

EDGE Policy Update

June 2021

June 4th was the Legislature's house of origin deadline. Hundreds of measures passed out of the Senate and Assembly houses ranging from issues on broadband access, financial aid reform, and workforce development strategies – all intended to boost California's economy and support working families, businesses, students paid low wages, and adult learners.

In addition to the policy hearings, budget committees in both houses convened hearings to approve several budget items, including the [Senate and Assembly budget plan](#). EDGE submitted a [budget letter](#) to the Administration and Legislature (prior to the Legislature's agreement) outlining key funding priorities. EDGE appreciates the legislative agreement to fund Cal Grant reform which will remove eligibility barriers for students and adult learners, increased funding for childcare to support working families, increased funding for career tech education programs, and maintaining investments for the creation of the Cradle-to-Career data system – all budget priorities that EDGE strongly supports.

Although there is excitement for these critical investments, there is still work to do. Much of the workforce development package is pending. The Legislature passed the budget bill ([AB 128](#)) on June 14, and will continue ongoing negotiations with the Administration on various pending budget proposals which will be implemented in trailer bills, leading up to the end of session deadline in September.

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 students and adult learners, and expand training opportunities for California's most underserved populations - all while prioritizing racial and economic equity.

Highlighted below are several bills that EDGE has taken positions on thus far. This list will be updated as pending legislation is analyzed. For more information about EDGE's 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 Senate Education Committee

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

Position: Support

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 Senate Business, Professions, and Economic Development 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 Senate Education 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 Senate Labor Committee

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

Position: Support

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 Senate Rules 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 Senate Rules 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 Assembly Communications and Conveyance Committee

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

Position: Support

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 Assembly Human Services Committee