

By: Senator(s) Turner-Ford

To: Finance

SENATE BILL NO. 2854

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A WOMEN IN HIGH-WAGE/HIGH-DEMAND/  
 2 NONTRADITIONAL JOBS GRANT PROGRAM UNDER THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT  
 3 OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY; TO PROVIDE DEFINITIONS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE  
 4 USE OF GRANT FUNDS AND GRANT APPLICATIONS; TO AUTHORIZE THE  
 5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT  
 6 SECURITY TO IMPLEMENT THIS ACT AND MONITOR THE USE OF FUNDS; AND  
 7 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

9 **SECTION 1. Women in High-Wage, High-Demand, Nontraditional**

10 **Jobs Grant Program.** (1) For the purpose of this section, the  
 11 following terms have the meanings given.

12 (a) "Commissioner" means the Executive Director of  
 13 the Mississippi Department of Employment Security.

14 (b) "Eligible organization" includes, but is not  
 15 limited to:

16 (i) Community-based organizations experienced in  
 17 serving women;

18 (ii) Employers;

19 (iii) Business and trade associations;

20 (iv) Labor unions and employee organizations;



21 (v) Registered apprenticeship programs;  
22 (vi) Secondary and postsecondary education  
23 institutions located in Mississippi; and  
24 (vii) Workforce and economic development  
25 agencies.

26 (c) "High-wage, high-demand" means occupations that  
27 represent at least one-tenth percent (0.1%) of total employment  
28 in the base year, have an annual median salary which is higher  
29 than the average for the current year, and are projected to have  
30 more total openings as a share of employment than the average.

31 (d) "Low-income" means income less than two hundred  
32 percent (200%) of the federal poverty guideline adjusted for a  
33 family size of four (4).

34 (e) "Nontraditional occupations" means those  
35 occupations in which women make up less than twenty-five percent  
36 (25%) of the workforce as defined under United States Code,  
37 Title 20, Section 2302.

38 (2) **Grant program.** The Executive Director of the  
39 Mississippi Department of Employment Security shall establish  
40 the Women in High-Wage, High-Demand, Nontraditional Jobs Grant  
41 Program to increase the number of women in high-wage, high-  
42 demand, nontraditional occupations. The Executive Director of  
43 the Mississippi Department of Employment Security shall make  
44 grants to eligible organizations for programs that encourage and  
45 assist women to enter high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional



46 occupations, including, but not limited to, those in the skilled  
47 trades, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)  
48 occupations.

49 (3) **Use of funds.** Grant funds awarded under this section  
50 may be used for:

51 (a) Recruitment, preparation, placement, and  
52 retention of women, including low-income women and women over  
53 fifty (50) years old, in registered apprenticeships,  
54 postsecondary education programs, on-the-job training and  
55 permanent employment in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional  
56 occupations;

57 (b) Secondary or postsecondary education or other  
58 training to prepare women to succeed in high-wage, high-demand,  
59 nontraditional occupations. Activities under this section may  
60 be conducted by the grantee or in collaboration with another  
61 institution, including, but not limited to, a public or private  
62 secondary or postsecondary school;

63 (c) Innovative, hands-on best practices that  
64 stimulate interest in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional  
65 occupations among women; increase awareness among women about  
66 opportunities in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional  
67 occupations; or increase access to secondary programming leading  
68 to jobs in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations.  
69 Best practices include, but are not limited to, mentoring,



70 internships or apprenticeships for women in high-wage,  
71 high-demand, nontraditional occupations;

72 (d) Training and other staff development for job  
73 seeker counselors and Mississippi Family Investment Program  
74 (MFIP) caseworkers on opportunities in high-wage, high-demand,  
75 nontraditional occupations;

76 (e) Incentives for employers and sponsors of  
77 registered apprenticeship programs to retain women in high-wage,  
78 high-demand, nontraditional occupations for more than one (1)  
79 year;

80 (f) Training and technical assistance for employers  
81 to create a safe and healthy workplace environment designed to  
82 retain and advance women, including best practices for  
83 addressing sexual harassment, and to overcome gender inequity  
84 among employers and registered apprenticeship programs;

85 (g) Public education and outreach activities to  
86 overcome stereotypes about women in high-wage, high-demand,  
87 nontraditional occupations, including the development of  
88 educational and marketing materials; and

89 (h) Support for women in high-wage, high-demand,  
90 nontraditional occupations including, but not limited to,  
91 assistance with workplace issues resolution and access to  
92 advocacy assistance and services.

93 (4) **Grant applications must include detailed information**  
94 **about how the applicant plans to:**



95 (a) Increase women s participation in high-wage,  
96 high-demand occupations in which women are currently  
97 underrepresented in the workforce;

98 (b) Comply with the requirements under subsection (3)  
99 of this section; and

100 (c) Use grant funds in conjunction with funding from  
101 other public or private sources.

102 (d) In awarding grants under this section, the  
103 executive director shall give priority to eligible  
104 organizations:

105 (i) With demonstrated success in recruiting and  
106 preparing women, especially low-income women and women over  
107 fifty (so) years old, for high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional  
108 occupations; and

109 (ii) That leverage additional public and private  
110 resources.

111 (e) At least fifty percent (50%) of total grant funds  
112 must be awarded to programs providing services and activities  
113 targeted to low-income women.

114 (5) The Executive Director shall monitor the use of funds  
115 under this section, collect and compile information on the  
116 activities of other state agencies and public or private  
117 entities that have purposes similar to those under this section,  
118 and identify other public and private funding available for  
119 these purposes.



120           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
121 and after July 1, 2017.

