

AO-K to Work Program; SB 199

SB 199 establishes the AO-K to Work Program (Program). The provisions applicable to the Program apply to all adult education programs in Kansas.

Definitions

The bill establishes definitions for the following terms:

- “AO-K” or “Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas” to mean a career pathways program model that assists students in obtaining a high school equivalency, becoming ready for transferable college-level courses, and earning an industry credential;
- “Career readiness assessment” to mean an assessment approved by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) to measure foundational skills required for success in the workplace and workplace skills that affect job performance;
- “Career readiness certificate” to mean a certificate that uses a career readiness assessment approved by KBOR to document an individual’s skills in applied math, graphic literacy, and workplace documents;
- “Industry recognized credential” to mean a credential recognized by multiple employers across an industry as determined by KBOR;
- “Kansas adult education program” to mean any educational institution or approved agency that receives adult education funding through KBOR; provides adult education or English language acquisition programs; serves Kansas adults age 16 and over who are in need of basic skills for the workforce, community participation, and family life; and prepares adults for achieving industry recognized credentials and college certificates and degrees; and
- “Qualified student” to mean an individual who has attained the age of 21, has not been awarded a high school diploma, has been accepted into a Kansas adult education program, has demonstrated high school equivalency by meeting the criteria established by KBOR pursuant to the bill, and has declared an AO-K career pathway interest.

The bill also specifies the definitions of “community college” and “technical college” have the same meaning as in continuing law (KSA 71-701 for community colleges and KSA 71-1802 for technical colleges).

Awarding of a Credential to a Qualified Student

The bill requires KBOR to award a Kansas high school equivalency credential to any qualified student who is recommended and approved to participate in an AO-K career pathway

approved by KBOR for college credit, successfully completes an approved AO-K career pathway and receives the industry-recognized credential appropriate to the completed pathway, takes a career readiness assessment and earns a career readiness certificate at a level approved by KBOR, and satisfies any other requirement deemed necessary by KBOR.

Access to Resources

The bill requires any qualified student participating in the Program to be provided reasonable access to all available student resources of the adult education program, the participating technical or community college, and the appropriate community partners, including, but not limited to, appropriate academic support, barrier mitigation, and employment or career assistance.

Fee and Fund

The bill requires each application to KBOR for issuance or duplication of a Kansas high school equivalency credential to be accompanied by a fee, established by KBOR, in an amount of not more than \$25.

The bill requires KBOR, on or before June 1 of each year, to determine the amount of revenue required to properly administer the provisions of the bill during the next ensuing fiscal year and establish the Kansas high school equivalency credentials processing fee for such year in the amount deemed necessary for such purposes. The fee will become effective on the succeeding July 1 of each year.

KBOR must remit all moneys received from the fee to the State Treasurer in accordance with KSA 75-4215 (remittance of state moneys; fee agency accounts; reports; post audit). Upon receipt of such remittance, the bill requires the State Treasurer to deposit the entire amount in the State Treasury to the credit of the Kansas High School Equivalency Credential Processing Fees Fund (Fund) and establishes the Fund in the State Treasury. The Fund will be used only for the payment of expenses connected with the processing, issuance, or duplication of Kansas high school equivalency credentials, and for the keeping of records by KBOR. The bill requires all expenditures from the Fund to be made in accordance with appropriations acts upon warrants of the Director of Accounts and Reports issued pursuant to vouchers approved by KBOR or by a person or persons designated by KBOR.

Rules and Regulations

The bill authorizes KBOR to adopt rules and regulations to implement and administer provisions of the bill.