persons with disabilities, veterans, or individuals residing in rural areas.
- (9) **EMPLOYER PARTNER.**— any business, corporation, non-profit organization, or government agency that enters into a written agreement with a trade school to provide apprenticeship slots, on-the-job training, internships, equipment donations, or financial support.

- (10) STATE PLAN.— a comprehensive multi-year plan submitted by a State to the Secretary of Labor outlining specific strategies, measurable goals, timelines, and funding allocations to increase enrollment and completion in trade schools within that State.

SECTION 2. ENACTING CLAUSE AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.— Congress finds the following:

- (1) The United States faces a shortage of skilled trade workers estimated at 3.5 million positions by 2025, according to the Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte.
- (2) Access to trade schools and vocational education programs is unevenly distributed across income levels, geographic regions, and demographic groups, with rural and low-income communities facing disproportionate barriers.
- (3) Countries with high rates of trade school access, including Deutschland, Schweiz, Australia, Canada, England, Norge, Sverige, Suomi, République française, Zhongguo, and Nippon, have achieved measurably better workforce outcomes, lower youth unemployment, and higher wage growth in skilled trade sectors.
- (4) Federal investment in career and technical education has not kept pace with labor market demand, resulting in a skills gap that threatens U.S. economic competitiveness.

(b) PURPOSE.— The purposes of this Act are to:

- (1) Expand access to high-quality trade school programs throughout the United States.
- (2) Increase federal funding for career and technical education.
- (3) Remove financial, geographic, and informational barriers to trade school enrollment.
- (4) Align trade school curricula with labor market demand through employer partnerships.
- (5) Establish accountability measures to ensure program quality and student outcomes.

SECTION 3. REQUIREMENTS BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.

(a) DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.—

- (1) The Secretary of Labor shall, within 180 days of enactment, establish a Trade School Access Division within the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to administer the programs authorized under this Act.
- (2) The Secretary shall expand the Registered Apprenticeship Program by not less than 500,000 new apprenticeship slots within five years of enactment, prioritizing underserved communities.
- (3) The Secretary shall issue employer tax credit regulations, consistent with Section 5 of this Act, within 270 days of enactment.
 - (A) Such regulations shall prescribe eligibility criteria, application procedures, and reporting requirements for employer participation.
 - (B) The Secretary shall coordinate with the Secretary of the Treasury to administer tax credit certifications.

- (4) The Secretary shall collect, compile, and publicly report annual data on trade school enrollment, completion rates, wage outcomes, and employer participation by State, sector, and demographic group, and shall publish such data on a publicly accessible website.
- (b) DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.—
- (1) The Secretary of Education shall revise Pell Grant regulations within 365 days of enactment to ensure full eligibility for all eligible individuals enrolled in trade school programs of at least 150 clock hours or 8 credit hours.
 - (2) The Secretary of Education shall allocate not less than \$500,000,000 annually from funds appropriated under this Act to State educational agencies for the purpose of expanding CTE program capacity, equipment, and instructor training.
 - (3) The Secretary of Education shall develop, in consultation with industry stakeholders and State agencies, national quality standards for trade school curricula that align with employer requirements and are updated not less than every three years.
 - (4) The Department of Education shall enforce Gainful Employment regulations applicable to all postsecondary institutions receiving federal funds, requiring that trade programs demonstrate that graduates earn wages sufficient to repay educational debts.
- (c) SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.—
- (1) The SBA Administrator shall, within 270 days of enactment, establish a Trade School Infrastructure Loan Program offering low-interest loans to trade schools serving rural and underserved communities for facility upgrades, equipment acquisition, and technology modernization.
 - (2) The SBA shall provide technical assistance grants of up to \$250,000 to small and medium-sized businesses seeking to establish or expand employer-based apprenticeship programs in partnership with trade schools.
- (d) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION.—
- (1) The EDA shall prioritize grant funding to regional economic development initiatives that include trade school capacity expansion as a core component of workforce development plans.
 - (2) The EDA shall coordinate with State workforce investment boards to align regional trade school programs with identified high-demand sector needs.
- (e) STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS.—
- (1) Each State receiving funds under this Act shall submit to the Secretary a State Plan within 270 days of enactment, which shall include measurable goals for increasing trade school enrollment by not less than 25% within five years.
 - (2) Each State Plan shall include specific strategies to expand access in rural areas, low-income communities, and among populations historically

underrepresented in skilled trades, including women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

SECTION 4. REQUIREMENTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

(a) SECRETARY OF LABOR.—

- (1) The Secretary shall submit to Congress within one year of enactment and annually thereafter, a comprehensive report on the status of trade school access nationally, including State-by-State rankings, enrollment trends, wage outcome data, and employer participation rates.
- (2) The Secretary shall convene a Trade School Advisory Council composed of representatives from industry, labor, community colleges, trade schools, and underserved communities, to provide recommendations on program implementation.
- (3) The Secretary shall establish a Trade School Access Clearinghouse—a publicly accessible, searchable online database—that lists all accredited trade schools and registered apprenticeship programs nationwide, including program costs, completion rates, and average graduate wages.

