

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 5908

To provide funding to summer youth employment programs to expand the availability of subsidized jobs for youths and to develop innovative program activities that improve academic, economic, and criminal justice outcomes for youths, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 6, 2023

Ms. SHERRILL (for herself, Mr. LAWLER, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, Ms. MANNING, Mr. PANETTA, and Mr. TRONE) introduced the following bill

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

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## A BILL

To provide funding to summer youth employment programs to expand the availability of subsidized jobs for youths and to develop innovative program activities that improve academic, economic, and criminal justice outcomes for youths, and for other purposes.

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 “Strengthening Commu-  
5 nities through Summer Employment Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS .**  
2

3 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
4 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Labor  
5 to carry out this Act—

6 (1) \$200,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;

7 (2) \$210,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;

8 (3) \$220,000,000 for fiscal year 2026;

9 (4) \$230,000,000 for fiscal year 2027; and

10 (5) \$240,000,000 for fiscal year 2028.

11 (b) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—Of the amounts ap-  
12 propriated under subsection (a), the Secretary of Labor  
13 shall use—

14 (1) 45 percent of such amount to award grants  
15 under section 3;

16 (2) 45 percent of such amount to award grants  
17 under section 4;

18 (3) 5 percent of such amount to carry out eval-  
19 uation activities under section 5(b); and

20 (4) 5 percent of such amount to fund the Advi-  
21 sory Board under section 6.

22 **SEC. 3. EXPANSION AND SCALING OF SUMMER YOUTH EM-**  
23 **PLOYMENT PROGRAMS.**

24 (a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—From the amounts avail-  
25 able under section 2(b)(1), the Secretary of Labor shall  
26 award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities

1 to develop and implement new, or expand existing, sum-  
2 mer youth employment programs in a State or local area,  
3 for the purpose of improving academic, economic, and  
4 criminal justice outcomes for participants, including—

- 5 (1) high school graduation rates;
- 6 (2) enrollment rates in postsecondary education;
- 7 (3) employment and wage rates; and
- 8 (4) arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates.

9 (b) GRANT PRIORITIZATION.—In awarding grants to  
10 eligible entities under this section, the Secretary of Labor,  
11 in coordination with the Advisory Board, shall prioritize  
12 eligible entities that, based upon the applications sub-  
13 mitted under subsection (c)—

14 (1) have higher youth unemployment rates and  
15 violent crime rates in the local areas to be served;

16 (2) will offer higher quality and more rigorous  
17 the summer youth employment programs (which  
18 shall include a consideration of whether the program  
19 has been evaluated and, if so, the impact of the pro-  
20 gram on the youth outcomes listed under subsection  
21 (a)); and

22 (3) will serve a higher number of youth histori-  
23 cally underserved by summer youth employment pro-  
24 grams, including youth in rural and suburban local  
25 areas.

1           (c) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—To be eligible to  
2 receive a grant under this section, an eligible entity shall  
3 submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in  
4 such manner, and containing such information as the Sec-  
5 retary may determine to be necessary, which shall include  
6 information that demonstrates that the eligible entity will  
7 use such grant to develop and implement, or expand, a  
8 summer youth employment program that includes each of  
9 the elements listed in subsection (d).

10           (d) REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR SUMMER YOUTH EM-  
11 PLOYMENT PROGRAMS.—A summer youth employment  
12 program funded under this section shall include each of  
13 the following elements:

14           (1) Provides youth participants under the age  
15 of 25 with subsidized employment for at least 4  
16 weeks during the summer.

17           (2) Pays at least the greater of the applicable  
18 Federal, State, or local minimum wage.

19           (3) Provides community engagement and out-  
20 reach to ensure equitable access to the program in  
21 terms of awareness, application process, and comple-  
22 tion of the hiring process, including documentation  
23 of eligibility.

1           (4) Matches each youth participant with an em-  
2           ployer based on the needs of the employer and the  
3           skills and interests of the youth participant.

4           (5) Provides coaching and mentoring services  
5           for each youth participant to support the partici-  
6           pant's completion of the summer employment pro-  
7           gram.

