



# The Senate Committee on Finance

Budget Bulletin

Prepared by Chris DeWitte and Ben Agsten, Budget Analysts



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## SENATE BILL 1:

Increasing access to career education and workforce training

Senate Bill 1 (SB1) was designed to make training for certain, high-demand careers more affordable. The bill establishes an Advanced Career Education (ACE) program and creates the WV Invests Grant Program, both of which are for the purpose of increasing access to career education and workforce training.



### SB1 KEY FACTS

Introduced: January 9, 2019

Completed Legislative Action: March 7, 2019

Signed by Governor: March 25, 2019

Total Cost: \$10,034,748

### WV INVESTS GRANT PROGRAM

WV Invests is a state-funded grant program that covers the full cost of tuition and fees for students who pursue certain certificate and associate degree programs. Eligible programs are chosen by the WV Department of Commerce and reflect those careers with the highest demand in West Virginia. While the Department has not yet come out with a list of eligible fields, possible career paths might include registered nurse (mean WV salary \$60,380) or industrial mechanic (mean WV salary \$52,080).

## PROGRAM COSTS

The introduced bill proposed paying the “last dollar in” tuition costs for community and technical colleges offering two-year degree programs. The Higher Education Policy Commission’s fiscal note estimated the cost to be around \$7,500,000.

During the legislative process, concerns were raised that four-year colleges would see lower enrollment as many students would be incentivized to enroll in community and technical colleges instead. To address these concerns, the WV House of Delegates amended the bill to allow the program to pay the tuition for programs in high-demand fields, regardless of whether they were offered at two-year or four-year college.

## KEY TERMS

**Introduced Bill:** The form a bill is in when first presented to a committee.

**Last Dollar In:** Students must first use all eligible state and federal grants to pay for their education. The Invests Program will cover whatever costs remain.

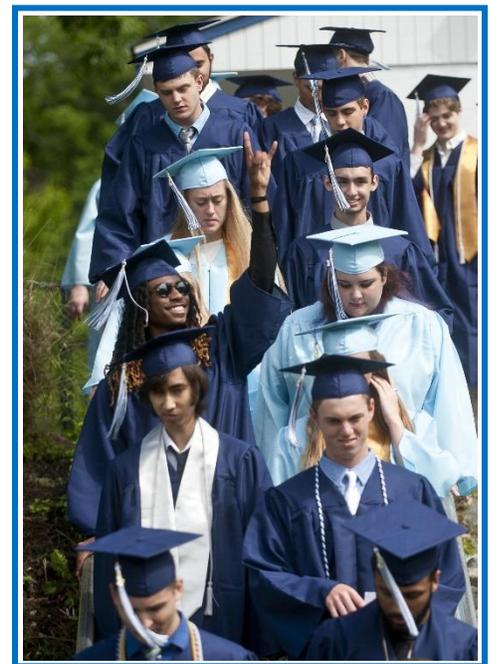
**Fiscal Note:** is a document that state agencies provide to predict the costs associated with a particular piece of legislation.

**High-demand field:** A designation given by the WV Department of Commerce, these are career paths for which there are many potential job opportunities.

## QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for the program, applicants must:

- Be a legal resident of West Virginia for at least 1 year immediately before applying;
- Be a graduate of a public, private or homeschool program, or have successfully passed a high school equivalency test;
- Have not already earned a college degree
- Have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- Be willing to make a commitment to improving the state by living in West Virginia for at least two years after graduation and completing at least 2 hours of unpaid community service each academic term;
- Pass a drug test.



## ADVANCED CAREER EDUCATION

Senate Bill 1 also contains provisions for an Advanced Career Education (ACE) Program. The ACE Program gives high school students the opportunity to choose from several different career pathways, each chosen by the Department of Commerce to reflect those careers with the highest demand in the state. The Department will provide annual updates to the WV Council for Community and Technical College Education. SB1 requires that the program be offered to all high school students, whether they receive a public, private or home school education.

## ACE OBJECTIVES

1. Provide additional opportunities to students to attain college credentials through ACE pathways;
2. Increase the number of students in this state that attain college credentials through ACE pathways;
3. Allow students to attain college credentials through ACE at little or no cost;
4. Ensure that ACE provides a clear roadmap to the courses and requirements necessary to attain college credentials; and
5. Ensure that course requirements within ACE pathways are not duplicated.

The ACE Program is designed to work in conjunction with the WV Invests Grant Program. Only Community and Technical Colleges that participate in the ACE Program are eligible to receive state funding through the Invests Program. In conjunction, the two programs will provide a clear path forward for West Virginians of any age to move into a rewarding career.

