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H.703

Representative Marcotte of Coventry moves that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES AND FUNDING FOR EXPANDING THE LABOR FORCE; INCREASING THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND PARTICIPATION RATES; APPROPRIATIONS

(a) In fiscal year 2023, the following amounts are appropriated from the General Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

(1) \$5,000,000.00 to the University of Vermont Office of Engagement, in consultation with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, to administer a statewide forgivable loan program of \$5,000.00 per graduate for recent college graduates across all Vermont higher education institutions who commit to work in Vermont for two years after graduation.

(2) \$387,000.00 to Vermont Technical College to develop a skilled meat cutter training and apprenticeship facility.

(b) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds to the Agency of Human Services to provide grants, which may be administered through a subgrantee, to refugee- or New American-focused

1 programs working in Vermont to support increased in-migration or retention of
2 recent arrivals.

3 Sec. 2. CTE FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE; FINDINGS

4 (a) Vermont’s career and technical education (CTE) system is critical to
5 ensuring that all Vermonters have access to the high-quality resources they
6 need to explore a wide variety of career pathways, earn a postsecondary
7 credential of value, and establish a productive career.

8 (b) CTE is a vital component of our educational system, supporting and
9 delivering on the goals established by the General Assembly in 2013 Acts and
10 Resolves No. 77 (flexible pathways), 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 189
11 (workforce development), and in achieving our attainment goal, which is that
12 70 percent of working-age Vermonters have a credential of value by 2025
13 (10 V.S.A. § 546).

14 (c) CTE is also an equity lever, providing every student access to critical
15 workforce training, postsecondary coursework, and the real-world skills and
16 networks that prepare our youth to continue to earn and learn during and after
17 high school.

18 (d) As of the fall semester of the 2021–2022 school year, students were
19 enrolling in CTE programs at a higher rate than at the beginning of the
20 pandemic, increasing from 4,160 to 4,565. In the 2020–2021 school year,
21 Vermont’s CTE system awarded Tier II credentials of value to 459 students.

1 (e) Since 2015, through legislative initiatives such as 2015 Acts and
2 Resolves No. 51, 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 69, 2018 Acts and Resolves
3 No. 189, 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 80, and most recently 2021 Acts and
4 Resolves No. 74, the General Assembly and other stakeholders in education
5 and in State government have been working to identify, understand, and
6 resolve long-standing concerns related to the functioning of the CTE system.

7 (f) In 2018, the Agency of Education embarked on a collaborative process
8 that included students, legislators, and communities across the State to develop
9 a strategic vision and aspirational goals to help guide the transformation of the
10 CTE system.

11 (g) The State Board of Education adopted the Agency of Education’s
12 vision and goals for CTE that “all Vermont learners attain their postsecondary
13 goals by having access to career and technical education systems that are
14 equitable, efficient, integrated and collaborative.”

15 (h) 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 189 committed Vermont to a redesign of
16 its workforce development and training system, including the approval of up to
17 four pilot sites or projects to examine the way our CTE system is funded and
18 governed.

19 (i) In a report dated June 14, 2021, the Agency of Education reported on its
20 progress, which was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report
21 presented possible alternatives to our current funding structure, which is

1 widely seen as a barrier to enrollment. However, these alternatives were based
2 on an examination of only the CTE school district funding model and did not
3 include the study of governance models. The report recommended completing
4 this study of CTE funding and governance models to propose actionable
5 implementation steps for the State.

6 (j) The Agency of Education’s State plan for federal Perkins funds is
7 aligned to the vision and goals created through collaborative processes that
8 included a public comment period. Processes required in the federal
9 legislation like the biennial Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment will
10 strengthen the role of CTE in each region and help to focus the use of limited
11 federal funds to improve the system.

12 Sec. 3. FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF
13 CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN VERMONT

14 (a) There is appropriated to the Joint Fiscal Office for fiscal year 2023 the
15 amount of \$180,000.00 from the General Fund to contract for services to:

16 (1) complete a systematic examination of the existing funding structures
17 of career technical education (CTE) in Vermont and how these structures
18 impede or promote the State’s educational and workforce development goals;

19 (2) examine CTE governance structures in relationship to those funding
20 structures;

1 (3) examine the implications of the existing funding and governance
2 structures for kindergarten through grade 12 schools and adult education;

3 (4) examine the funding and alignment of early college and dual
4 enrollment;

5 (5) consider the CTE funding and governance structures in other states
6 in relation to Vermont’s unique system of funding education; and

7 (6) identify and prioritize potential new models of CTE funding and
8 governance structures to reduce barriers to enrollment and to improve the
9 quality, duration, impact, and access to CTE statewide.

10 (b) In performing its work, the contractor shall consult with the consultant
11 and any other stakeholders involved in completing the report on the design,
12 implementation, and costs of an integrated and coherent adult basic education,
13 adult secondary education, and postsecondary career and technical education
14 system pursuant to 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 74, Sec. H.3.

15 (c)(1) On or before March 1, 2023, the Joint Fiscal Office shall issue a
16 written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House
17 Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee
18 on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, the House
19 Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance the
20 work performed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

1 (2) On or before July 1, 2023, the Agency of Education shall develop an
2 implementation plan, including recommended steps to design and implement
3 new funding and governance models, and issue a written report to the House
4 and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Commerce and
5 Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development,
6 Housing and General Affairs, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and
7 the Senate Committee on Finance describing the results of its work under
8 subsection (a) of this section and making recommendations for legislative
9 action.

10 Sec. 4. INVESTMENT IN THE UP-SKILLING OF PRIVATE SECTOR
11 EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT THE EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS
12 AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS; APPROPRIATIONS

13 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the
14 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
15 Funds to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for a
16 performance-based contract to provide statewide delivery of business coaching
17 and other forms of training to BIPOC business owners, networking and special
18 convenings, and career fairs, workshops and paid internships, career guidance,
19 and other support for BIPOC workers across the State.

20 Sec. 5. REGIONAL WORKFORCE EXPANSION SYSTEM

21 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

1 (1)(A) Vermont is experiencing an acute labor shortage in 2022 with
2 over 25,000 posted job openings; and

3 (i) 9,945 people meet the federal statistical definition of
4 unemployed as of January 2022; and

5 (ii) 4,500 individuals are receiving unemployment insurance
6 assistance as of March 2022.

7 (B) The Vermont Department of Labor estimates that the workforce
8 has shrunk by 24,000 individuals from 2019 to 2022, yet the unemployment
9 rate is just 2.9 percent as of February 2022.

10 (C) The workforce participation rate has fallen from 66 percent to
11 60.6 percent.

12 (2) The Department receives approximately 80 percent of its funding
13 from federal sources, which constrains the Department and its employees from
14 adjusting its work to meet immediate needs.

15 (3) The federal funding for field staff in the Workforce Development
16 Division has declined significantly over the past 20 years, supporting 75
17 persons in 2022 as compared to 135 in 2003.

18 (4) Though Vermont has a small population, the unique characteristics
19 of its region’s employers, educational institutions, demographics, and
20 socioeconomic conditions make it best to address efforts to connect individuals
21 with training and job placement on a regional basis.

1 (b) Regional Workforce Expansion System. The amount of \$1,500,000.00
2 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Labor for a pilot
3 program to launch and lead a coordinated regional system to work toward
4 accomplishing the following statewide goals:

5 (1) increase statewide labor participation rate;

6 (2) decrease the number of open positions reported by employers;

7 (3) increase the wages of workers as they transition to new jobs; and

8 (4) increase job preparedness.

9 (c) Duties. In order to meet the goals specified in subsection (b) of this
10 section, the Department shall:

11 (1) create new capacity to address and support State activities related to
12 workforce development, expansion, and alignment;

13 (2) focus on the overarching goal of helping workers find jobs and
14 employers find workers;

15 (3) support employers in communicating and tailoring their work
16 requirements, conditions, and expectations to better access local workers; and

17 (4) collaborate with local education and training providers and regional
18 workforce partners to create and regularly distribute data related to local labor
19 force supply and demand.