8           (6) Provides assistance to each youth partici-  
9           pant in obtaining educational and employment op-  
10          portunities after the completion of the program,  
11          such as by connecting participants with secondary  
12          school programs, postsecondary education opportuni-  
13          ties, apprenticeships, career and technical education,  
14          or adult job training programs, if applicable.

15          (7) Provides training, coaching, and mentoring  
16          services, and technical assistance to participating  
17          employers to best help such employers structure the  
18          job opportunities of the employers to meet the em-  
19          ployer's needs and the support the success of youth  
20          participants.

21          (8) Provides program supports to youth partici-  
22          pants before, during, and after their program (such  
23          as digital literacy training, work-readiness opportu-  
24          nities, financial literacy training, specific job train-

1 ing for their summer job placement, and career  
2 counseling services).

3 **SEC. 4. IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE PROGRAM AC-**  
4 **TIVITIES.**

5 (a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—From the amounts ap-  
6 propriated under section 2(b)(2) for this section, the Sec-  
7 retary of Labor shall provide grants, on a competitive  
8 basis, to eligible entities that operate summer youth em-  
9 ployment programs that include each of the program ele-  
10 ments listed in section 3(d) to integrate innovative ap-  
11 proaches in carrying out such programs for the purposes  
12 of improving the youth outcomes listed under section 3(a).

13 (b) GRANT PRIORITIZATION.—In awarding grants to  
14 eligible entities under this section, the Secretary of Labor,  
15 in coordination with the Advisory Board, shall prioritize  
16 eligible entities that, based upon the applications sub-  
17 mitted under subsection (c)—

18 (1) have higher youth unemployment rates and  
19 violent crime rates in the local areas to be served;

20 (2) will offer a higher quality and more rigorous  
21 summer youth employment program (which shall in-  
22 clude a consideration of whether the program has  
23 been evaluated and, if so, the impact of the program  
24 on the youth outcomes listed in section 3(a));

1           (3) will offer a higher quality and more rigorous  
2           innovative approach for such program (which shall  
3           include a consideration of whether that innovative  
4           approach has been evaluated and, if so, the impact  
5           of the innovative approach on the youth outcomes  
6           listed under section 3(a)); and

7           (4) will serve a higher number of youth histori-  
8           cally underserved by summer youth employment pro-  
9           grams, including youth in rural and suburban local  
10          areas.

11          (c) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—To be eligible for  
12 a grant under this section, an eligible entity shall submit  
13 to the Secretary an application at such time, and in such  
14 manner as may be required by the Secretary, which in-  
15 cludes a description of the plan to integrate one or more  
16 of the innovative approaches listed in subsection (d) into  
17 the summer youth employment program operated by the  
18 eligible entity.

19          (d) INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SUMMER YOUTH  
20 EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.—An eligible entity that oper-  
21 ates a summer youth employment program that includes  
22 the required program elements listed in section 3(d) shall  
23 use funds received under this section to integrate into such  
24 program one or more of the following innovative ap-  
25 proaches:

1           (1) Individualized mentoring and coaching for  
2 youth participants, under which each youth partici-  
3 pant—

4                   (A) before and after the participant starts  
5 the program and regularly during the program,  
6 meets one-on-one with a dedicated mentor;

7                   (B) develops a comprehensive success plan  
8 with the mentor, including academic and em-  
9 ployment goals and the steps needed to achieve  
10 such goals;

11                   (C) receives other support from the men-  
12 tor, which shall include—

13                           (i) coaching to overcome barriers that  
14 could impact progress in completing the  
15 employment received under the summer  
16 youth employment program;

17                           (ii) providing letters of recommenda-  
18 tion; and

19                           (iii) making referrals to educational  
20 and social services, where necessary.

21           (2) High-quality job training, career counseling,  
22 or educational tutoring programs to be delivered in  
23 small group settings before the program, on evenings  
24 and weekends during the program, and after the  
25 program, with the goal of preparing youth partici-



1 pants for future employment, which shall include as-  
2 sisting youth participants—

3 (A) with developing resumes and inter-  
4 viewing skills, and financial literacy; and

5 (B) in completing a regular high school di-  
6 ploma or its recognized equivalent and literacy  
7 classes, if applicable.

