

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND ACT

Introduced By: Senators Ruggerio, Pearson, Gallo, DiPalma, LaMountain, and Tikoian

Date Introduced: March 23, 2023

Referred To: Senate Labor

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 28 of the General Laws entitled "LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS"  
2 is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 60

4 REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND ACT

5 **28-60-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Real Jobs Rhode Island Act."

7 **28-60-2. Legislative purpose.**

8 The purpose of the real jobs Rhode Island act is to create an industry-led system to advance  
9 the skills of the state's workforce, grow the state's economy and increase sustainable employment  
10 for middle class working families.

11 **28-60-3. Definitions.**

12 As used in this chapter the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings,  
13 unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

14 (1) "Credential" means any recognized:

15 (i) Educational diploma;

16 (ii) Certificate or degree;

17 (iii) Occupational license; or

18 (iv) Apprenticeship certificate, including, but not limited to:

19 (A) Industry-recognized certification; or

1 (B) Award for skills attainment and completion, issued by an approved training provider  
2 in the state or third-party credential provider.

3 (2) "Department" means the department of labor and training.

4 (3) "High-demand occupations" means occupations that have a significant presence within  
5 target industries, that are in demand by employers, and that pay or lead to payment of a family  
6 sustaining wage.

7 (4) "Identifiable skill" means the attainment of a proficiency in a specific work-related  
8 skill, that is likely to lead to future job advancement and improvement in an individual's hiring  
9 potential.

10 (5) "Job readiness training" means:

11 (i) Training for the purpose of assisting and supporting jobseekers in overcoming  
12 individual barriers to employment and developing the skills necessary to maintain employment and  
13 to qualify for skills training opportunities.

14 (ii) Job readiness training includes:

15 (A) Occupational skills development;

16 (B) GED preparation;

17 (C) Literacy advancement;

18 (D) Financial stability services, including financial coaching;

19 (E) Credit counseling;

20 (F) Transportation; and

21 (G) Childcare.

22 (6) "Local board" means a local workforce investment board.

23 (7) "Real jobs Rhode Island program" means the program created under this chapter.

24 (8) "Strategic industry partnership" means collaboration that brings together a regional  
25 group of employers, nonprofits, institutions of higher education, community colleges, local boards,  
26 local governments, or other relevant partners to:

27 (i) Identify common workforce needs for high-demand occupations, within a target  
28 industry; and

29 (ii) Develop and implement workforce solutions to meet the common workforce needs and  
30 shortages, based on regional needs.

31 (9) "Target industry" means a group of employers closely linked by a common product or  
32 service, workforce skills, similar technologies, supply chains, or other economic ties.

33 **28-60-4. Program administration.**

34 The department, in consultation with the governor's workforce board, as established by §

1 42-102-1, shall administer the real jobs Rhode Island program.

2 **28-60-5. Administrative grants.**

3 (a) The department shall provide grants, on a competitive basis, for:

4 (1) An approved partnership for development of a plan consistent with the purpose of the  
5 real jobs Rhode Island program;

6 (2) Workforce training programs and other qualified entities that provide industry valued  
7 skills training to individuals, resulting in an industry-recognized credential or identifiable skill,  
8 consistent with an approved industry partnership plan; and

9 (3) Job readiness training and skills training, resulting in an industry-recognized credential  
10 or identifiable skill.

11 (b) Applications for strategic industry partnership grants shall include:

12 (1) Evidence of skills shortages within the target industry over a sustained period of time;

13 (2) A description of specific high demand occupations or sets of occupations, within the  
14 target industry; and

15 (3) The specifics of training programs that would result in individuals obtaining industry-  
16 recognized credentials or identifiable skills, to facilitate their employment or advancement in the  
17 targeted industry.

18 (c) Grants may be awarded for skills training consistent with an approved partnership plan  
19 to:

20 (1) Targeted industries with identified positions and a demonstrated need for incumbent  
21 worker training;

22 (2) Industries with an identified workforce shortage, that will be seeking to hire individuals  
23 to train to meet a specific skill need;

24 (3) A partnership member that can provide supportive services to qualified individuals  
25 receiving training; and

26 (4) Educational providers, consistent with the goals of the plan.

27 (d) The competitive grant process shall give priority to strategic industry partnerships, that  
28 maximize the potential of the collaboration through direct financial or in-kind contributions by  
29 members of the target industry.

30 (e) The supportive services provided on behalf of an individual, by a partnership member  
31 may be used to pay for:

32 (1) Job readiness training; and

33 (2) Approved transportation, childcare or other approved needs of an individual to allow  
34 participation in job readiness and skills training opportunities.

1           **28-60-6. Monitoring and evaluation.**

2           (a) The department shall monitor all grants awarded under this chapter, to ensure  
3 compliance with all applicable statutes, rules and regulations.

4           (b) The department may require all recipients of strategic industry partnership grants to:

5           (1) Demonstrate an ability to collaborate successfully with grant partners; and

6           (2) Include additional provisions in a grant proposal to ensure accountability.

7           (c) The department may revoke grant funding from a strategic industry partnership,  
8 workforce training program or a partnership member if goals consistent with a grant agreement  
9 approved by the department are not met.

10           **28-60-7. Funding.**

11           Effective in fiscal year 2024, and in each year thereafter, the real jobs Rhode Island  
12 program shall be funded with fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) provided from the general fund  
13 upon appropriation by the general assembly.

14           **28-60-8. Annual report.**

15           (a) On or before December 31 of each year, the department shall report to the governor,  
16 the senate president and the speaker of the house, on the real jobs Rhode Island program.

17           (b) The report required under this section shall include:

18           (1) A description of each strategic industry partnership receiving grant funding and the  
19 status of the partnership;

20           (2) The number of individuals participating in each component of the real jobs Rhode  
21 Island program; and

22           (3) The number of participants that have obtained an industry-recognized credential or  
23 identifiable skill, a new employment position, a title promotion and a wage increase.

24           **28-60-9. Regulations.**

25           The department may promulgate such regulations necessary to implement the provisions  
26 of this chapter, including, but not limited to, sections of the Rhode Island administrative code  
27 relevant to grant-making such as 220-RICR-30-00-10.

28           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND ACT

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1           This act would establish a real jobs Rhode Island program, which would be an industry -  
2 led system to advance the skills of the state's workforce to grow the state's economy and increase  
3 sustainable employment for middle-class families. The program would be administered by the  
4 department of labor and training, which would provide grants to promote job skills training and  
5 industry partnership from a yearly fifteen million dollar (\$15,000,000) appropriation by the general  
6 assembly.

7           This act would take effect upon passage.

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