20 (d) System infrastructure.

1 (1) The Department shall make investments that improve and expand
2 regional capacity to connect supply (workers) and demand (employment) in
3 real time and shall hire eight full-time limited-service employees with funding
4 allocated to perform the work described in this section who shall report to the
5 Workforce Development Division.

6 (2) Of the eight positions authorized in this subsection, five shall be
7 Workforce Expansion Specialists who shall report to the Workforce
8 Development Division and who shall be assigned, one each, to the Division’s
9 five regions.

10 (e) Coordination.

11 (1) The Department shall convene regional meetings of education,
12 training, business, and service provider partners; coordinate local workforce
13 information collection and distribution; and assist in developing localized
14 career resources, such as information for career counseling, local job fairs, and
15 career expos, that will be available to a wide range of stakeholders.

16 (2) Regional workforce specialists shall include community partners
17 who directly serve mature workers, youth, individuals with disabilities,
18 individuals who have been involved with the correction system, BIPOC
19 Vermonters, New Americans, and other historically marginalized populations
20 in efforts to align service delivery, share information, and achieve greater
21 employment outcomes for Vermonters.

1 (3) The Department shall develop labor market information reports by
2 CTE district to support discussion and decision making that will address local
3 labor market challenges and opportunities and support a regional approach to
4 solving local or unique labor supply challenges.

5 (f) Interim report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department shall
6 provide a narrative update on the progress made in hiring staff, establishing
7 interagency agreements, developing regional information exchange systems,
8 and supporting State-level work to expand the labor force to the House and
9 Senate committees of jurisdiction.

10 (g) Implementation. The Department of Labor shall begin implementing
11 the Regional Workforce Expansion System on or before August 1, 2022.

12 Sec. 6. INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS; WORKFORCE

13 DEVELOPMENT; PILOT PROGRAM

14 (a) Purpose. The purpose of this section is to facilitate the education and
15 vocational training of incarcerated individuals so that they have a greater
16 likelihood of obtaining gainful employment and positively contributing to
17 society upon reintegration into the community.

18 (b) Policy; appropriations.

19 (1)(A) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$420,000.00 is appropriated
20 from the General Fund to the Department of Corrections, in consultation with
21 the Vermont Department of Labor, to address education and vocational

1 enhancement needs. These funds shall not be allocated from any amounts
2 budgeted for Justice Reinvestment II initiatives.

3 (B) The Department shall use the funds allocated for the development
4 of education and vocational training for incarcerated individuals residing in a
5 Vermont correctional facility prior to community reintegration. The
6 Department may allocate the funds over three years, consistent with the
7 following:

8 (i) \$270,000.00 for transition development, including equipment
9 and mobile labs in one or more sites;

10 (ii) \$100,000.00 for training partner support; and

11 (iii) \$50,000.00 for curriculum development.

12 (2) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$300,000.00 is appropriated from
13 the General Fund to the Department of Corrections, which may be allocated
14 over not more than three years, to establish a community-based pilot reentry
15 program at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility in consultation with
16 the Vermont Department of Labor. The Department of Corrections shall
17 designate a service provider to administer the pilot program's goals to:

18 (A) provide continuity of services for incarcerated individuals;

19 (B) expand current employment readiness programs within the
20 facility by building pathways for coordinated transition to employment;

1 (C) focus on the first six months after individuals are released from
2 the facility;

3 (D) coordinate with local community resources, parole and probation
4 offices, and other supports to ensure successful transition into the community;

5 (E) assist individuals in successfully transitioning into new jobs; and

6 (F) work with employers to support successful hiring and best
7 practices to support incarcerated individuals.

8 (c) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Corrections
9 shall create and submit a report on workforce and education training programs
10 in correctional facilities to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee;
11 the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Commerce and
12 Economic Development; and the Senate Committees on Economic
13 Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Judiciary. The report shall:

14 (1) identify program design, logistical needs, and policy changes to
15 current Department of Corrections facility-based training and educational
16 programs necessary to successfully enable incarcerated individuals'
17 reintegration into their communities, including changes to programs that
18 enhance individuals' skill development, knowledge, and other support needed
19 to qualify for and secure a position in a critical occupation in Vermont;

1 (2) identify disparities of outcomes and recommend solutions for
2 incarcerated Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color concerning facility-based
3 training, educational programming, and successful community reintegration;

4 (3) provide an update on the Department of Corrections' use of
5 education and vocational enhancement funding in fiscal year 2023;

6 (4) provide recommendations on what aspects of the pilot program
7 should be replicated in other correctional facilities in Vermont; and

8 (5) provide recommended legislation for the continuation of the pilot
9 program or any changes.

10 Sec. 7. REPEALS

11 10 V.S.A. §§ 544 and 545 are repealed.

12 Sec. 8. 10 V.S.A. § 547 is added to read:

13 § 547. WORK-BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

14 (a) Vermont Work-Based Learning and Training Program. The
15 Department of Labor shall develop the statewide Work-Based Learning and
16 Training Program that serves transitioning secondary and postsecondary
17 students and Vermonters seeking work-based experience as part of a career
18 experience or change and is designed to:

19 (1) support Vermonters who are graduating from postsecondary
20 education or a secondary CTE program or who are pursuing a career change
21 with a paid on-the-job work experience lasting 12 weeks or fewer;

1 (2) establish a statewide platform available to all employers to list their
2 internships, returnships, pre-apprenticeships, and registered apprenticeship
3 opportunities and for jobseekers to view and access information about specific
4 opportunities; and

5 (3) support employers by providing them with assistance in developing
6 and implementing meaningful work-based learning and training opportunities.

7 (b) Definitions. As used in this section:

8 (1) “Internship” means a work-based learning experience with an
9 employer where the participant may, but does not necessarily, receive
10 academic credit.

11 (2) “Returnship” means an on-the-job learning experience for an
12 individual who is returning to the workforce after an extended absence or is
13 seeking a limited-duration on-the-job work experience in a different
14 occupation or occupational setting as part of a career change.

15 (c) Activities. The Department may use funds appropriated to it for the
16 Program to:

17 (1) build and administer the Program;

18 (2) develop an online platform that will connect students and jobseekers
19 with work-based learning and training opportunities within Vermont;

1 (3) support work-based learning and training opportunities with public
2 and private employers available to prospective workers located in or relocating
3 to Vermont;

4 (4) promote work-based learning and training as a valuable component
5 of a talent pipeline; and

6 (5) assist employers in developing meaningful work-based learning and
7 training opportunities.

8 (d) Data. The Department shall collect the following data:

9 (1) the total number of participants served;

10 (2) the number of participants who received wage assistance or other
11 financial assistance as part of this Program and their employment status one
12 year after completion;

13 (3) the average wage of participants in subdivision (2) of this subsection
14 at the start of the Program and the average wage of participants one year after
15 completion;

16 (4) the number of work-based learning or training opportunities listed on
17 the platform; and

18 (5) the number of employers who offered a work-based learning or
19 training opportunity.

1 (e) State participation. The Department shall engage appropriate State
2 agencies and departments to expand Program opportunities with State
3 government and with entities awarded State contracts.

4 (f) Reporting. On or before February 15, 2023, the Department shall report
5 Program data to the relevant committees of jurisdiction.

6 Sec. 9. INTERNSHIP COST OFFSET INITIATIVE

7 (a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from
8 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
9 Funds to the Department of Labor for an Internship Cost Offset Initiative.

10 (b) The Department shall design and implement the Initiative to expand the
11 number of postsecondary students participating in an internship with a
12 Vermont employer, consistent with the following:

13 (1) Students with a household income that is at or below 120 percent of
14 area median income and enrolled in an approved postsecondary institution are
15 eligible for not more than \$3,000.00 for tuition and fees directly related to
16 participating in an internship with a Vermont employer for which they are also
17 receiving postsecondary credit toward a degree.