8 (3) Social-emotional learning for youth partici-  
9 pants, including proven interventions to help develop  
10 empathy, self-efficacy, positive decision-making, and  
11 communication skills.

12 (4) Wrap-around financial assistance services,  
13 including for food, shelter, and transportation.

14 (5) Mental health supports for youth partici-  
15 pants, as applicable.

16 (6) Substance abuse and addiction treatment  
17 supports for youth participants, as applicable.

18 (7) The continuation of certain program ele-  
19 ments (particularly the individualized mentoring,  
20 mental health and behavioral supports, and career  
21 counseling), in coordination with their school dis-  
22 tricts, for a period of time after the employment por-  
23 tion of the program ends to help participants con-  
24 tinue their engagement with the education and em-  
25 ployment system, with financial assistance available

1 to youth who continue to participate in these pro-  
2 gram elements after their summer employment has  
3 ended.

4 (8) The provision of one or more of the pro-  
5 gram elements listed in section 3(d) virtually to de-  
6 velop digital literacy and remote work skills that are  
7 a part of many professional settings.

8 (9) The provision of Learn and Earn opportuni-  
9 ties, in which participants take postsecondary or  
10 training courses during nonsummer months coupled  
11 with work experience in related fields during the  
12 summer.

13 (10) The expansion of private sector opportuni-  
14 ties with employers in in-demand occupations or in-  
15 dustry sectors (as defined in section 3 of the Work-  
16 force Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.  
17 3102)), such as information technology, health care,  
18 life sciences, and vocational careers.

19 (11) The development of skill-based digital  
20 badges issued by cities that are recognized by high  
21 schools, community colleges, and employers.

22 (12) The laddering of job opportunities from  
23 one summer to the next to enable participants to  
24 build skills over multiple summers by progressing  
25 from entry-level to more senior positions that further

1 develop soft skills (such as leadership skills) or hard  
2 skills (such as technical skills).

3 (13) A program element identified by the Advi-  
4 sory Board under section 6(i)(3).

5 (14) A new innovative program element that is  
6 not identified by the Advisory Board under section  
7 6(i)(3) and is not listed in this subsection, which  
8 is—

9 (A) proposed by the eligible entity in the  
10 application submitted under subsection (b);

11 (B) determined by the Secretary, in con-  
12 sultation with the Advisory Board, as being rea-  
13 sonably expected to demonstrate evidence, in  
14 the case of an element in which such evidence  
15 does not exist, in carrying out the purposes de-  
16 scribed in subsection (a).

17 **SEC. 5. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES.**

18 (a) **PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT ASSESSMENTS.**—  
19 Beginning not later than 1 year after receiving such grant  
20 and for each succeeding year of the grant period, each eli-  
21 gible entity receiving a grant under section 3 or 4, in con-  
22 sultation with the Advisory Board established under sec-  
23 tion 6, shall develop and implement a performance meas-  
24 urement assessment of such program to assess whether

1 the program is being implemented in a way that meets  
2 the requirements of section 3 or 4, respectively.

3 (b) IMPACT EVALUATIONS.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—From the amounts appro-  
5 priated under section 2(b)(3), the Secretary of  
6 Labor shall, in consultation with the Advisory Board  
7 established under section 6, award a contract to one  
8 or more independent research organizations or non-  
9 profit organizations to carry out evaluations to  
10 measure the impact of each summer youth employ-  
11 ment program that is being supported by a grant  
12 awarded under section 3 or 4.

13 (2) REQUIREMENTS OF EVALUATIONS.—An im-  
14 pact evaluation of a program that is being supported  
15 by a grant awarded under section 3 or 4 shall meet  
16 the following requirements:

17 (A) The evaluation begins not later than 3  
18 years after the program first receives such sup-  
19 port.

