

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to which was
3 referred House Bill No. 703 entitled “An act relating to promoting workforce
4 development” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and
5 recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

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

11 In fiscal year 2023, the following amounts are appropriated from the
12 General Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

13 (1) \$5,000,000.00 to the University of Vermont Office of Engagement,
14 in consultation with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, to
15 administer a statewide forgivable loan program of \$5,000.00 per graduate for
16 recent college graduates across all Vermont higher education institutions who
17 commit to work in Vermont for two years after graduation.

18 (2) \$1,000,000.00 to the State Refugee Office to administer as grants to
19 refugee- or New American-focused programs working in Vermont to support
20 increased in-migration or retention of recent arrivals.

1 (3) \$387,000.00 to Vermont Technical College to develop a skilled meat
2 cutter training and apprenticeship facility.

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 Agency of Education for fiscal year 2023
15 the 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) consider the CTE funding and governance structures in other states;
4 and

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

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

13 (c)(1) On or before March 1, 2023, the Agency of Education shall issue a
14 written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House
15 Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate
16 Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs on the
17 status of its work under subsection (a) of this section.

18 (2) On or before July 1, 2023, the Agency of Education shall develop an
19 implementation plan, including recommended steps to design and implement
20 new funding and governance models, and issue a written report to the House
21 and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Commerce and

1 Economic Development, and the Senate Committee on Economic
2 Development, Housing and General Affairs describing the results of its work
3 under subsection (a) of this section and making recommendations for
4 legislative action.

5 Sec. 4. INVESTMENT IN THE UP-SKILLING OF PRIVATE SECTOR
6 EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT THE EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS
7 AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS; APPROPRIATIONS

8 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the
9 General Fund to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to
10 regrant a performance-based contract to the Vermont Professionals of Color
11 Network for statewide delivery of business coaching and other forms of
12 training to BIPOC business owners, networking and special convenings, and
13 career fairs, workshops and paid internships, career guidance, and other
14 support for BIPOC workers across the State.

15 Sec. 5. REGIONAL WORKFORCE EXPANSION SYSTEM

16 (a) Regional Workforce Expansion System. The amount of \$3,000,000.00
17 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Labor to launch
18 and lead a coordinated regional system to support the State's workforce
19 expansion efforts that is designed to:

20 (1) support employers in tailoring their work requirements, conditions,
21 and expectations to better access local workers;

1 (2) collaborate with local education and training providers and regional
2 workforce partners, to create and regularly distribute data related to local labor
3 force supply and demand; and

4 (3) create and share work-based learning and training opportunities with
5 secondary and postsecondary students, local workforce expansion partners, and
6 others interested in starting or advancing in their career.

7 (b) System infrastructure.

8 (1) The Vermont Department of Labor shall make investments that
9 improve and expand regional capacity to connect supply (workers) and
10 demand (employment) in real-time.

11 (2) The Department shall place in the Barre, Bennington, Brattleboro,
12 Rutland, St. Albans and St. Johnsbury areas, six state-funded Workforce
13 Expansion Specialists who are limited-service, full-time-employees and who
14 shall report to the Workforce Development Division.

15 (c) Coordination.

16 (1) The Department shall co-convene regular, regional meetings of
17 education, training, business, and service provider partners; coordinate local
18 workforce information collection and distribution, assist with pilot projects,
19 provide targeted sector support, and develop localized career resources such as
20 information for career counseling, local job fairs, career expos, available to a
21 wide range of stakeholders.

1 (2) 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 (d) Report. On or before December 15, 2024, the Department shall provide
6 a narrative update on the progress made in hiring staff, establishing
7 interagency agreements, developing regional information exchange systems,
8 and serving jobseekers and employers to the House and Senate Committees of
9 Jurisdiction. The report shall also recommend ongoing metrics that can be
10 easily recorded and reported at the local and State levels on a regular basis to
11 meet multiple information needs.

12 (e) Implementation. The Department of Labor shall begin implementing
13 the Regional Workforce Expansion System on or before August 1, 2022.

14 Sec. 6. JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS; WORKFORCE
15 DEVELOPMENT; PILOT PROGRAM

16 (a) Findings.

17 (1) Justice-involved individuals are persons who hold a conviction
18 record and may or may not have served time in a corrections facility.

19 (2) 95 percent of incarcerated individuals will be released to their
20 communities and between 78–83 percent of those released are between 25 and
21 54 years of age, which is prime working age.

