

**Joint Committee on Higher Education Bill**  
**Summary**

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<b><u>BILL NUMBER</u></b>	S.945
<b><u>TITLE</u></b>	An Act assisting low-income students success through work-study
<b><u>SPONSORS</u></b>	Senator Moore
<b><u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u></b>	-
<b><u>PRIOR HISTORY</u></b>	S.839 of the 2021/2022 Legislative Session was redrafted and reported out of the Joint Committee on Higher Education (See: S.2812), S.2812 was reported to Senate Ways and Means, no further action taken. S.839 of the 2023/2024 Legislative Session accompanied study order S.2646.
<b><u>SUMMARY</u></b>	This bill establishes a Career Pathways Work Study Trust Fund to 1) subsidize the cost of state work study positions for low-income students and 2) fund an “education opportunity coordinator” position at each Massachusetts community college to assist students with career planning, accessing financial aid, identifying a program of study, and accessing other benefit and support options.

**SECTION-BY-SECTION**

**Section 1:** Provides that the sums in section 2 are for the cost of a career pathways work-study trust fund and related community college staff positions.

**Section 2:** Inserts section 22B after section 22A of chapter 15A;

(a) Subject to appropriation, provides that Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC), through the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges (MACC), will support education opportunity coordinator positions to provide focused assistance (career, financial aid, work study, transportation, childcare, and more) to low-income students enrolled in community colleges. Requires each community college to have at least 1 on-campus coordinator. The coordinators will work with recipients, community colleges, and case managers at the Department of Transitional Assistance and other state agencies.

(b) Requires the BHCC, through MACC, to annually file a report with the Legislature including the number of recipients enrolled, the number receiving grants under the **Massachusetts Community College Career Pathways Trust Fund (Trust Fund)**, and recipient post-schooling success rate. The first report shall be filed two years after the Trust

Fund is established and annually after that.

**Section 3:** Adds clause (t) to paragraph (B) of section 2 of chapter 18;

(t) Requires the Department of Transitional Assistance to connect individuals with education opportunity coordinators, to ensure individuals receiving cash assistance through transitional aid to families with dependent children (TAFDC) can participate in community college programs and increase their chance of long-term careers.

**Section 4:** Inserts the following section 2EEEEEE after 2DDDDDD to chapter 29;

(a) Establishes the Trust Fund, to be held by BHCC and administered by MACC

(b) The fund shall be used to fund and provide state work-study employment opportunities for eligible low-income students enrolled in certificate or two-year associate degree programs at any community college, with a preference for recipients of cash assistance through TAFDC.

(c) Provides that funds shall be used for jobs at community colleges, an off-campus placement that provides career development opportunities, or an off-campus community service placement as defined in subsection (e).

(d) Provides that funds distributed will not exceed 80% of the total compensation paid to students, with the exception of jobs at the community college or those that provide career development opportunities. Requires employers to pay employee benefits. The federal work-study program will not replace any of the employer's share of student compensation.

(e) Defines an off-campus service placement as one that will improve the quality of life for the community, particularly low-income residents. Provides that MACC will identify placements through consultation with local nonprofit, governmental, and community-based organizations. Organizations cannot be substantially involved in politics.

(f) Requires students to be paid a rate comparable to those employed in similar work while remaining qualified for federal and state public assistance programs. The office may adjust compensation to maximize student participation in other federal and state public assistance programs.

(g) Prohibits funds from being used to compensate a student for more than an average of 15 hours a week during enrollment or 40 hours a week during a vacation period. The student cannot be employed in the same position by both the fund and the federal work-study program at the same time and exceed an average of 15 hours per week.

(h) Provides that students may receive academic credit for work experience gained through fund jobs.

(i) Provides that monies received from the Trust Fund shall not count against a recipient's income, assets, or any other eligibility standard in qualifying for cash assistance benefits.

(j) Requires the college and the Department of Higher Education to enter a memorandum of understanding ensuring that funds are properly used. The college will enter into agreements with employers, community colleges, the Department of Transitional Assistance, and others for the operation of the fund.