20 (B) The evaluation shall meet each of the  
21 following:

22 (i) Impact evaluation design and anal-  
23 ysis methods are shared with the Advisory  
24 Board before the beginning of the evalua-  
25 tion.

1 (ii) The evaluation uses administrative  
2 data to assess the impact of the program  
3 as a whole on participants for 1 year, 3  
4 years, and 5 years after the completion of  
5 the program on each of the following:

6 (I) High school graduation rates.

7 (II) Enrollment rates in postsec-  
8 ondary education.

9 (III) Employment and wage  
10 rates.

11 (IV) Crime rates (such as arrest,  
12 arraignment, or incarceration rates).

13 (iii) The evaluation uses survey data  
14 collected during the program to assess pro-  
15 gram impacts on short-term changes in  
16 soft skills (such as such as interpersonal,  
17 communication, and time management  
18 skills), academic and career goals, and job  
19 readiness.

20 (iv) The evaluation uses randomized  
21 experimental designs, when feasible, or  
22 other research methods that allow for the  
23 strongest possible causal inferences when  
24 random assignment is not feasible.

1           (3) **ADVISORY BOARD.**—In assisting the organi-  
2           zation that receives a contract under this subsection,  
3           the Advisory Board established under section 6 shall  
4           provide additional resources to such organization to  
5           carry out the evaluations under this subsection, in-  
6           cluding assistance with using randomized experi-  
7           mental designs.

8 **SEC. 6. ADVISORY BOARD.**

9           (a) **IN GENERAL.**—From the amounts available  
10          under section 2(b)(4), the Secretary of Labor shall estab-  
11          lish within the Department of Labor an Advisory Board  
12          to carry out the duties listed in subsection (i).

13          (b) **MEMBERS.**—

14               (1) **NUMBER OF MEMBERS.**—The Secretary  
15               shall determine the number of members to serve on  
16               the Advisory Board.

17               (2) **APPOINTMENT AND EXPERTISE.**—Each  
18               member of the Advisory Board shall be appointed by  
19               the Secretary of Labor, and shall have expertise in  
20               designing and administering summer youth employ-  
21               ment programs or experience in program evaluation  
22               and evidence-based policy in the workforce develop-  
23               ment field.

24               (3) **TERMS.**—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each member shall be  
2 appointed for a term of 4 years, and may be re-  
3 appointed for subsequent terms by the Sec-  
4 retary.

5 (B) VACANCIES.—Any member appointed  
6 to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration  
7 of the term for which the member's predecessor  
8 was appointed shall be appointed only for the  
9 remainder of that term. A member may serve  
10 after the expiration of that member's term until  
11 a successor has taken office. A vacancy in the  
12 Advisory Board shall be filled in the manner in  
13 which the original appointment was made.

14 (c) BASIC PAY.—

15 (1) RATES OF PAY.—Except as provided in  
16 paragraph (2), Advisory Board Members and staff,  
17 including the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and  
18 Director, shall each be paid at a rate determined by  
19 the Secretary.

20 (2) PROHIBITION OF COMPENSATION OF FED-  
21 ERAL EMPLOYEES.—Members of the Advisory Board  
22 who are full-time officers or employees of the United  
23 States may not receive additional pay, allowances, or  
24 benefits by reason of their service on the Advisory  
25 Board.

1 (d) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall receive  
2 travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence,  
3 in accordance with applicable provisions under subchapter  
4 I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code.

5 (e) QUORUM.—Fifty percent plus one members of the  
6 Advisory Board shall constitute a quorum but a lesser  
7 number may hold hearings.

8 (f) CHAIRPERSON; VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The Chair-  
9 person and Vice Chairperson of the Advisory Board shall  
10 be designated by the Secretary at the time of the appoint-  
11 ment. The term of office of the Chairperson and Vice  
12 Chairperson shall be 4 years.

13 (g) MEETINGS.—The Advisory Board shall meet  
14 monthly and at the call of the Chairperson or a majority  
15 of its members.

