
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 805 (Fong) - Career Apprenticeship Bridge Program

Version: June 18, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: June 29, 2026

Policy Vote: L., P.E. & R. 5 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Robert Ingenito

Bill Summary: AB 805 would bill establish the Career Apprenticeship Bridge (CAB) program, as specified.

Fiscal Impact:

- The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) indicates that it would incur first-year costs of \$1.6 million, and \$1.5 million annually thereafter, to implement the provisions of the bill. Ongoing costs would include maintaining the dashboard and working with specified entities to administer and support the CAB Program (General Fund).
- The California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Community Colleges (CCC) would likely incur minor and absorbable costs to work with DIR on program parameters and regulations.
- The bill would result in annual cost pressures, likely in the tens of millions of dollars, to create programs for youth participants that meet CAB Program purposes (General Fund, see Staff Comments).

Background: California's apprenticeship system is administered by DIR's Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS), which oversees the state's registered apprenticeship programs and enforces standards governing wages, hours, working conditions, and occupational training requirements. Apprenticeship programs combine paid, on-the-job training with related classroom instruction, providing workers with a structured pathway to industry-recognized credentials and career advancement.

The California Apprenticeship Council (CAC) establishes apprenticeship standards for the building and construction trades and firefighter occupations, while the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (IACA) performs a similar role for apprenticeship programs in all other sectors, including healthcare, advanced manufacturing, education, technology, and other emerging industries.

Recognizing the value of apprenticeship as a pathway into high-demand careers, the Legislature established the California Youth Apprenticeship Committee (CYAC) in 2022 to develop a statewide strategy for expanding apprenticeship opportunities for young people. The Committee was directed to define youth apprenticeship, establish guiding principles for youth apprenticeship programs, and recommend policies to support the growth of apprenticeship opportunities for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

In 2024, CYAC released *The California Youth Apprenticeship Model*, a report outlining recommendations for a coordinated statewide youth apprenticeship framework. The report defines youth apprenticeship as a registered apprenticeship program serving individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 that combines paid work experience with classroom instruction and career technical education. These programs must satisfy all registered apprenticeship requirements while accommodating the unique needs of youth participants, including compliance with child labor laws and flexible scheduling.

Youth participation already represents a significant component of California's apprenticeship system. According to DAS, approximately one-third of registered apprentices are between the ages of 16 and 24, including participants in both traditional building trades apprenticeships and apprenticeships in other industries.

The Legislature also established the California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship (COYA) Grant Program to expand apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for young people facing barriers to employment. The program provides funding to develop new apprenticeship pathways, expand existing programs, and strengthen partnerships among workforce organizations, educational institutions, employers, labor organizations, and community-based organizations.

The program seeks to improve labor market outcomes for opportunity youth by connecting participants with training, supportive services, and pathways into high-wage careers. Since its creation, DAS has awarded more than \$59 million through multiple rounds of COYA grants to support apprenticeship expansion and workforce development initiatives throughout the state.

A central recommendation of the CYAC report is the creation of a Career Apprenticeship Bridge (CAB) program designed to integrate apprenticeship opportunities directly into the high school experience. The proposal seeks to establish a formal connection between career technical education (CTE) programs and registered apprenticeships, allowing students to begin accumulating apprenticeship-related experience and training before graduating from high school.

Under the proposed model, students would participate in a structured combination of paid work-based learning and occupation-specific classroom instruction aligned with a registered apprenticeship pathway. Where feasible, participants would also have opportunities to earn college credit while completing program requirements. Upon completion, students would receive credit toward a registered apprenticeship program, allowing them to enter with advanced standing and continue progressing toward journey-level status after high school.

The proposal is intended to create a more seamless transition from secondary education into apprenticeship and employment by enabling students to complete an initial phase of apprenticeship training while still enrolled in school. According to CYAC, this approach would expand access to paid work experience, strengthen connections between education and workforce systems, and provide students with multiple postsecondary options, including direct entry into registered apprenticeship programs, continued employment with apprenticeship sponsors, or pursuit of higher education.

The report distinguishes the proposed CAB model from traditional pre-apprenticeship programs, which generally focus on classroom-based preparation and simulated

workplace experiences but typically do not include paid on-the-job training. CYAC concluded that a distinct framework was necessary because existing pre-apprenticeship models are not designed to provide the level of compensated work experience and apprenticeship credit contemplated under the proposed bridge program. By integrating paid employment, classroom instruction, and apprenticeship advancement into a single framework, the CAB model is intended to create an earlier and more direct pathway into California's registered apprenticeship system.

Proposed Law: This bill, among other things, would do the following:

- Establish the Career Apprenticeship Bridge Program to be administered by DAS and authorize the Division to work with SDE and the Office of the Chancellor of the CCC in order to, among other things, identify resources to support youth apprenticeships.
- Require a program applicant for a Career Apprenticeship Bridge Program to submit documentation to DAS, as specified.
- Require the Chief of DAS, before approving a Career Apprenticeship Bridge Program, to present the application, as described, to SDE to review whether specified requirements are met.
- Authorize the Chief of DAS, among other things, to issue rules and regulations that govern Career Apprenticeship Bridge Programs, as specified.

Related Legislation:

- SB 845 (Perez) would make several changes to the state's framework for CTE and work-based learning, including: (1) revising the process for updating model CTE curriculum standards by requiring consultation with CTE teachers and labor representatives; (2) expanding the authority of local educational agencies, including state special schools, to offer and award credit for work-based learning activities beginning in grade 10; (3) establishing an interagency workgroup to develop occupational frameworks for youth apprenticeships; and (4) requiring the CDE to collect data on work-based learning participation, subject to an appropriation. This bill is pending in the Assembly Education Committee.
- ACR 16 (Fong, Chapter 130, Statutes of 2023) declared the importance of creating pathways to success for California's opportunity youth and the need to develop a statewide comprehensive plan that will reduce persistent economic inequities endured by California's opportunity youth.
- SB 191 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 67, Statutes of 2022), among other things, established youth apprenticeship as a key priority for the DAS, required the DAS to convene the CYAC, and established the Youth Apprenticeship Grant Program.

Staff Comments: Previous state budgets included support for youth apprenticeship and workforce training programs of a similar magnitude. For example, the 2022 Budget Act enacted the Youth Apprenticeship Grant Program and provided \$65 million (General

Fund) over three years to develop or expand on existing apprenticeship programs for 16- to 24-year-old individuals facing certain barriers to labor market participation.

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