LEGISLATION:

- Senate Bill 16 (Sen. Romine)
- House Bill 225 (Rep. Swan)

A new state financial aid program that addresses workforce needs by encouraging adults to pursue an industry-recognized credential in an area designated as “high need.”

**Background**

Missouri’s Big Goal for Higher Education is to have 60 percent of working-age adults with a high quality certificate or degree by 2025. In order to meet this goal, a significant number of adults will need to be trained.

The effectiveness of the total suite of financial aid programs was reviewed during a comprehensive look at the Missouri state financial aid programs in 2018. Right now, Missouri only has two financial aid programs serving adult students – the Access Missouri Grant and the Marguerite Ross Barnett Memorial Scholarship. The Ross Barnett scholarship serves about 200 students a year with a $400,000 appropriation. Fast Track would help address this issue, potentially serving 16,000 students, and putting Missouri among leading states that are serious about serving adults.

**Opportunity**

- Fast Track will increase financial access, encouraging students to enter areas with workforce shortages by providing financial aid to cover actual tuition and general fees.
- This program will open doors for an entire segment of the population to get training and participate meaningfully in the workforce.

Demand on state funds will be reduced by using federal aid, including Pell Grants and Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act funds, first.

**Potential Impact**

- Adults with no postsecondary education – Someone who is underemployed or whose economic situation has changed due to a lay-off or personal circumstances.
- Adults who have some college but no degree – Someone who may have entered college right after high school but never finished.
- Adults with a degree – Someone who needs an additional credential to move up to a better job.

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**AT A GLANCE:**

16,000 estimated student reach

**LEGISLATION:**

Creating Fast Track will require a statutory change. Legislation has been introduced in the House and Senate.

- Senate Bill 16 (Sen. Romine)
- House Bill 225 (Rep. Swan)

**$22.2 million**

FY 2020 appropriation request

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