16 (h) DIRECTOR AND STAFF OF ADVISORY BOARD; EX-  
17 PERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—

18 (1) DIRECTOR.—The Advisory Board shall have  
19 a Director who shall be appointed by the Chair-  
20 person.

21 (2) STAFF.—The Advisory Board Chairperson  
22 may appoint additional personnel as they consider  
23 appropriate. Such staff shall provide specific over-  
24 sight and guidance, pursuant to the functions of the  
25 Advisory Board under this section.



1           (3) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE  
2 LAWS.—The Director and staff of the Advisory  
3 Board shall be appointed subject to the provisions of  
4 title 5, United States Code, governing appointments  
5 in the competitive service.

6           (4) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—The Advi-  
7 sory Board may procure temporary and intermittent  
8 services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United  
9 States Code.

10          (5) STAFF OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Upon re-  
11 quest of the Advisory Board, the head of any Fed-  
12 eral department or agency may detail, on a reim-  
13 bursable basis, any of the personnel of that depart-  
14 ment or agency to the Advisory Board to assist it in  
15 carrying out its duties under this Act.

16          (i) DUTIES.—The Advisory Board shall assist the  
17 Secretary in carrying out each of the following:

18           (1) APPLICATION REVIEW.—Reviewing applica-  
19 tions submitted by eligible entities under sections  
20 4(d) and 5(b) to ensure that each eligible entity se-  
21 lected to receive a grant under this Act will use such  
22 grant as required under this Act.

23           (2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

24           (A) IN GENERAL.—Providing technical as-  
25 sistance to eligible entities receiving grants

1 under section 3, for the purpose of assisting  
2 such eligible entities to best implement the sum-  
3 mer youth employment programs to be assisted  
4 with such grants, by identifying existing sum-  
5 mer youth employment programs that dem-  
6 onstrate, through evaluations conducted under  
7 section 5(b) or through outside studies, that  
8 each of the program elements listed in section  
9 3(d) and implemented under such programs  
10 have a significant impact on academic, eco-  
11 nomic, and criminal justice outcomes.

12 (B) WORKING GROUP.—Technical assist-  
13 ance may be provided under subparagraph (A)  
14 through the creation and administration of a  
15 working group of the administrators of eligible  
16 entities to share best practices regarding the  
17 implementation of summer youth employment  
18 programs.

19 (3) INNOVATIVE PROGRAM ELEMENTS.—

20 (A) IDENTIFYING PROGRAM ELEMENTS.—  
21 Identifying any innovative approaches to sum-  
22 mer youth employment programs for purposes  
23 of paragraph (13) of section 4(d) that are not  
24 listed in section 4(d), which demonstrate or are  
25 reasonably expected to demonstrate evidence of

1 improving the youth outcomes listed under sec-  
2 tion 3(a).

3 (B) APPROVING NEW PROGRAM ELE-  
4 MENTS.—Providing recommendations to the  
5 Secretary with respect to whether any new pro-  
6 gram element proposed by any eligible entity  
7 under section 4(d)(14) demonstrate or are rea-  
8 sonable expected to demonstrate such evidence.

9 (4) DATABASE OF IMPACT EVALUATIONS.—  
10 Publishing a database of completed evaluations con-  
11 ducted under section 5(b), which maintains evidence  
12 on the impact of programs (including the program  
13 elements of programs) supported with grants under  
14 this Act.

15 (5) PROGRAM EVALUATIONS.—Providing assist-  
16 ance with respect to impact evaluations described in  
17 section 5(b)(3).

18 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

19 In this Act:

20 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-  
21 ty” means a State (or State board) or unit of gen-  
22 eral local government (or a local board), or a non-  
23 profit organization, or a consortium of any of such  
24 entities.

1           (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
2 the Secretary of Labor.

3           (3) STATE.—The term “State” means any  
4 State of the United States, the District of Columbia,  
5 the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Is-  
6 lands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Common-  
7 wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

8           (4) WIOA TERMS.—The terms “local area”,  
9 “local board”, “State board”, and “unit of general  
10 local government” have the meanings given such  
11 terms in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and  
12 Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

○