18 (2) The Department shall enter into an agreement with the Vermont
19 Student Assistance Corporation to develop and administer the Initiative, which
20 shall include an amount not to exceed seven percent for costs associated with
21 the administration of the program.

1 (c) Reporting. On or before February 15, 2023, the Department shall report
2 on the number of individuals served through the Initiative and the types of
3 internship opportunities they completed.

4 Sec. 9. THE VERMONT TRADES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

5 (a) The Vermont Trades Scholarship Program is created and shall be
6 administered by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The Vermont
7 Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse initial licensing fees, exam fees,
8 and tuition payments under the Program on behalf of eligible individuals,
9 subject to the appropriation of funds by the General Assembly for this purpose.

10 (b) To be eligible for a scholarship under the Program, an individual,
11 whether a resident or nonresident, shall:

12 (1) be enrolled in an industry recognized training and certification
13 program that leads to initial employment or career advancement in a building,
14 mechanical, industrial, or medical trade, or in clean energy, energy efficiency,
15 weatherization, or clean transportation;

16 (2) demonstrate financial need and have a household income that is at or
17 below 120 percent of area median income and;

18 (3) register with the Vermont Department of Labor for the purpose of
19 receiving relevant job referrals, if unemployed; and

1 (4) agree to work in their profession in Vermont for a minimum of one
2 year following licensure or certification completion for each year of
3 scholarship awarded.

4 (c)(1) The Corporation shall give preference to students attending a
5 Vermont-based training program or, if one isn't available for their certification,
6 an offer of employment or promotion from a Vermont employer upon
7 completion.

8 (2) The Corporation shall give priority to applicants who have not
9 received other assistance.

10 (d) There shall be no deadline to apply for a scholarship under this section.
11 Scholarships shall be awarded on a rolling basis if funds are available, and any
12 funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall roll over and shall be available
13 to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in the following fiscal year to
14 award additional scholarships as set forth in this section.

15 (e) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from
16 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
17 Funds to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for scholarships for
18 trades students under the Vermont Trades Scholarship Program.

19 Sec. 10. THE VERMONT TRADES LOAN REIMBURSEMENT

20 PROGRAM

1 (a) The Vermont Trades Loan Repayment Reimbursement Program is
2 created and shall be administered by the Vermont Student Assistance
3 Corporation. The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse
4 funds under the Program to eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of
5 funds by the General Assembly for this purpose.

6 (b) To be eligible for loan repayment under the Program, an individual,
7 shall:

8 (1) be a Vermont resident; and

9 (2) be employed in an occupation in the building, mechanical, industrial,
10 or medical trades, or in the clean energy, energy efficiency, weatherization, or
11 clean transportation sectors, for an average of at least 30 hours per week for
12 least one full calendar year before applying.

13 (c) For every year of work in a qualifying occupation, an individual shall
14 be eligible for up to \$5,000.00 in loan repayment reimbursement.
15 Reimbursements shall not exceed the total amount of educational debt owed.

16 (d) There shall be no deadline to apply for loan repayment reimbursement
17 under this section. Loan repayment shall be awarded on a rolling basis if funds
18 are available, and any funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall roll over
19 and shall be available to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in the
20 following fiscal year to award additional loan repayment as set forth in this
21 section.

1 (e) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the
2 General Fund to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for loan
3 repayment for trades professionals under the Program.

4 Sec. 11. CTE CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

5 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM; REVOLVING LOAN
6 FUND

7 (a) Purpose. This section authorizes and provides funding for the CTE
8 Construction and Rehabilitation Experiential Learning Program and Revolving
9 Loan Fund, the purposes of which are to:

10 (1) expand the experiential and educational opportunities for high school
11 and adult CTE students to work directly on construction projects;

12 (2) build community partnerships among CTE centers, housing
13 organizations, government, and private businesses;

14 (3) beautify communities and rehabilitate buildings that are
15 underperforming assets;

16 (4) expand housing access to Vermonters in communities throughout the
17 State; and

18 (5) improve property values while teaching high school and adult
19 students trade skills.

20 (b) Appropriation; creation of fund; administration.

1 (1) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$15,000,000.00 is appropriated
2 from the Education Fund to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to
3 create and administer the CTE Construction and Rehabilitation Experiential
4 Learning Program and Revolving Loan Fund pursuant to this section.

5 (2) The Board may use not more than five percent of the Fund for its
6 costs of administration.

7 (c) Proposals; applications; funding.

8 (1) A regional CTE center, working in collaboration with one or more
9 housing and community partners, private businesses, nonprofit organizations,
10 or municipalities, shall identify construction projects that would be relevant
11 and appropriate for CTE students enrolled in construction, electrical,
12 plumbing, design, business management, or other CTE programs, including:

13 (A) rehabilitation of residential properties that are blighted or not
14 code-compliant;

15 (B) new residential construction projects or improvements to land in
16 cases of critical community need; and

17 (C) commercial construction projects that have substantial
18 community benefit.

19 (2) Prior to or during the application process, a CTE center and its
20 partners may consult with the Board to identify and consider potential funding
21 partners to leverage amounts available through the Fund.

1 (3) A CTE center and its partners shall apply to the Board for funding
2 by submitting a project application that includes the information required by
3 the Board and addresses the following:

4 (A) the educational benefits for students and fit with the CTE
5 curriculum;

6 (B) the community benefits for the neighborhood, municipality, or
7 region in which the project is located; and

8 (C) the partners with whom the CTE center is collaborating and the
9 respective responsibility for the aspects of a project, including:

10 (i) educational instruction and academic credit;

11 (ii) project management;

12 (iii) insurance coverage for students and the property;

13 (iv) compensation and benefits, including compliance with labor
14 laws, standards, and practices; and

15 (v) property acquisition, ownership, and transfer.

16 (4) A CTE center may use funding for, and shall specify in its
17 application the allocation of costs associated with:

18 (A) acquisition, design, permitting, construction, marketing, and
19 other building-related expenses; and

1 (B) costs for labor, including for student wages and for instructor
2 compensation during the academic year as well as for amountmer or other
3 work that is not otherwise budgeted during the academic year.

4 (d) Eligibility; review; approval. The Board may approve an application
5 that includes the information required by subsection (c) of this section and
6 provide funding for a project that meets the following eligibility criteria:

7 (1) The project involves the rehabilitation of blighted or otherwise
8 noncode compliant property, or new residential construction projects or
9 improvements to land in cases of critical need, and results in a building with
10 not more than four residential dwelling units.

11 (2) The project includes a weatherization component.

12 (3) Students working on the project receive academic credit, a
13 competitive wage, or both.

14 (e) Affordability; flexibility. If appropriate in the circumstances, the Board
15 may condition funding for a project on the inclusion of one or mechanisms
16 addressing the affordability of the property upon rent or sale.

17 (f) Funding; proceeds; revolving loans.

18 (1) The Board shall provide funding for projects from the amounts
19 available in the Fund in the form of zero-interest loans, in an amount, for a
20 period, and upon terms specified by the Board.

1 (2) The Board shall return to the Fund any proceeds realized to provide
2 funding for future projects.

3 (g) Report. The Board shall address the implementation of this section in
4 its annual report to the General Assembly.