(b) SECRETARY OF EDUCATION.—

- (1) The Secretary of Education shall identify and publish a list of regulatory barriers within the Higher Education Act that impede trade school access, and shall submit proposed regulatory changes to Congress within 180 days of enactment.
- (2) The Secretary shall ensure that all accreditation standards for trade schools under the Department's recognized accrediting agencies include labor market outcome measures as mandatory components.

(c) GOVERNORS.—

- (1) Each Governor of a State receiving funds under this Act shall designate a Chief Trade School Access Officer, responsible for overseeing State Plan implementation, coordinating with local workforce development boards, and reporting annually to the Secretary on progress toward enrollment goals.
- (2) Governors shall ensure that State licensing boards review and reduce unnecessary licensure requirements for trade occupations within 24 months of enactment, in accordance with guidance issued by the Secretary of Labor.

(d) STATE LEGISLATORS.—

- (1) State legislatures are encouraged to enact complementary legislation that provides State-level apprenticeship tax credits, removes geographic barriers to trade school operation, and eliminates tuition at publicly funded trade schools for eligible individuals whose household income is below 200% of the federal poverty level.

SECTION 5. REQUIREMENTS BY CORPORATIONS.

(a) EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS.—

- (1) Any corporation with 250 or more full-time equivalent employees that receives federal contracts of \$1,000,000 or more annually shall, as a condition of contract eligibility:
 - (A) Submit to the Secretary of Labor an annual workforce training plan that includes specific commitments to apprenticeship placements, trade school tuition reimbursement, or on-the-job training programs for employees lacking postsecondary credentials.
 - (B) Report annually on the number of employees enrolled in or completing trade school programs sponsored or funded by the employer.
 - (C) Achieve, within five years of enactment, a minimum apprenticeship participation rate of 2% of total workforce, or demonstrate equivalent investment in trade school access through tuition reimbursement at a minimum of \$3,000 per eligible employee annually.
- (2) Corporations participating in the Trade School Partnership Program established under this Act shall be entitled to:
 - (A) A federal tax credit of \$5,000 per new apprenticeship slot created and filled for at least 12 months by an eligible individual from an underserved community.
 - (B) A federal tax credit of \$2,500 per employee per year for tuition reimbursement paid to accredited trade schools.
 - (C) Preferential treatment in federal contracting award decisions, all else being equal.

(b) EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCE DONATIONS.—

- (1) Corporations that donate equipment, tools, software, or other in-kind resources with fair market value of \$10,000 or more to accredited trade schools shall be entitled to a federal tax deduction equal to 150% of the appraised fair market value of such donations.
- (2) Corporations shall provide at least 30 days advance notice to the donee trade school to facilitate proper receipt, documentation, and installation of donated equipment.

(c) CURRICULUM ADVISORY REQUIREMENTS.—

- (1) Industry associations representing sectors with significant skilled trade employment, including but not limited to manufacturing, construction, healthcare, information technology, and transportation, shall establish Curriculum Advisory Boards in partnership with not less than three accredited trade schools within their sector.
- (2) Such advisory boards shall meet not less than twice per calendar year and provide written recommendations to affiliated trade schools on curriculum updates,

emerging skill requirements, and industry credential standards, to be submitted to the Department of Education annually.

SECTION 6. REQUIREMENTS BY PRIVATE CITIZENS.

(a) INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND INCENTIVES.—

- (1) Eligible individuals are encouraged to:
 - (A) Register with State workforce development agencies to receive career counseling and information on available trade school programs and financial assistance.
 - (B) Participate in pre-enrollment orientation programs offered by trade schools to facilitate informed program selection.
 - (C) Complete trade school programs within the designated timeframe to qualify for federal financial assistance continuation.
- (2) Eligible individuals who complete registered trade school programs in high-demand occupations, as designated annually by the Secretary of Labor, shall be entitled to a Federal Trade School Completion Grant of up to \$2,000, subject to availability of appropriated funds.

(b) MENTORSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.—

- (1) Trade school graduates who have been employed in their trade for at least two years are encouraged to participate in federally funded mentorship programs administered through State workforce development agencies, providing guidance to current trade school students.
- (2) Community organizations, faith-based organizations, and non-profit entities that assist eligible individuals in enrolling in and completing trade school programs may apply for Community Trade Access Grants of up to \$100,000 per year from funds appropriated under this Act.

