

EDGE Policy Update

April 2021

On April 5th, the Legislature returned from their week-long spring recess and now face a fast-approaching deadline at the end of April for policy committees to send all fiscal bills to the appropriations committees. Thus far, we've seen groundbreaking legislation pass several key committees in the areas of broadband access, quality data, financial aid reform, and workforce development strategies - all intended to support working families, small businesses, low-income students, and adult learners to ultimately boost CA's workforce.

Dozens of committee hearings have been held, including budget committees in both the Senate and Assembly - providing informational overviews of the Governor's proposed budget. EDGE submitted a [budget letter](#) to the Administration and Legislature outlining our priorities based on the budget proposal. View our summary analysis of the Governor's budget proposal [here](#). The Legislature is expected to take action on several key budget items leading up to the Governor's May Revision and June 15 budget deadline.

As the 2021 legislative year continues to prove extremely busy with numerous policy and budget proposals seeking to respond to COVID-19 impacts and prioritize economic recovery strategies, several measures EDGE is tracking continue to make their way through the legislative process. EDGE is committed to pandemic response and recovery efforts that will advance policies to support our business community, dislocated workers in low-wage occupations, provide stable resources to our community colleges, invest in support services for low-income students and adult learners, and expand training opportunities for California's most underserved populations - all while prioritizing racial and economic equity.

Below, we highlight several bills that EDGE has taken positions on thus far. This list will be updated as we continue to analyze all pending legislation. For more information about our positions and efforts, please contact Anna Alvarado, Policy Director, at aalvarado@caedge.org.

EDGE Priority Bills

[AB 99 \(Irwin\)](#) California Cradle-to-Career Data System.

Position: Support

Summary: Would implement the recommendations of the CA Cradle-to-Career Data System Legislative Report, which describes the planning process and recommendations for phase one of the Cradle-to-Career Data System. The bill would set the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the data system.

Status: Pending in Assembly Higher Education Committee.

[AB 417 \(McCarty\)](#) Rising Scholars Network: justice-involved students.

Position: Support

Summary: Would authorize the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges to establish the Rising Scholars Network program to enter into agreements with up to 50 community colleges to provide support services funding for justice-involved students.

Status: Pending in Assembly Appropriations Committee.

[AB 628 \(E.Garcia\)](#) Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative.

Position: Support

Summary: Would build upon the Breaking Barriers to Employment legislation by assisting individuals in obtaining the skills necessary to prepare for work in high-demand industries identified in local and regional workforce development plans and targets individuals who face systemic barriers to employment. The bill expands access and eligibility for community-based organizations to supply training and support services, and refocuses equity and access as priority measures of program success. EDGE is also supporting a budget ask of \$50 million to fund this initiative.

Status: Pending in Assembly Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy Committee.

[AB 1456 \(Medina\)](#) Student financial aid: Cal Grant Reform Act.

Position: Support

Summary: Would enact the Cal Grant Reform Act, which would revise and recast the provisions establishing and governing the existing Cal Grant programs and the Middle Class Scholarship Program into a new Cal Grant Program. The new Cal Grant Program seeks to remove barriers to access financial aid, considers the total costs of attendance in award amounts, and will be based on student need.

Status: Pending in Assembly Higher Education Committee.

[SB 4 \(Gonzalez\)](#) Broadband for All Act.

Position: Support

Summary: Would secure ongoing funding and implement a number of critically needed reforms to the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) program administered by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). These changes will help close the digital divide and meet the connectivity needs of Californians, both during this unprecedented pandemic and for decades to come.

Status: Pending in Senate Judiciary Committee.

The CA EDGE Coalition Board is currently reviewing the following bills and will consider official positions later this month:

[AB 1036 \(E. Garcia\)](#) CA Manufacturing Emergency Preparedness Act of 2021.

Position: Pending

Summary: Would enact the CA Manufacturing Emergency Preparedness Act of 2021, which would authorize I-Bank to establish the Manufacturing Disaster Loan Program for the purpose of attracting, retaining, retooling, and expanding manufacturing capacity in the state. Specifically, the loan program would need to meet certain objectives, including the protection and enhancement of the state's long-term manufacturing capacity, and support quality jobs that provide high wages, including benefits. EDGE is supporting the Governor's \$50 million investment for I-Bank to support small businesses.

Status: Pending in Assembly Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy Committee.

[AB 106 \(Salas\)](#) Regions Rise Grant Program.

Position: Pending

Summary: Would establish the Regions Rise Grant Program within GO-Biz to support regional innovative strategies to address housing, homelessness, workforce, sustainability, and public health. The state program intends to provide competitive grants for multijurisdictional collectives that involve local and regional governments, labor, community-based organizations, and private and civic organizations covering locally-defined economic regions, to adopt a comprehensive shared prosperity strategy focused on the priority challenges of the respective region.

Status: Pending in Assembly Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy Committee.

[SB 609 \(Hurtado\)](#) CalFresh.

Position: Pending

Summary: Would expand the CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) program by including individuals participating in adult education and career tech education programs. It would also expand the definition of a "participant who faces multiple barriers to employment" to, an individual who lost employment as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including lost employment due to a layoff, illness, or caregiving responsibility.

Status: Pending in Senate Appropriations Committee.