5 Sec. 12. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; FINDINGS

6 The General Assembly finds that:

7 (1) while child care is an essential component of Vermont’s economy,
8 research has shown that three out of five of Vermont’s youngest children do
9 not have access to the child care needed by their families;

10 (2) according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, early
11 childhood educators are the lowest-paid college graduates of any degree
12 program in the country;

13 (3) the Council for a Strong America found in a national economic
14 impact study that the U.S. economy loses \$57 billion annually due to child care
15 challenges;

16 (4) the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation found that high-quality
17 child care is a powerful two-generation workforce development strategy that
18 strengthens today’s workforce and puts children on the path to develop well
19 and enter kindergarten ready to thrive in school, work, and life;

20 (5) the Vermont Early Care and Learning Dividend Study found that
21 increased investment in early care and education, as described in the

1 recommendations of Vermont’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High-
2 Quality Affordable Child Care, would yield \$3.08 for every additional dollar
3 invested into the system;

4 (6) 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 45 established goals that no Vermont
5 family spend more than 10 percent of its income on child care and that early
6 childhood educators receive compensation commensurate with their peers in
7 similar fields as informed by a systems analysis and financing study;

8 (7) while the State works toward achieving these goals, the COVID-19
9 pandemic has exacerbated already pressing challenges, making it even harder
10 for families to find affordable high-quality child care and more difficult for
11 early childhood education programs to find and retain qualified educators; and

12 (8) according to a recent study by the National Association for the
13 Education of Young Children, 71 percent of center-based child care programs
14 in Vermont reported experiencing a staffing shortage.

15 Sec. 13. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

16 It is the intent of the General Assembly that immediate action is necessary
17 to support Vermont’s economy; ensure that all families with young children
18 have access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education; and ensure
19 that Vermont’s early childhood educators, the backbone of our economy, are
20 well supported.

21 Sec. 14. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT

1 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$125,000.00 is appropriated from the
2 General Fund to the Department for Children and Families' Child
3 Development Division for a performance-based contract to develop and
4 implement a comprehensive early childhood educator recruitment campaign.

5 Sec. 15. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

6 (a) The General Assembly values all health care workers, at every level and
7 in each component of the health care system. The General Assembly also
8 acknowledges the many struggles faced by health care workers and that the
9 pandemic has placed further strain on an already taxed system. Many health
10 care workers have not had their pay adjusted over time to address increases in
11 the cost of living, essentially amounting to pay cuts from year to year. Health
12 care workers have experienced burnout, trauma, and moral injuries due to a
13 history of underfunding and the present stress of the pandemic.

14 (b) In order to retain and recruit health care workers in Vermont, it is the
15 intent of the General Assembly to invest in multiple solutions aimed at
16 reinforcing our health care workforce in the present and sustaining our health
17 care workers into the future.

18 Sec. 16. EMERGENCY GRANTS TO SUPPORT NURSE EDUCATORS

19 (a) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from
20 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
21 Funds to the Department of Health and shall carry forward for the purpose of

1 providing emergency interim grants to Vermont’s nursing schools over three
2 years to increase the compensation for their nurse faculty and staff, with
3 \$1,000,000.00 to be distributed in each of fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025 to
4 increase the compensation for each full-time-equivalent (FTE) member of the
5 clinical and didactic nurse faculty and staff. The Department shall distribute
6 the funds among the nursing schools in Vermont equitably based on each
7 school’s proportion of nursing faculty and staff to the total number of FTE
8 nursing faculty and staff across all nursing schools statewide.

9 (b) If the nurse faculty or staff, or both, of a nursing school receiving a
10 grant under this section are subject to a collective bargaining agreement, the
11 use of the grant funds provided to the nursing school for those faculty or staff,
12 or both, shall be subject to impact bargaining between the nursing school and
13 the collective bargaining representative of the nurse faculty or staff, or both, to
14 the extent required by the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

15 Sec. 17. NURSE PRECEPTOR INCENTIVE GRANTS; HOSPITALS;

16 WORKING GROUP; REPORT

17 (a)(1) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$2,400,000.00 is appropriated from
18 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
19 Funds to the Agency of Human Services to provide incentive grants to
20 hospital-employed nurses in Vermont to serve as preceptors for nursing
21 students enrolled in Vermont nursing school programs. The Agency shall

1 distribute the funds to hospitals employing nurses who provide student
2 preceptor supervision based on the number of preceptor hours to be provided,
3 at a rate of \$5.00 per preceptor hour, or a lesser hourly rate if the need exceeds
4 the available funds.

5 (2) If nurse preceptors receiving compensation pursuant to a grant awarded
6 to a hospital under this section are subject to a collective bargaining agreement,
7 the use of the grant funds provided to the hospital for the nurse preceptors shall
8 be subject to impact bargaining between the hospital and the collective
9 bargaining representative of the nurses to the extent required by the collective
10 bargaining agreement.

11 (b)(1) The Director of Health Care Reform or designee in the Agency of
12 Human Services shall convene a working group of stakeholders representing
13 nursing schools, long-term care facilities, designated and specialized service
14 agencies, federally qualified health centers, home health agencies, primary care
15 practices, and other health care facilities to:

16 (A) identify ways to increase clinical placement opportunities across
17 a variety of health care settings for nursing students enrolled in Vermont
18 nursing school programs;

19 (B) establish sustainable funding models for compensating nurses
20 serving as preceptors or for supporting the hiring of additional nurses to
21 alleviate the pressures on nurse preceptors, or both; and

1 (C) develop an action plan for implementing the clinical placement
2 expansion and sustainable funding models identified and established pursuant
3 to subdivisions (A) and (B) of this subdivision (1), including addressing the
4 need for student housing opportunities.

5 (2) On or before January 15, 2023, the Director of Health Care Reform
6 shall provide the working group’s action plan and any recommendations for
7 legislative action to the House Committees on Health Care, on Commerce and
8 Economic Development, and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees on
9 Health and Welfare, on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs,
10 and on Appropriations.

11 Sec. 18. HEALTH CARE EMPLOYER NURSING PIPELINE AND
12 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

13 (a) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from
14 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
15 Funds to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation and shall carry forward
16 for the purpose of providing grants to health care employers, including
17 hospitals, long-term care facilities, designated and specialized service agencies,
18 federally qualified health centers, and other health care providers, to establish
19 or expand partnerships with Vermont nursing schools to create nursing
20 pipeline or apprenticeship programs, or both, that will train members of the
21 health care employers’ existing staff, including personal care attendants,

1 licensed nursing assistants, and licensed practical nurses, to become higher-
2 level nursing professionals. Through a combination of scholarship awards,
3 grants awarded to health care employers pursuant to this section, and the health
4 care employer’s contributions, the trainees’ tuition and fees shall be covered in
5 full, and trainees shall be provided with assistance in meeting their living costs,
6 such as housing and child care, while attending the program.

7 (b) In awarding grants pursuant to this section, VSAC shall give priority to
8 health care employer proposals based on the following criteria:

9 (1) the extent to which the health care employer proposes to participate
10 financially in the program;

11 (2) the extent of the health care employer’s commitment to sustaining
12 the program financially, including providing financial support for nurse
13 preceptors, to create ongoing opportunities for educational advancement in
14 nursing;

15 (3) the ability of the health care employer’s staff to leverage nursing
16 scholarship opportunities to maximize the reach of the grant funds;

17 (4) the employer’s demonstrated ability to retain nursing students in the
18 Vermont nursing workforce;

19 (5) the employer’s geographic location, in order to ensure access to
20 pipeline and apprenticeship programs for nursing staff across Vermont; and

1 (6) the employer’s commitment to advancing the professional
2 development of individuals from marginalized communities, especially those
3 that have been historically disadvantaged in accessing educational
4 opportunities and career advancement in the health care professions.

5 (c)(1) VSAC shall begin awarding grants under this section expeditiously
6 in order to enable health care employer staff to begin enrolling in nursing
7 school programs that commence in the fall of 2022.

8 (2) On or before September 15, 2022, VSAC shall provide an update to
9 the Health Reform Oversight Committee on the status of program
10 implementation.

11 Sec. 19. 18 V.S.A. § 34 is added to read:

12 § 34. VERMONT NURSING FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE
13 PROGRAM

14 (a) The Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan Incentive Program is created
15 and shall be administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with
16 the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The Vermont Student
17 Assistance Corporation shall disburse **forgivable loan** funds under the Program
18 on behalf of eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of funds by the
19 General Assembly for this purpose.

