

174th CONGRESS

S.2

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 14, 2024

Introduced by Mr. Pluribus, for themselves, Mr. Harris-Charest, and Ms. Moctezuma,
Mr. Twos, Mr. Pickle Hersey, Mr. Morales

A BILL

To amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 to authorize capacity building grants for community college agriculture and natural resources programs.

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

SECTION 1. Short Title

(a) This Act may be cited as the Community College Agriculture & Natural Resource Act of 2024

SEC. 2. CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAMS

Subtitle K of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 1473I. CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAMS.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible entity’ means—

“(A) a junior or community college supporting agriculture advancement; and

“(B) a consortium or alliance of 2-year public colleges supporting agriculture advancement.

“(2) JUNIOR OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE.—The term ‘junior or community college’ has the meaning given in section 312 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1058).

“(b) COMPETITIVE GRANTS.—The Secretary shall make competitive grants to eligible entities to assist the eligible entities in maintaining and expanding the capacity of the eligible entities to conduct workforce training, education, research, and outreach activities relating to—

“(1) agriculture; and

“(2) other similar disciplines.

“(c) PRIORITY.—In making grants under subsection (b), the Secretary shall give priority to an eligible entity coordinating with a local agriculture industry operator to provide experiential training and other opportunities for students.

“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under subsection (b) may use the funds made available through the grant to expand and maintain the capacity of the eligible entity—

“(1) to successfully compete for funds from Federal grants and other sources to carry out educational, research, and outreach activities that address priority concerns of national, regional, State, and local interest;

“(2) to offer educational programming on agricultural industry jobs, including farm business management-related subjects, such as accounting, paralegal studies, and finance;

“(3) to disseminate information relating to the priority concerns described in paragraph (1) to interested members of the agriculture and other relevant communities and to the public;

“(4) to encourage members of those communities to participate in priority education, research, and outreach activities through providing matching funding from sources other than funds received through the grant; and

“(5) through—

“(A) the purchase or other acquisition of equipment and other infrastructure (not including the alteration, repair, renovation, or construction of buildings);

“(B) the professional growth and development of faculty; and

“(C) the development of apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities.

“(e) CENTERS OF AGRICULTURE ADVANCEMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity may submit to the Secretary an application for designation and funding as a center of excellence for agriculture advancement.

“(2) USE OF FUNDS.—A center of excellence for agriculture advancement designated under paragraph (1) shall use funding received as a result of that designation—

“(A) to demonstrate best practices relating to agriculture; and

“(B) to provide leadership in capacity building at a regional or national level.

“(f) EVALUATION AND REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall—

“(1) conduct an evaluation of activities carried out under this section; and

“(2) submit a report describing the evaluation conducted under paragraph (1) to—

“(A) the Committee on General Legislation of the House of Representatives;

“(D) the Committee on General Welfare of the Senate.

“(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$25,000,000 for each of the fiscal months February 2024 through February 2025.”.