

Date of Hearing: April 23, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

AB 3087 (Mike Fong) – As Amended March 21, 2024

SUBJECT: California Community Colleges Economic and Workforce Development Program

SUMMARY: Extends the operation of the California Community Colleges (CCC) Economic and Workforce Development (EWD) Program by five years to January 1, 2030.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the CCC under the administration of the Board of Governors of the CCC, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. The CCC shall be comprised of community college districts (CCD). (Education Code (EDC) Section 70900).
- 2) Creates for each CCD a board of trustees, known as the governing board, and authorizes the governing board to establish, maintain, operate, and govern each CCC within their district in accordance with state and federal law, as specified. The governing board may initiate and carry on any program, activity, or may otherwise act in any manner that is not in conflict or inconsistent with any law and that is not in conflict with the purpose of a CCC district, as specified. (EDC Section 70902).
- 3) Establishes the California Community Colleges Economic and Workforce Development Program to, among other things, advance California’s economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training, and services that contribute to continuous workforce improvement.
 - a) Authorizes the Board of Governors of the CCC to award grants and project funds for the program, as specified.
 - b) Requires the program to be implemented only during those fiscal years for which funds are appropriated for its purposes.
 - c) Repeals the program on January 1, 2025. (EDC Section 88600 et. seq.)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Purpose.* According to the author, “The EWD program is the only economic development program of the CCC and its end goal to increase job opportunity for students is of critical importance to all Californians. I am proud to carry legislation extending this vital resource for five more years, and I know that CCC campuses throughout the state will continue to serve as beacons of workforce training in their communities.”

Background. Codified in 1991, the EWD program formalized earlier efforts to coordinate statewide economic development through colleges connected all over the state to their local communities and employers, as well as to provide technical training and programs for local small businesses. The program has been amended at least three times since 1991 to clarify program goals and to better align the program with California and federal needs.

The EWD program advances California's economic growth and global competitiveness through education and services. This effort contributes to continuous workforce improvement, technology deployment and business development, consistent with the current needs of the state's regional economies. Local colleges and business stakeholders form consortia to identify regional workforce needs and priorities while they aid small businesses in the region through collaboration with local workforce development boards to train workers according to regional employer needs. These partnerships enable colleges to develop curricula to address the training needs of local industry. In 2018-19, the EWD program awarded 82 grants totaling \$18,985,000 to five categories of industry sector experts and professionals in technical support areas. In 2019-20, the program awarded 83 grants, totaling \$18,558,000.

Regional approach. The Economic and Workforce Development Advisory Committee (EWDAC), composed of college presidents as well as major industry employers in California and faculty representatives, advises the Chancellor's Office on EWD development, recommends resource deployment and develops inventive or novel strategies to achieve program goals and objectives.

The EWD program also provides grants to a network of colleges with economic and workforce development programs throughout the state, utilizing a regional approach coupled with sector strategies to achieve its goals. College grantees serve in a variety of roles including centers of excellence (COEs), regional consortia (RCs), statewide directors of employer engagement (previously referred to as sector navigators), regional directors of employer engagement (previously referred to as deputy sector navigators) and technical assistance providers (TAPs).

Arguments in support. The CCC Chancellor's Office wrote in support of AB 3087 (Mike Fong), writing that, "by allowing the EWD Program to continue to operate, AB 3087 (Mike Fong) will ensure that California can maintain its competitive workforce advantage. The EWD Program connects students and employers by generating career opportunities in industries with the greatest need. This vital effort serves the unique economic and workforce needs of regions throughout California by continually responding to dynamic economic and workforce trends and needs. By leveraging state investments, the EWD Program supports community colleges to develop and implement training and curriculum in 10 key strategic industry sectors, create jobs and career pathways for students, train incumbent workers, and engage employers to understand their training needs. Taken together, these efforts reduce the gap between labor-market demand and existing or future worker availability, thereby generating economic mobility and prosperity. AB 3087 would allow the EWD Program, for another five years, to continue to advance California's economic growth and global competitiveness through education and services."

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Opposition

None on file.

Analysis Prepared by: Kevin J. Powers / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960