20 (b) To be eligible for a **forgivable loan** under the Program, an individual,
21 whether a resident or nonresident, shall:

- 1 (1) be enrolled at an approved postsecondary education institution as
2 defined in 16 V.S.A. § 2822;
- 3 (2) demonstrate financial need;
- 4 (3) demonstrate academic capacity by carrying the minimum grade point
5 average in the individual’s course of study prior to receiving the fund award;
6 and
- 7 (4) agree to work as a nurse in Vermont for a minimum of one year
8 following licensure for each year of scholarship awarded.
- 9 (c)(1) First priority for **forgivable loan** funds shall be given to students
10 pursuing a practical nursing certificate who will be eligible to sit for the
11 NCLEX-PN examination upon completion of the certificate.
- 12 (2) Second priority for **forgivable loan** funds shall be given to students
13 pursuing an associate’s degree in nursing who will be eligible to sit for the
14 NCLEX-RN examination upon graduation.
- 15 (3) Third priority for **forgivable loan** funds shall be given to students
16 pursuing a bachelor of science degree in nursing.
- 17 (4) Fourth priority shall be given to students pursuing graduate nursing
18 education.
- 19 (d) Students attending an approved postsecondary educational institution in
20 Vermont shall receive first preference for scholarships.

1 (e) There shall be no deadline to apply for a **forgivable loan** under this
2 section. **Forgivable loans** shall be awarded on a rolling basis as long as funds
3 are available, and any funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall roll over
4 and shall be available to the Department of Health and the Vermont Student
5 Assistance Corporation in the following fiscal year to award additional
6 **forgivable loans** as set forth in this section.

7 Sec. 20. REPEAL

8 18 V.S.A. § 31 (educational assistance; incentives; nurses) is repealed.

9 Sec. 21. VERMONT NURSING FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE

10 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

11 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 in Global Commitment
12 investment funds is appropriated to the Department of Health for **forgivable**
13 **loans** for nursing students under the Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan
14 Program established in Sec. 19 of this act.

15 Sec. 22. 18 V.S.A. § 35 is added to read:

16 § 35. VERMONT NURSING **AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT** LOAN
17 REPAYMENT PROGRAM

18 (a) As used in this section:

19 (1) “Corporation” means the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation
20 established in 16 V.S.A. § 2821.

1 (2) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the eligibility
2 requirements for loan repayment under this section.

3 (3) “Eligible school” means an approved postsecondary education
4 institution, as defined under 16 V.S.A. § 2822.

5 (4) “Loan repayment” means the cancellation and repayment of loans
6 under this section.

7 (5) “Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,
8 serviced, or otherwise administered by the Corporation under this subchapter
9 for attendance at an eligible school.

10 (6) “Program” means the Vermont Nursing and Physician Assistant
11 Loan Repayment Program created under this section.

12 (b) The Vermont Nursing and Physician Assistant Loan Repayment
13 Program is created and shall be administered by the Department of Health in
14 collaboration with the Corporation. The Program provides loan repayment on
15 behalf of individuals who live and work as a nurse or physician assistant in this
16 State and who meet the eligibility requirements in subsection (e) of this
17 section.

18 (c) The loan repayment benefits provided under the Program shall be paid
19 on behalf of the eligible individual by the Corporation, subject to the
20 appropriation of funds by the General Assembly specifically for this purpose.

1 (d) To be eligible for loan repayment under the Program, an individual
2 shall satisfy all of the following requirements:

3 (1) have graduated from an eligible school where the individual has,
4 within the past five years, been awarded a nursing degree or a degree in
5 physician assistant studies;

6 (2) had the minimum grade point average or better or the equivalent as
7 determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point
8 averages from the eligible school;

9 (3) work as a nurse or physician assistant in this State; and

10 (4) be a resident of Vermont.

11 (f)(1) An eligible individual shall be entitled to an amount of loan
12 cancellation and repayment under this section equal to one year of loans for
13 every for one year of service as a nurse or physician assistant in this State.

14 (2) The Corporation shall award loan repayments in amounts that are
15 sufficient to attract high-quality candidates while also making a meaningful
16 increase in Vermont’s health care professional workforce.

17 (i) The Corporation shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines
18 necessary to implement the provisions of this section.

19 Sec. 23. VERMONT NURSING AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LOAN

20 REPAYMENT PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

1 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the
2 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
3 Funds to the Department of Health for loan repayment for nurses and physician
4 assistants under the Vermont Nursing and Physician Assistant Loan
5 Repayment Program established in Sec. 22 of this act.

6 Sec. 24. 18 V.S.A. § 36 is added to read:

7 § 36. NURSE EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT
8 PROGRAM

9 (a) Definitions. As used in this section:

10 (1) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the eligibility
11 requirements under this section for a scholarship or loan repayment.

12 (2) “Eligible school” means an approved postsecondary education
13 institution, as defined under 16 V.S.A. § 2822.

14 (3) “Gift aid” means grant or scholarship financial aid received from the
15 federal government or from the State.

16 (4) “Loan repayment” means the cancellation and repayment of loans
17 under this section.

18 (5) “Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,
19 serviced, or otherwise administered by the Corporation under this subchapter
20 for attendance at an eligible school.

1 (6) “Program” means the Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan
2 Repayment Program created under this section.

3 (7) “Scholarship” means a scholarship awarded under this section
4 covering tuition, room, board, and the cost of required books and supplies for
5 up to full-time attendance at an eligible school.

6 (b) Program creation. The Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan
7 Repayment Program is created and shall be administered by the Department of
8 Health in collaboration with the Corporation. The Program provides
9 scholarships to students enrolled in an eligible school who commit to working
10 as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State and who meet the
11 eligibility requirements in subsection (d) of this section. The Program also
12 provides loan repayment on behalf of individuals who work as nurse educators
13 at a nursing school in this State and who meet the eligibility requirements in
14 subsection (e) of this section.

15 (c) The scholarship and loan repayment benefits provided under the
16 Program shall be paid on behalf of the eligible individual by the Corporation,
17 subject to the appropriation of funds by the General Assembly specifically for
18 this purpose.

19 (d) Eligibility for scholarships. To be eligible for a scholarship under the
20 Program, an individual, whether a resident or nonresident, shall satisfy all of
21 the following requirements:

1 (1) be enrolled at an eligible school in a program that leads to a graduate
2 degree in nursing;

3 (2) continually demonstrate satisfactory academic progress by
4 maintaining the minimum grade point average or better or the equivalent as
5 determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point
6 averages;

7 (3) have used any available gift aid;

8 (4) have executed a contract with the Corporation committing the
9 individual to work as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State;

10 (5) have executed a promissory note obligating the individual to repay
11 the individual's scholarship benefit, in whole or in part, if the individual fails
12 to complete the period of service required in subsection (f) of this section; and

13 (6) have completed the Program's application form, the free application
14 for federal student aid (FAFSA), and the Vermont grant application each
15 academic year of enrollment in accordance with a schedule determined by the
16 Corporation.

17 (e) Eligibility for loan repayment. To be eligible for loan repayment under
18 the Program, an individual shall satisfy all of the following requirements:

19 (1) graduated from an eligible school where the individual has, within
20 the past five years, been awarded a graduate degree in nursing;

1 (2) had the minimum grade point average or better or the equivalent as
2 determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point
3 averages from the eligible school;

4 (3) work as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State; and

5 (4) be a resident of Vermont.

6 (f) Service commitment.

7 (1) Scholarships. For each year of service as a nurse educator at a
8 nursing school in this State, an eligible individual shall be entitled to a full
9 academic year of full scholarship benefit under the Program. If an eligible
10 individual fails to serve as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State for
11 a period that would entitle the individual to the full scholarship benefit
12 received by the individual, other than for good cause as determined by the
13 Corporation, then the individual shall reimburse the Corporation a pro rata
14 portion of the scholarship paid under the Program pursuant to the terms of the
15 interest-free reimbursement promissory note signed by the individual at the
16 time of entering the Program.

