
This act summary is provided for the convenience of the public and members of the General Assembly. It is intended to provide a general summary of the act and may not be exhaustive. It has been prepared by the staff of the Office of Legislative Counsel without input from members of the General Assembly. It is not intended to aid in the interpretation of legislation or to serve as a source of legislative intent.

Act No. 183 (S.11). Commerce and trade; economic development; workforce development

An act relating to economic and workforce development

This act adopts various provisions across a multitude of subject areas to promote workforce development and economic development. The act provides funding and creates program language for a forgivable loan program to retain recent college graduates, a skilled meat cutter training facility at VTC, recruiting and retaining recent immigrants, business coaching for BIPOC-owned businesses, an assessment of the workforce development system and a regional workforce expansion pilot project to provide additional regional workforce support services; a workforce development pilot project for incarcerated individuals, studies on correctional officer recruiting, a work-based learning and training program at DOL for internships and returnships, a secondary-student industry-recognized pilot project to allow students to take an adult CTE course, a Vermont trades scholarship program to increase workers in the trades, and a CTE construction and rehabilitation experiential learning program to allow CTE students to work on community construction and rehabilitation projects.

This act requires the Agency of Human Services to report on conditions that pose an obstacle to the successful recruitment and retention of correctional officers and to create a plan to improve the recruitment and retention of correctional officers. It also requires the Agency of Human Services to submit a report assessing the effectiveness of certain appropriations in 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83 with respect to employee recruitment and retention.

The act appropriates funds to support nurse educators and to encourage nurses at critical access hospitals to serve as preceptors for nursing school students. It provides for grants to health care employers to establish or expand partnerships with Vermont nursing schools to create nursing pipeline or apprenticeship programs to train members of their existing staff to become higher-level nursing professionals. The act establishes, codifies, and funds forgivable loan incentive programs for nurses, nurse faculty, and mental health professionals, as well as loan repayment programs for nurse faculty and for certain other health care professionals. The act provides funding to the designated and specialized service agencies for loan repayment and tuition assistance to assist in recruiting and retaining mental health and substance use disorder treatment professionals. The act directs the Green Mountain Care Board, as part of its annual hospital budget

review process, to look at hospitals' investments in workforce development initiatives and at the salaries of hospitals' leadership teams and allows the Board to exclude investments in nursing workforce development initiatives from hospitals' fiscal year 2023 budget limits. The act establishes a statewide Health Care Workforce Data Center in the Agency of Human Services, Office of Health Care Reform and creates a Health Care Workforce Coordinator position in that Office. It also calls for a report on creating the capacity to perform health care supply and demand modeling based on information from the Health Care Workforce Data Center and requires the Department of Financial Regulation to take additional steps to reduce the administrative burden of prior authorization requirements on health care providers.

The act expands eligibility for student loan repayment assistance for Head Start employees; provides funding to promote the attainment of credentials of value; provides funding for the Vermont Serve, Learn, and Earn Program; creates language and provides funding for a forest future strategic roadmap; creates a Community Recovery and Revitalization Program to provide COVID-related grant relief to businesses and municipalities; creates a VEDA Short-Term Forgivable Loan Program to provide COVID-related relief to businesses; provides additional funding for relocating employee incentives; transfers authority for the administration of funds through the Entergy Windham County Economic Development Special Fund to the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation; and creates a Vermont Film and Media Industry Task Force.

This act establishes the COVID-19-Related Paid Leave Grant Program to provide grants to employers for certain costs related to providing paid leave to an employee for a COVID-19-related reason during the period from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

The act temporarily increases the unemployment insurance maximum weekly benefit by \$60.00 over the amount provided by the existing statutory formula. Subsequent to that, the act replaces the increase in the unemployment insurance maximum weekly benefit with a temporary \$25.00 increase in both the unemployment insurance weekly benefit formula and the maximum weekly benefit. It also extends the ability of the Department of Labor to access tax return information for purposes of reviewing claimant's income information in relation to the federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program.

The act provides additional appropriations for creative economy grants through the Vermont Arts Council, provides funding for the Everyone Eats program, and provides additional funding for the Vermont Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Program.

The act creates a sports betting study committee to review legalization of sports betting in Vermont.

The act creates a State prohibition on robocalls that is co-extensive with protections afforded under federal law and directs the Attorney General to report to the General Assembly on any necessary changes to Vermont law.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on October 7, 2021