1 (3) 63 percent of incarcerated individuals in the Vermont Southern State
2 Correctional Facility reported job training as the most helpful program to meet
3 their needs.

4 (b) Policy; appropriations.

5 (1)(A) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$417,000.00 is appropriated
6 from the General Fund to the Department of Corrections to address vocational
7 enhancement needs.

8 (B) The Department shall use funds to transition vocational training
9 space within existing correctional facilities to support continued education and
10 vocational training and placement in the community.

11 (C) The Department may allocate funds over three years, consistent
12 with the following:

13 (i) \$267,000 for transition development, to include equipment,
14 renovation of vocational space, and/or mobile lab in one or more sites.

15 (ii) \$100,000 for training partner support.

16 (iii) \$50,000 for development of curriculum.

17 (2) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$300,000.00 is appropriated from
18 the General Fund to the Department of Corrections to subgrant to the Vermont
19 Works for Women, which may be allocated over not more than three years, to
20 establish a community-based pilot reentry program at the Chittenden

1 Correctional Facility that will provide continuity of services for justice-
2 involved women and:

3 (A) expand VWV’s current employment readiness program within
4 the Chittenden facility by building pathways for coordinated transition to
5 employment;

6 (B) focus on the first six months after individuals are released from
7 the facility;

8 (C) coordinate with local community resources, parole and probation
9 offices, and supports to ensure successful transition into the community;

10 (D) assist individuals in successfully transitioning into new jobs; and

11 (E) work with employers to support successful hiring and best
12 practices to support justice involved employees.

13 (c) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Corrections
14 shall create and submit a report on Workforce and Education Training
15 Programs in Correctional Facilities to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight
16 Committee; the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on
17 Commerce and Economic Development; and the Senate Committees on
18 Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Judiciary. The
19 report shall:

20 (1) identify program design, logistical needs, and policy changes to
21 current Department of Corrections facility-based training and educational

1 programs necessary to successfully support justice involved individuals’
2 reentry into their communities, including changes to programs that better
3 support individuals’ skill development, knowledge, and support needed to
4 qualify and secure a position in a critical occupation in Vermont;

5 (2) identify disparities of outcomes for justice-involved BIPOC
6 individuals in facility-based training and educational programming and
7 successful reentry into the community and solutions for addressing the
8 disparities;

9 (3) provide an update on the Department of Corrections Vocational
10 Enhancement work funding in FY23; and

11 (4) provide an update on what aspects of the Reentry Pilot Program
12 could and should be replicated in other correctional facilities in Vermont.

13 Sec. 7. REPEALS

14 10 V.S.A. §§ 544 and 545 are repealed.

15 Sec. 8. WORK-BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 (2) “Pre-apprenticeship” is a program of combined learning and work-
15 based experiences that lead to an informal apprenticeship or formal registered
16 apprenticeship program.

17 (3) “Registered Apprenticeship” is a program approved by the Vermont
18 Department of Labor as a federally recognized apprenticeship program.

19 (4) “Returnship” means an on-the-job learning experience for an
20 individual who is returning to the workforce after an extended absence or is

1 seeking a limited-duration on-the-job work experience in a different
2 occupation or occupational setting as part of a career change.

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

5 (1) build and administer the Program;

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

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

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

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

15 (d) Data; goals. The Department shall collect data and establish goals and
16 performance measures that demonstrate Program results for activities funded
17 through the Program.

18 (e) State participation. The Department shall engage appropriate State
19 agencies and departments to expand Program opportunities with State
20 government and with entities awarded State contracts.

1 (f) Reporting. On or before February 15, 2023, the Department shall report
2 on recommended metrics for measuring Program performance to the relevant
3 committees of jurisdiction.

4 Sec. 8a. INTERNSHIP COST OFFSET INITIATIVE

5 (a) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000 is appropriated from the
6 General Fund to the Department of Labor for an Internship Cost Offset
7 Initiative.

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

11 (1) Students enrolled in an approved postsecondary institution are
12 eligible for not more than \$3,000.00 for tuition and fees directly related to
13 participating in an internship with a Vermont employer for which they are also
14 receiving postsecondary credit toward a degree.

15 (2) The Department shall enter into an agreement with the Vermont
16 Student Assistance Corporation to develop and administer the Initiative, which
17 shall include an amount not to exceed 7 percent for costs associated with the
18 administration of the program.