17 (2) Loan repayment. An eligible individual shall be entitled to an
18 amount of loan cancellation and repayment under this section equal to one year
19 of loans for every for one year of service as a nurse educator at a nursing
20 school in this State.

1 (g) Adoption of policies, procedures, and guidelines. The Corporation
2 shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines necessary to implement the
3 provisions of this section.

4 Sec. 25. NURSE EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT
5 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

6 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the
7 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
8 Funds to the Department of Health for scholarships and loan repayment for
9 nurse educators under the Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan Repayment
10 Program established in Sec. 24 of this act.

11 Sec. 26. NURSING SCHOOLS; SIMULATION LAB UPDATE AND
12 EXPANSION; APPROPRIATION

13 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$4,000,000.00 is appropriated from the
14 General Fund to the Agency of Human Services for purposes of providing
15 capital grants to nursing school programs to enable them to renovate or expand
16 their simulation laboratories, or both, in order to enable them to increase
17 student enrollment. The amount of the grant funds shall be divided among the
18 nursing schools in Vermont based on each school’s projected nursing student
19 enrollment following completion of the renovation or expansion.

20 Sec. 27. 18 V.S.A. § 9456 is amended to read:

21 § 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

1 (a) The Board shall conduct reviews of each hospital’s proposed budget
2 based on the information provided pursuant to this subchapter and in
3 accordance with a schedule established by the Board.

4 (b) In conjunction with budget reviews, the Board shall:

5 * * *

6 (10) require each hospital to provide information on administrative
7 costs, as defined by the Board, including specific information on the amounts
8 spent on marketing and advertising costs; ~~and~~

9 (11) require each hospital to create or maintain connectivity to the
10 State’s Health Information Exchange Network in accordance with the criteria
11 established by the Vermont Information Technology Leaders, Inc., pursuant to
12 subsection 9352(i) of this title, provided that the Board shall not require a
13 hospital to create a level of connectivity that the State’s Exchange is unable to
14 support;

15 (12) review the hospital’s investments in workforce development
16 initiatives, including nursing workforce pipeline collaborations with nursing
17 schools and compensation and other support for nurse preceptors; and

18 (13) consider the salaries for the hospital’s executive and clinical
19 leadership and the hospital’s salary spread, including a comparison of median
20 salaries to the medians of northern New England states.

21 * * *

1 Sec. 28. GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; FISCAL YEAR 2023
2 HOSPITAL BUDGET REVIEW; NURSING WORKFORCE
3 DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

4 For hospital fiscal year 2023, the Green Mountain Care Board may exclude
5 all or a portion of a hospital’s investments in nursing workforce development
6 initiatives from any otherwise applicable financial limitations on the hospital’s
7 budget or budget growth. Notwithstanding any provision of GMCB Rule
8 3.202, the Board may modify its hospital budget guidance for hospital fiscal
9 year 2023 as needed to comply with this section.

10 Sec. 29. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; DESIGNATED AND
11 SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCIES; WORKFORCE
12 DEVELOPMENT

13 (a) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$6,000,000.00 is appropriated from
14 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
15 Funds to the Agency of Human Services to expand the supply of high-quality
16 mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and developmental disability
17 services professionals by distributing funds to the designated and specialized
18 service agencies equitably based on each agency’s proportion of full-time-
19 equivalent (FTE) mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and
20 developmental disability services staff to the total number of FTE mental
21 health, substance use disorder treatment, and developmental disability services

1 staff across all designated and specialized service agencies statewide. The
2 designated and specialized service agencies shall use these funds for loan
3 repayment and tuition assistance to promote the recruitment and retention of
4 high-quality mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and
5 developmental disability services professionals available to Vermont residents
6 in need of their services, as set forth in subsection (b) of this section.

7 (b)(1) Each designated and specialized service agency shall make the funds
8 received pursuant to subsection (a) of this section available to its current and
9 prospective employees as set forth in subdivisions (A) and (B) of this
10 subdivision (1) on a rolling basis in exchange for a one-year service obligation
11 to provide mental health, substance use disorder treatment, or developmental
12 disability services, or a combination of these, at a designated or specialized
13 service agency in this State. The funds may be used for the following
14 purposes:

15 (A) loan repayment for master’s-level clinicians, bachelor’s-level
16 direct service staff, and nurses; and

17 (B) tuition assistance for individuals pursuing degrees to become
18 master’s-level clinicians, bachelor’s-level direct service staff, and nurses.

19 (2) Loan repayment and tuition assistance funds shall be available to the
20 current and prospective employees of designated and specialized service

1 agencies in the form of forgivable loans, with the debt forgiven upon the
2 employee's completion of the required service obligation.

3 (c) Until the funds have been fully expended, the Agency of Human
4 Services shall report on or before January 15 annually to the House
5 Committees on Appropriations, on Health Care, and on Human Services and
6 the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare with
7 information on the following:

8 (1) the specific designated and specialized service agencies that have
9 received funds to date and the programs within each of those agencies in which
10 the financial assistance recipients will deliver services;

11 (2) the amount of financial assistance funding provided to each
12 recipient;

13 (3) the specific degrees or certificates toward which the tuition
14 assistance recipients are working and those earned by loan repayment
15 recipients; and

16 (4) the number of new employees attracted to the designated and
17 specialized service agencies as a result of the financial assistance, their fields
18 of study, and the programs in which they deliver services.

19 Sec. 30. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; BARRIERS TO

20 MENTAL HEALTH LICENSURE; REPORT

1 The Office of Professional Regulation shall undertake a systematic review
2 of the licensing processes for mental health and substance use disorder
3 treatment professionals to identify barriers to licensure. On or before
4 January 15, 2023, the Office shall provide its findings and recommendations to
5 address any identified barriers to licensure to the House Committees on Health
6 Care, on Human Services, on Commerce and Economic Development, and on
7 Government Operations and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare, on
8 Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and on Government
9 Operations.

10 Sec. 31. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; POSITION;

11 APPROPRIATION

12 (a) One classified, three-year limited-service Health Care Workforce
13 Coordinator position is created in the Agency of Human Services, Office of
14 Health Care Reform in fiscal year 2023 to support the health care workforce
15 initiatives set forth in this act and in the Health Care Workforce Development
16 Strategic Plan. The Coordinator shall focus on building educational, clinical,
17 and housing partnerships and support structures to increase and improve health
18 care workforce training, recruitment, and retention.

19 (b) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$170,000.00 is appropriated from the
20 General Fund to the Agency of Human Services, Office of Health Care Reform

1 for the Health Care Workforce Coordinator position, of which \$120,000.00 is
2 for personal services and \$50,000.00 is for operating expenses.

3 Sec. 32. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE
4 DATA HUB; HEALTH RESOURCE ALLOCATION PLAN

5 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$2,500,000.00 is appropriated from the
6 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
7 Funds to the Agency of Human Services to enable the Agency to serve as the
8 State’s health care workforce data hub. In order enhance the State’s public
9 health data systems, respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and
10 improve the State’s COVID-19 mitigation and prevention efforts, the Agency
11 shall collect health care workforce data and identify and propose solutions to
12 address data gaps, and shall share the data with the Green Mountain Care
13 Board to inform the Board’s work in identifying the State’s health resources
14 available to meet Vermonters’ health care needs and additional resources that
15 may be necessary, as part of the Board’s Health Resource Allocation Plan
16 responsibilities pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 9405. The Agency shall use existing
17 statewide information to the extent practicable to avoid imposing
18 administrative burdens on health care providers and to avoid duplication of
19 efforts underway elsewhere in Vermont. The Agency shall expand its data

1 collection practices over two years to include all levels of the health care
2 workforce, beginning with the highest-level licensed health care professionals.

