

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4088

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants for career support for a skilled, internationally educated health care workforce.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 9, 2024

Mr. KAINE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants for career support for a skilled, internationally educated health care workforce.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Welcome Back to the  
5 Health Care Workforce Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. SUPPORT FOR SKILLED INTERNATIONALLY EDU-**  
7 **CATED HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart 3 of part E of title VII  
9 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 295f et seq.)  
10 is amended by adding at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 779. SUPPORT FOR SKILLED INTERNATIONALLY EDU-**  
2 **CATED HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE.**

3 “(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
5 the date of enactment of the Welcome Back to the  
6 Health Care Workforce Act, the Secretary shall  
7 award grants to eligible entities to provide career  
8 support for internationally educated health care pro-  
9 fessionals to integrate into, and expand, the health  
10 care workforce.

11 “(2) CONSULTATION.—Before awarding any  
12 grants under this section, the Secretary shall consult  
13 with the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of  
14 Education.

15 “(b) APPLICATION.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity desiring a  
17 grant under this section shall submit to the Sec-  
18 retary an application at such time, in such manner,  
19 and containing such information as the Secretary  
20 may require.

21 “(2) CONTENTS.—An application submitted  
22 under paragraph (1) shall include—

23 “(A) a description of each project de-  
24 scribed in subsection (d) that the eligible entity  
25 proposes to develop or continue under the  
26 grant;

1           “(B) information demonstrating that the  
2 eligible entity has the capacity to fully carry out  
3 and administer such projects;

4           “(C) a plan for the proposed projects that  
5 includes, at a minimum—

6                   “(i) demographic information regard-  
7 ing the population to be served by the  
8 grant and how the current health care  
9 workforce, as of the date of application, is  
10 not meeting the health needs of the com-  
11 munity to be served, including information  
12 on the health care workforce shortages in  
13 the area to be served by the grant; and

14                   “(ii) a description of how the eligible  
15 entity will make use of grant funds to sup-  
16 port the identification and advancement of  
17 internationally educated health care profes-  
18 sionals in the geographic area to be served  
19 by the grant;

20           “(D) a description of the eligible entity’s  
21 experience in working with internationally edu-  
22 cated health care professionals;

23           “(E) a description of the partnership the  
24 eligible entity has formed with various entities,

1 including institutions of higher education and  
2 health care employers; and

3 “(F) any additional information deter-  
4 mined relevant by the Secretary.

5 “(c) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-  
6 tion, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible entities  
7 whose projects support the recruitment and retention of—

8 “(1) internationally educated health care pro-  
9 fessionals in professions in communities experiencing  
10 gaps between their existing health care workforce, as  
11 of the date of the application for the grant, and the  
12 needs of the community; or

13 “(2) internationally educated health care pro-  
14 fessionals in rural communities.

15 “(d) USE OF FUNDS.—

16 “(1) SUPPORTED PROJECTS.—

17 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs  
18 (2) and (3), an eligible entity receiving a grant  
19 under this section shall use grant funds to  
20 carry out—

21 “(i) 1 or more system-level improve-  
22 ment projects described in subparagraph  
23 (B); and

1           “(ii) 1 or more individual-level im-  
2           provement projects described in subpara-  
3           graph (C).

4           “(B) SYSTEM-LEVEL IMPROVEMENTS.—A  
5           project described in this subparagraph expands  
6           culturally and linguistically competent supports  
7           for internationally educated health care profes-  
8           sionals, which may include—

9                   “(i) establishing a network of partners  
10                  that offer prerequisite educational opportu-  
11                  nities and continuing education opportuni-  
12                  ties;

13                   “(ii) developing peer support and  
14                  mentoring opportunities;

15                   “(iii) educating employers regarding  
16                  the abilities and capacities of internation-  
17                  ally educated health care professionals;

18                   “(iv) developing career ladder oppor-  
19                  tunities for internationally educated health  
20                  care professionals, such as—

21                           “(I) developing a system to pro-  
22                           vide ongoing supportive services once  
23                           employment is obtained;

24                           “(II) funding leadership develop-  
25                           ment, continuing education, pre-

1 paratory classes, examinations, and li-  
2 censing and certification costs, in  
3 order to support health care workforce  
4 advancement; or

5 “(III) education and support on  
6 how to serve as an educator in a clin-  
7 ical or academic setting; or

8 “(v) creating and carrying out  
9 projects for the purposes of increasing the  
10 retention of internationally educated health  
11 care professionals in the health care work-  
12 force.

13 “(C) INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL IMPROVE-  
14 MENTS.—A project described in this subpara-  
15 graph tailors individual support for internation-  
16 ally educated health care professionals, which  
17 may include—

18 “(i) support for the licensing process;

19 “(ii) funding and facilitating access to  
20 accelerated and contextualized courses on  
21 English as a second language and board or  
22 licensure examination preparation;

23 “(iii) culturally competent individual-  
24 ized career counseling and coaching;

1           “(iv) individualized guidance and sup-  
2           port for the credentialing evaluation pro-  
3           cess;

4           “(v) providing individualized work-  
5           readiness supports and clinical experience  
6           and training for internationally educated  
7           health care professionals who need such  
8           supports, experience, or training;

9           “(vi) educating internationally edu-  
10          cated health care professionals employed  
11          by the eligible entity on their rights as em-  
12          ployees;

13          “(vii) providing individualized sup-  
14          portive services to internationally educated  
15          health care professionals in order to sup-  
16          port their employment, retention, or career  
17          advancement, which may include support  
18          for living expenses, health care, or trans-  
19          portation; or

20          “(viii) assisting internationally edu-  
21          cated health care professionals in obtaining  
22          overseas academic or training records.