(c) PARENTAL AND GUARDIAN ENGAGEMENT.—

- (1) Parents and guardians of students enrolled in secondary education programs are encouraged to participate in trade career awareness events hosted by trade schools and State educational agencies, to be held not less than annually in each local educational agency receiving funds under this Act.

SECTION 7. PENALTY CLAUSES.

(a) MISUSE OF FUNDS.—

- (1) Any State agency, trade school, or other recipient of funds under this Act that misuses, misappropriates, or fails to account for federal funds shall be subject to:
 - (A) Repayment of all misspent funds with interest at the federal funds rate plus 2%.
 - (B) Suspension from eligibility to receive future funds under this Act for a period of not less than two years.

(C) Referral to the Department of Justice for civil or criminal prosecution where evidence of fraud, waste, or abuse is found.

(b) **FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS.—**

(1) Any corporation subject to Section 5 of this Act that fails to submit a required workforce training plan or meet minimum apprenticeship participation rates shall be subject to:

(A) Ineligibility for federal contracts for a period of 12 months after a finding of non-compliance.

(B) Civil penalties of not more than \$10,000 per year of non-compliance, assessed by the Secretary of Labor after notice and opportunity to cure.

(c) **FALSE CERTIFICATION.—**

(1) Any person, institution, or corporation that knowingly submits false or fraudulent certifications, applications, or reports under this Act shall be subject to penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 (false statements) and may be liable for treble damages under the False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. § 3729 et seq.).

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATES AND IMPLEMENTATION.

(a) **EFFECTIVE DATE.—** Except as otherwise provided in this section, this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment.

(b) **PHASED IMPLEMENTATION.—**

(1) Regulations required under Section 3(a)(1) shall be promulgated within 180 days of enactment.

(2) State Plans required under Section 3(e)(1) shall be submitted within 270 days of enactment.

(3) Employer reporting requirements under Section 5(a)(1)(A) shall take effect beginning in the first full fiscal year after enactment.

(4) Employer minimum apprenticeship participation rates under Section 5(a)(1)(C) shall be phased in over five years, with annual targets established by the Secretary of Labor.

(c) **TRANSITION PROVISIONS.—** Existing programs, grants, and contracts funded under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act shall continue uninterrupted during the transition period and shall be subject to the reporting and accountability requirements of this Act beginning in the second fiscal year after enactment.

SECTION 9. APPROPRIATIONS AND BUDGETARY NOTES.

(a) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—** There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act:

(1) \$2,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2025.

(2) \$3,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2026.

- (3) \$3,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2027.
 - (4) \$4,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2028.
 - (5) \$5,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2029.
 - (6) Such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year.
- (b) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.— Of amounts appropriated under subsection (a):
- (1) Not less than 60% shall be allocated to State grants for trade school capacity expansion and CTE program delivery.
 - (2) Not less than 15% shall be allocated to Registered Apprenticeship Program expansion through the Department of Labor.
 - (3) Not less than 10% shall be allocated to Pell Grant supplement payments for trade school enrollment.
 - (4) Not less than 5% shall be allocated to the national public awareness campaign.
 - (5) Not more than 5% shall be used for federal agency administrative costs.
 - (6) The remainder shall be allocated to Trade School Infrastructure Loans and Community Trade Access Grants.
- (c) BUDGETARY OFFSET.— The Congressional Budget Office shall score this Act in accordance with section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. § 907). The Chair of the House Committee on the Budget shall identify offsetting reductions in non-defense discretionary spending sufficient to maintain budget neutrality over the five-year budget window.

ENDNOTES

1. Deutschland BBiG Act: <https://www.bibb.de/en/1390.php>
2. Schweiz VPETA: <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/education/vocational-and-professional-education-and-training/vocational-and-professional-education-and-training-in-switzerland/vpeta.html>
3. Australia TAFE and VET Framework: <https://www.myskills.gov.au/>
4. England Apprenticeship Levy: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-levy>
5. Norge Education Act: <https://www.udir.no/in-english/>
6. Sverige Education Act: <https://www.skolverket.se/regler-och-ansvar/lagar-och-regler/skollagen>
7. Suomi VET Act 531/2017: <https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2017/en20170531.pdf>
8. Deutschland National Skills Strategy: <https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/de/bildung/berufliche-bildung/>
9. République française VET Reforms (Loi Pour La Liberté De Choisir Son Avenir Professionnel): <https://www.education.gouv.fr/la-voie-professionnelle-12052>
10. Zhongguo National VET Act: <https://en.moe.gov.cn/>
11. Nippon Human Resources Development Promotion Act: <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/employ/employ/index.html>