3 Sec. 33. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE
4 BOARD; SUPPLY AND DEMAND MODELING

5 On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Labor, in collaboration
6 with the Green Mountain Care Board, shall explore and recommend to the
7 House Committees on Health Care, on Human Services, and on Commerce and
8 Economic Development and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare
9 and on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs a process,
10 methodology, and necessary funding amounts to establish and maintain the
11 capacity to perform health care supply and demand modeling based on
12 information in the health care workforce data hub, for use by health care
13 employers, health care educators, and policymakers.

14 Sec. 34. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL REGULATION; GREEN
15 MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS;
16 ADMINISTRATIVE COST REDUCTION; REPORT

17 (a) The Department of Financial Regulation shall explore the feasibility of
18 requiring health insurers and their prior authorization vendors to access clinical
19 data from the Vermont Health Information Exchange whenever possible to

1 support prior authorization requests in situations in which a request cannot be
2 automatically approved.

3 (b) The Department of Financial Regulation shall direct health insurers to
4 provide prior authorization information to the Department in a format required
5 by the Department in order to enable the Department to analyze opportunities
6 to align and streamline prior authorization request processes. The Department
7 shall share its findings and recommendations with the Green Mountain Care
8 Board, and the Department and the Board shall collaborate to provide
9 recommendations to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate
10 Committees on Health and Welfare and on Finance on or before January 15,
11 2023 regarding the statutory changes necessary to align and streamline prior
12 authorization processes and requirements across health insurers.

13 Sec. 35. 33 V.S.A. § 3543 is amended to read:

14 § 3543. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

15 (a)(1) There is established a need-based student loan repayment assistance
16 program for the purpose of providing student loan repayment assistance to any
17 individual employed by a regulated, privately operated center-based child care
18 program or family child care home.

19 (2) An eligible individual shall:

20 (A) work in a privately operated center-based child care program or
21 in a family child care home that is regulated by the Division for at least an

1 average of 30 hours per week for 48 weeks of the year, except that this
2 minimum time requirement does not apply to an employee of Vermont Head
3 Start to the extent it conflicts with any law or contract provision governing the
4 terms of employment.

5 (B) receive an annual salary of not more than \$50,000.00; and

6 (C) have earned an associates or bachelor’s degree with a major
7 concentration in early childhood, child and human development, elementary
8 education, special education with a birth to age eight focus, or child and family
9 services within the preceding five years.

10 * * *

11 Sec. 36. PILOT PROGRAM; POSITIONS EMBEDDED WITHIN
12 RECOVERY CENTERS

13 (a)(1) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$1,290,000.00 is appropriated from
14 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
15 Funds to the Department for Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living’s
16 Division of Vocation Rehabilitation for the purpose of developing and
17 implementing a two-year pilot program that embeds 15 FTE new positions
18 within 12 recovery centers across the State.

19 (2) The 15 FTE limited-service positions shall be allocated as follows:

1 (A) Of the total appropriation, \$540,000.00 total shall be allocated in
2 equal amounts to fund the following 2.5 FTE at each of two geographically
3 diverse recovery centers:

4 (i) one FTE to serve as an employment counselor within the
5 Division of Vocation Rehabilitation;

6 (ii) one FTE to serve as an employment consultant within the
7 Vermont Association of Business Industry and Rehabilitation; and

8 (iii) 0.5 FTE to serve as Employment Assistance Program staff
9 within the Division of Vocation Rehabilitation.

10 (B) Of the total appropriation, \$75,000.00 shall be allocated in equal
11 amounts to fund one FTE who shall serve as an employment support counselor
12 at each of the 10 remaining recovery centers in the State.

13 (b) On or before January 1, 2024, the Division of Vocational
14 Rehabilitation, in collaboration with the Vermont Association of Business
15 Industry and Rehabilitation, shall submit a report to the House Committees on
16 Commerce and Economic Development and on Human Services and to the
17 Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
18 and on Health and Welfare amountmarizing the effectiveness of the pilot
19 program, including:

20 (1) educational attainment and achievement of program recipients;

21 (2) acquisition of a credential of value pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 546;

1 (3) number of job placements; and

2 (4) job retention rates.

3 **Sec. 37. CREDENTIAL OF VALUE GOAL; PUBLIC-PRIVATE**

4 **PARTNERSHIP; APPROPRIATION**

5 (a) Duties. In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$350,000.00 is appropriated
6 from the General Fund to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for a
7 performance-based contract to perform the following duties, in coordination
8 and alignment with State partners, in support of the State’s goal articulated in
9 10 V.S.A. § 546 that 70 percent of working-age Vermonters hold a credential
10 of value by 2025 (Goal):

11 (1) increase public awareness of the value of postsecondary education
12 and training to help persons of any age make informed decisions about the
13 value of education and training that would further their advancement in
14 educational pathways and pursuit of career goals, through targeted outreach as
15 outlined in subsection (b) of this section;

16 (2) promote a broad understanding of the public good and value in
17 achieving the State’s Goal and of actions stakeholders can take to increase
18 attainment;

19 (3) assist or coordinate with stakeholders, such as educational, business,
20 governmental, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations, in activities that seek
21 to align the delivery of high-quality education and training opportunities with

1 career advancement and support the policy priorities outlined in 10 V.S.A.

2 § 546:

3 (4) collect and display publicly available, nonconfidential information
4 about postsecondary credentials available to Vermonters;

5 (5) facilitate conversations or provide information about the national
6 best practices in aligning, recognizing, measuring, tracking, and promoting
7 postsecondary credentials of value to the Vermont Department of Labor and
8 Agency of Education when requested;

9 (6) maintain web-based resources that provide information about
10 opportunities to obtain a postsecondary credential of value, in coordination
11 with State partners;

12 (7) support the Vermont Department of Labor and Agency of Education
13 transition or integration of Advance Vermont’s web-based resources and
14 collected information referenced in subdivisions (4) and (6) of this subsection
15 into a State-supported system in a coordinated way; and

16 (8) meet on a quarterly basis with the Vermont Department of Labor and
17 Agency of Education about activities described in this subsection.

18 (b) Outreach. **The contractor** may use funds awarded by the State to:

19 (1) create and distribute public-facing communications and resources
20 related to the duties described in this section; and

1 (2) offer support to career and education counselors, employment and
2 training counselors, jobseekers and their families, and other stakeholders,
3 consistent with best practice and State policy and programs, to help them better
4 understand the postsecondary education and training landscape.

5 (c) Reports. The contractor shall provide written reports to:

6 (1) the Vermont Department of Labor and Agency of Education about
7 anticipated work and activities using a simplified reporting template jointly
8 developed by the contractor and the State entities on a quarterly basis; and

9 (2) on or before December 15, 2022, the House and Senate committees
10 of jurisdiction regarding the use of funds, activities performed, and outcomes
11 achieved pursuant to this section.

12 Sec. 38. VERMONT SERVE, LEARN, AND EARN PROGRAM;

13 APPROPRIATION

14 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$3,200,000.00 is appropriated from the
15 General Fund to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to provide
16 funding for capital and operating needs of groups participating in the Vermont
17 Serve, Learn, and Earn Program, which supports workforce development goals
18 through creating meaningful paid service and learning opportunities for young
19 adults.

1 Sec. 39. ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY; FINDINGS

2 The General Assembly finds:

3 (1) Adult education and literacy services are a key piece of the
4 workforce development system and serve as the entryway into career readiness
5 and workforce development for tens of thousands of our most vulnerable
6 Vermonters, those with low literacy, under-education, or those simply in need
7 of increased skills so that they can succeed.

8 (2) 36,000 adults in Vermont do not have a high school credential, and
9 tens of thousands more lack the skills to matriculate into and be successful in
10 college, in career training programs, or both. Adult education and literacy
11 providers are the first stop on the path to the transformative opportunities that
12 Vermont is offering for these individuals.

13 (3) Adult education and literacy services help people build the assets
14 they need to move out of poverty successfully, as well as the confidence to
15 continue to move toward success throughout their lives. Students are supported
16 to identify concrete goals and then break those goals down into steps. Students
17 set goals in the domains of:

18 (A) family and life;

19 (B) academics; and

20 (C) career and college readiness.