23           “(2) USE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Each  
24          eligible entity receiving a grant under this section  
25          may use not more than 10 percent of the grant

1 funds for costs associated with the administration of  
2 the projects under this subsection.

3 “(3) MINIMUM REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE DI-  
4 RECT SUPPORT.—Each eligible entity receiving a  
5 grant under this section shall use not less than 20  
6 percent of the grant funds to carry out projects de-  
7 scribed in paragraph (1)(B).

8 “(e) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—An eligible en-  
9 tity receiving a grant under this section shall use such  
10 grant only to supplement, and not supplant, the amount  
11 of funds that otherwise would be available to address the  
12 recruitment, training and education, retention, and ad-  
13 vancement of internationally educated health care profes-  
14 sionals in the health care workforce of the State or region  
15 served by the eligible entity.

16 “(f) EVALUATIONS AND REPORTS.—

17 “(1) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS BY GRANT  
18 RECIPIENTS.—

19 “(A) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity re-  
20 ceiving a grant under this section shall annually  
21 provide a report on the grant to the Secretary,  
22 at such time and containing such data and in-  
23 formation as requested by the Secretary.

24 “(B) CONTENTS.—The report submitted  
25 under subparagraph (A) shall include—



1           “(i) the number of internationally  
2           educated health care professionals who  
3           participated in the projects supported  
4           under the grant; and

5           “(ii) for each project carried out  
6           under the grant, in the aggregate and  
7           disaggregated by the demographic cat-  
8           egories as required by the Secretary—

9                   “(I) the number of internation-  
10                  ally educated health care professionals  
11                  who accessed services, benefits, or  
12                  supports through the project;

13                  “(II) the number of internation-  
14                  ally educated health care professionals  
15                  who through the project attained em-  
16                  ployment in the health care workforce,  
17                  in the aggregate and disaggregated by  
18                  occupation and industry;

19                  “(III) the number of internation-  
20                  ally educated health care professionals  
21                  who participated in the project and  
22                  withdrew, unsuccessfully attempted to  
23                  obtain board certification, or were ter-  
24                  minated from the project without  
25                  completing training or attaining em-

1                   ployment in the health care workforce;  
2                   and

3                               “(IV) data on the country of edu-  
4                               cation of the participating internation-  
5                               ally educated health care profes-  
6                               sionals.

7                   “(2) ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS BY SEC-  
8                   RETARY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of  
9                   enactment of the Welcome Back to the Health Care  
10                  Workforce Act, and each year thereafter until all  
11                  projects supported under this section are completed,  
12                  the Secretary shall prepare and submit to Congress  
13                  a report on the progress of each project supported  
14                  under a grant under this section.

15                  “(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16                               “(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-  
17                               tity’ means a consortium of 2 or more of the fol-  
18                               lowing:

19                                       “(A) A hospital, health system, or other  
20                                       entity that provides health care.

21                                       “(B) A community-based or other non-  
22                                       profit entity with experience in clinical health or  
23                                       public health services.

24                                       “(C) An institution of higher education.

25                                       “(D) An area health education center.

1           “(E) A State government, local govern-  
2           ment, or Indian Tribe.

3           “(F) A Federally qualified health center.

4           “(G) Any other type of entity determined  
5           appropriate by the Secretary.

6           “(2) EMPLOY; EMPLOYER.—The terms ‘employ’  
7           and ‘employer’ have the meanings given the terms in  
8           section 3 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

9           “(3) HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE.—The term  
10          ‘health care workforce’ means the workforce com-  
11          prised of health care providers with direct patient  
12          care and support responsibilities and public health  
13          workers.

14          “(4) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term ‘Indian Tribe’  
15          means the recognized governing body of any Indian  
16          or Alaska Native Tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village,  
17          community band, or component reservation individ-  
18          ually identified (including parenthetically) in the list  
19          published most recently as of the date of enactment  
20          of the Welcome Back to the Health Care Workforce  
21          Act, pursuant to section 104 of the Federally Recog-  
22          nized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C.  
23          5131).

24          “(5) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—  
25          The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the

1 meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher  
2 Education Act of 1965.

3 “(6) INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED HEALTH  
4 CARE PROFESSIONAL.—The term ‘internationally  
5 educated health care professional’ means an indi-  
6 vidual who—

7 “(A) completed the education requirements  
8 for a health care workforce profession in an-  
9 other country; and

10 “(B) is—

11 “(i) lawfully admitted for permanent  
12 residence;

13 “(ii) admitted as a refugee under sec-  
14 tion 207 of the Immigration and Nation-  
15 ality Act;

16 “(iii) granted asylum under section  
17 208 of such Act; or

18 “(iv) an alien otherwise authorized to  
19 be employed in the United States.

20 “(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
21 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
22 such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years  
23 2025 through 2029.”.

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