

Model Bill:

Know Before You Go Higher Education Transparency Act

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the “Know Before You Go Higher Education Transparency Act.”

Purpose. This Act will empower students, parents, and taxpayers with better information about how their institutions of higher education prepare students for future careers. Not every college program must necessarily be aligned with a particular career pathway, however all programs should leave their students better off than before they enrolled. Students and taxpayers should be able to know if a program fails this basic test and compare programs within and between institutions. Crucially, this information should be presented to students at multiple critical junctures, including prior to their decision to enroll in a higher education program.

SECTION 2. A new section of State Code is created, which shall read:

(A) State Higher Education Transparency Portal. No later than [*Implementation date*] the [*State Higher Education Board*] shall establish an internet-based portal freely available to the public which details basic outcomes information for each postsecondary education program approve to operate in the state under [*higher education state authorization statute*]. The features of the portal shall include, for each such program, at least:

- (i) Display the median total debt after graduation for each higher education program authorized in the state.
- (ii) Median total earnings at different points after graduation for each higher education program authorized in the state.
- (iii) The number of students who have graduated from each program authorized in the state in the most recent year.
- (iv) The on-time completion rate for each program authorized in the state in the most recent year.
- (v) The ability to easily compare the outcomes of higher education programs at a single institution.
- (vi) The ability to easily compare the outcomes of similar higher education programs across different institutions.

(B) Collection of data. The [*State Higher Education Board*] shall collect the data in paragraph A of this section from the [*Insert Departments of Revenue, Education, Labor, or others with the necessary data*] or from federal agencies including but not limited to the U.S. Department of Education and the Internal Revenue Service.

(C) Reporting of data. The [*State Higher Education Board*] shall:

- (i) Update the data in the portal described in this section at least annually.
- (ii) Provide data documentation that helps students and members of the public easily understand the data being reported.
- (iii) Ensure that student privacy is protected in any data reported, including, if necessary, combining data from similar programs or data from the same program across multiple years for reporting purposes. However, nothing in this Act, shall require the *[State Higher Education Board]* to modify data for privacy purposes that is publicly reported by any federal agency.
- (iv) Enable permanent hyperlinks to a page within the portal containing data for each academic program authorized to operate in the state.
- (v) Provide resources, publications, and training necessary for parents, guidance counselors, teachers, and other staff at public and private secondary schools to utilize the portal effectively.

(F) Rulemaking. The *[State Higher Education Board]* shall promulgate all necessary rules and regulations for the administration of this Act within ninety days of the enactment.

(G) Location and links to the portal. As a condition of authorization to operate in the state under *[higher education state authorization statute]*, the *[State Higher Education Board]* shall require all higher education institutions authorized to operate in the state to:

- (i) Prominently display a link to the portal on the homepage of their internet site.
- (ii) Prominently display a link on the homepage of each academic program's internet site to the data in the portal relating to that academic program.
- (iii) Require individuals to certify that they have accessed the portal prior to submitting an application for admission to any academic program, prior to enrolling in or changing their program of study, prior to signing a Master Promissory Note under 20 U.S.C. §1082, and prior to withdrawing from the institution.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect on *[January 1, 20XX]*.