21 **Sec. 40. FINDINGS; FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP**

1 The General Assembly finds for the purposes of this section and Secs. 38b
2 to 38d of this act:

3 (1) Private and public forestlands:

4 (A) constitute unique and irreplaceable resources, benefits, and
5 values of statewide importance;

6 (B) contribute to the protection and conservation of wildlife habitat,
7 air, water, and soil resources of the State;

8 (C) mitigate the effects of climate change; and

9 (D) benefit the general health and welfare of the persons of the State.

10 (2) The forest products sector, including maple sap collection:

11 (A) is a major contributor to and is valuable to the State's economy
12 by providing nearly 14,000 jobs for Vermonters, generating \$2.1 billion in
13 annual sales, and supporting \$30.8 million in additional economic activity
14 from trail uses and seasonal tourism;

15 (B) is essential to the manufacture of forest products that are used
16 and enjoyed by the persons of the State; and

17 (C) benefits the general welfare of the persons of the State.

18 (3) Private and public forestlands are critical for and contribute
19 significantly to the State's outdoor recreation and tourism economies.

20 (4) Eighty percent of Vermont's forestland is held in private ownership,
21 of which 56 percent of private lands are enrolled in the forestland category of

1 Vermont’s Use Value Appraisal Program (UVA). UVA is Vermont’s most
2 important conservation program and contains the largest foundation of supply
3 to support a vibrant forest-based rural economy.

4 (5) Economic realities and demand pressures for urban, commercial, and
5 residential land uses throughout the State continue to challenge forest
6 landowners trying to maintain intact forests. Forest fragmentation can
7 adversely affect the natural environment and viable forest management.
8 Addressing the economic and social needs of the forest products sector is
9 paramount to keeping forests intact, viable, and healthy.

10 (6) The encouragement, development, improvement, and preservation of
11 forestry operations will result in extant, intact, and functioning forests that will
12 provide a general benefit to the health and welfare of the persons of the State
13 and the State’s economy.

14 (7) To strengthen, promote, and protect the Vermont forest products
15 sector, the State should establish the Vermont Forest Future Strategic
16 Roadmap.

17 Sec. 41. 10 V.S.A. chapter 82 is added to read:

18 CHAPTER 82. VERMONT FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

19 § 2531. VERMONT FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

20 (a) Creation. The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation shall
21 create the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap to strengthen, modernize,

1 promote, and protect the forest products sector in Vermont. The
2 Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation may contract with a qualified
3 contractor for the creation of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap.
4 During the contract proposal process, the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and
5 Recreation shall seek a proposal to complete the Vermont Forest Future
6 Strategic Roadmap from the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

7 (b) Intended outcomes. The intended outcomes of the Vermont Forest
8 Future Strategic Roadmap are to:

9 (1) increase sustainable economic development and jobs in Vermont’s
10 forest economy;

11 (2) promote ways to expand the workforce and strengthen forest product
12 enterprises in order to strengthen, modernize, promote, and protect the
13 Vermont forest economy into the future;

14 (3) promote the importance of healthy, resilient, and sustainably
15 managed working forests that provide a diverse array of high-quality products
16 now and in the future; and

17 (4) identify actionable strategies designed to strengthen, modernize,
18 promote, and protect the forest products sector in Vermont, including
19 opportunities for new product development, opening new markets for Vermont
20 forest products, adopting modern manufacturing processes, and utilizing new
21 ways to market Vermont forest products.

1 (c) Strategic Roadmap content. In developing the Vermont Forest Future
2 Strategic Roadmap, the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation or the
3 relevant contractor shall:

4 (1) review all existing data, plans, and industry-level research completed
5 over the past 10 years, including the Working Lands Enterprise Fund’s Forest
6 Sector Systems Analysis, and identify any recommendations in those reports in
7 order to build upon previous efforts;

8 (2) identify infrastructure investment and funding to support and
9 promote Vermont forest products enterprises;

10 (3) identify regulatory barriers and propose policy recommendations to
11 support and strengthen the Vermont forest economy;

12 (4) identify opportunities for all State agencies to engage with and
13 enhance the Vermont forest products sector, including the Department of
14 Buildings and General Services, the Agency of Commerce and Community
15 Development, the Department of Tourism and Marketing, the Agency of
16 Education, the Agency of Transportation, the Department of Public Service,
17 the Agency of Natural Resources, the Department of Financial Regulation, and
18 the Department of Labor;

19 (5) develop recommendations to support education and training of the
20 current and future workforce of the Vermont forest products sector;

1 (6) propose alternatives for the modernization of transportation and
2 regulation of Vermont forest products enterprises, including modernization of
3 local and State permits;

4 (7) identify methods or programs that Vermont forest enterprises can
5 utilize to access business assistance services;

6 (8) recommend how to maintain access by Vermont forest products
7 enterprises to forestland and how to maintain the stewardship and conservation
8 of Vermont forests as a whole;

9 (9) propose methods to enhance market development and manufacturing
10 by Vermont forest products enterprises, including value chain coordination and
11 regional partnerships;

12 (10) recommend conamounter education and marketing initiatives; and

13 (11) recommend how to clarify the roles of various public entities and
14 nongovernmental organizations that provide certain services to the forestry
15 sector and to ensure coordination and alignment of those functions in order to
16 advance and maximize the strength of the forest products industry.

17 (d) Process for development of Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap.

18 (1) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation or relevant
19 contractor shall develop the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap and all
20 subsequent revisions through the use of a public stakeholder process that
21 includes and invites participation by interested parties representing all users of

1 Vermont’s forests, including representatives of forest products enterprises,
2 State agencies, investors, forestland owners, recreational interests, loggers,
3 foresters, truckers, sawmills, firewood processors, wood products
4 manufacturers, education representatives, and others.

5 (2) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation, in collaboration
6 with forest products sector stakeholders, shall review the Strategic Roadmap
7 periodically and shall update the Strategic Roadmap at least every 10 years.

8 (e) Advisory panel; administration.

9 (1) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation or relevant
10 contractor shall convene a Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap advisory
11 panel to review and counsel in the development and implementation of the
12 Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap. The advisory panel shall include
13 representatives of forest products enterprises, State agencies, investors,
14 forestland owners, foresters, loggers, truckers, wood products manufacturers,
15 recreational specialists, education representatives, trade organizations, and
16 other partners as deemed appropriate. The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and
17 Recreation shall select representatives to the advisory panel.

18 (2) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation or relevant
19 contractor may seek grants or other means of assistance to support the
20 development and implementation of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic
21 Roadmap.

1 **Sec. 42. IMPLEMENTATION**

2 (a) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation or relevant
3 contractor shall submit to the General Assembly:

4 (1) draft recommendations for the Vermont Forest Future Strategic
5 Roadmap on or before July 1, 2023; and

6 (2) a final report and recommendations for the Vermont Forest Future
7 Strategic Roadmap on or before January 1, 2024.

8 (b) Any recommendation submitted under this section shall include
9 recommended appropriations sufficient to implement the recommendation or
10 the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap as a whole.

11 **Sec. 43. APPROPRIATIONS**

12 In addition to any other funds appropriated to the Department of Forests,
13 Parks and Recreation, in fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$250,000.00 is
14 appropriated from the General Fund to the Department to enter a two-year
15 contract in fiscal year 2023 for the purpose of contracting for the development
16 of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap required by 10 V.S.A.
17 § 2531.

18 **Sec. 44. EFFECTIVE DATES**

19 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022, except that:

20 (1) Sec. 9(b)–(c) (Internship Cost Offset Initiative) shall take effect on
21 passage.

1 (2) Sec. 27 (18 V.S.A. § 9456) shall take effect on January 1, 2023 and
2 shall apply to hospital fiscal years 2024 and after.