STATE OF NEW YORK

4669

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 8, 2021

Introduced by Sen. PARKER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing life long learning centers in the state university of New York

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 355-e to read as follows:

§ 355-e. Life long learning centers. 1. There is hereby established in the state university, subject to the jurisdiction of its board of trustees, life long learning centers to be operated at community colleges and the colleges and universities of the state university to serve mid life adults forty years of age or older who are seeking to explore life options, remain civically engaged, continue their education and acquire skills for or begin to plan for a second career, including entrepreneurial instruction.

2. The board of trustees of the state university shall select the location of such centers on campuses of colleges and universities with a commitment to reinvent their credit and non-credit learning programs to target the emerging needs and demands and interests of adults age forty and older who are interested in exploring life options, civic engagement and continued learning.

3. The purpose of life long learning centers is to encourage the offering of mid life adult programs that assist eligible students in acquiring the skills and abilities necessary to plan for and carry out new careers for their next stage of life, and help universities meet the demands of this group. The following shall be the priority activities of such centers:

a. retooling career counseling and work force re-entry service that are offered on campus to attract older adults who are interested in public service careers;

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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b. facilitate partnerships on and off campus with interested parties;

c. expanding connections with local businesses and employers to identify work force shortages that could be filled by re-trained older workers;

d. collaborate and offer training for not-for-profit organizations and employers to work with older adults and volunteers; and

e. working with individuals residing in rural and urban areas that are traditionally underserved.

4. The board of trustees of the state university shall, within appropriations made therefor, award grants to establish life long learning centers. Grant applications submitted by institutions of higher education shall outline plans of instruction and curriculum-related activities and services to advance the purpose of assisting mid life adults interested in exploring life options, civic engagement and continued learning. Such plans may provide for contracting by the eligible applicant with specified not-for-profit community based educational organizations for the provision of instruction, activities and services outlined in the plan. Such plans shall include quantifiable measures to assess the effectiveness of the instruction activities and services in promoting the purposes of the program. Such measures shall include, but not be limited to:

a. the rate of success of linking eligible students with work experiences that serve community needs;

b. success at adapting colleges and universities work force re-entry services, career counseling and skill development opportunities that enable older adults to have meaningful civic engagement and work force opportunities;

c. rate of establishments of external links with community, business, government and other educational institutions that may encourage entrepreneurial approaches and partnerships that may help further the goals of this program; and

d. ability of the program plan to assist in the development of initiatives designed to address the unique needs of older individuals residing in rural and urban communities that are traditionally underserved.

The board of trustees shall make grant awards based upon a review of submitted applications making selections from submitted applications that would best meet the goals and objectives of this section. Such approved plans may be amended with the approval of the board of trustees of the state university.

5. The board of trustees of the state university shall submit a report annually to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, the director of the state office for the aging and the commissioner of health.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.