19 (c) Reporting. On or before February 15, 2023, the Department shall report
20 on recommended metrics for measuring Initiative performance to the relevant
21 committees of jurisdiction.

1 Sec. 9. THE VERMONT TRADES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

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

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

13 (2) demonstrate financial need;

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

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

19 (c)(1) The Corporation shall give preference to students attending a
20 Vermont-based training program or, if one isn't available for their certification,

1 an offer of employment or promotion from a Vermont employer upon
2 completion.

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

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

10 (e) The sum of \$3,000,000.00 in base General Funds is appropriated to the
11 Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for scholarships for trades students
12 under the Vermont Trades Scholarship Program.

13 Sec. 10. THE VERMONT TRADES LOAN REIMBURSEMENT
14 PROGRAM

15 (a) The Vermont Trades Loan Repayment Reimbursement Program is
16 created and shall be administered by the Vermont Student Assistance
17 Corporation. The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse
18 funds under the Program to eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of
19 funds by the General Assembly for this purpose.

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

1 (1) be a Vermont resident; and

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

6 (c) For every year of work in a qualifying occupation, an individual shall
7 be eligible for up to \$5,000.00 in loan repayment reimbursement.

8 Reimbursements shall not exceed the total amount of educational debt owed.

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

15 (e) The sum of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
16 Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for loan repayment for trades
17 professionals under the Program.

18 Sec. 11. CTE CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

19 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM; REVOLVING LOAN

20 FUND

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

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

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

8 (3) beautify communities and rehabilitate buildings that are
9 underperforming assets;

10 (4) expand housing access to Vermonters in communities throughout the
11 State; and

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

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

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

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

21 (c) Proposals; applications; funding.

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

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

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

10 (C) commercial construction projects that have substantial
11 community benefit.

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

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

18 (A) the educational benefits for students and fit with the CTE
19 curriculum;

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

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

3 (i) educational instruction and academic credit;

4 (ii) project management;

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

6 (iv) compensation and benefits, including compliance with labor
7 laws, standards, and practices; and

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

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

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

13 (B) costs for labor, including for student wages and for instructor
14 compensation during the academic year as well as for summer or other work
15 that is not otherwise budgeted during the academic year.

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

19 (1) The project involves the rehabilitation of blighted or otherwise
20 noncode compliant property, or new residential construction projects or

1 improvements to land in cases of critical need, and results in a building with
2 not more than four residential dwelling units.

3 (2) The project includes a weatherization component.

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

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

9 (f) Funding; proceeds; revolving loans.

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

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

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

17 Sec. 12. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT

18 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$125,000.00 is appropriated from the
19 General Fund to the Department for Children and Families' Child
20 Development Division to subgrant to the Vermont Association for the

1 Education of Young Children to develop and implement a comprehensive early
2 childhood educator recruitment campaign.

3 Sec. 13. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

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

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

16 Sec. 14. EMERGENCY GRANTS TO SUPPORT NURSE EDUCATORS

17 (a) The sum of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Department of Health
18 from General Fund in fiscal year 2023 and shall carry forward for the purpose
19 of providing emergency interim grants to Vermont's nursing schools over three
20 years to increase the compensation for their nurse faculty and staff, with
21 \$1,000,000.00 to be distributed in each of fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025 to

1 increase the compensation for each full-time-equivalent (FTE) member of the
2 clinical and didactic nurse faculty and staff. The Department shall distribute
3 the funds among the nursing schools in Vermont equitably based on each
4 school's proportion of nursing faculty and staff to the total number of FTE
5 nursing faculty and staff across all nursing schools statewide.

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

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

13 WORKING GROUP; REPORT

14 (a)(1) The sum of \$2,400,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Human
15 Services from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to provide incentive grants
16 to hospital-employed nurses in Vermont to serve as preceptors for nursing
17 students enrolled in Vermont nursing school programs. The Agency shall
18 distribute the funds to hospitals employing nurses who provide student
19 preceptor supervision based on the number of preceptor hours to be provided.

1 at a rate of \$5.00 per preceptor hour, or a lesser hourly rate if the need exceeds
2 the available funds.

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

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

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

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

20 (C) develop an action plan for implementing the clinical placement
21 expansion and sustainable funding models identified and established pursuant

1 to subdivisions (A) and (B) of this subdivision (1), including addressing the
2 need for student housing opportunities.

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

9 Sec. 16. HEALTH CARE EMPLOYER NURSING PIPELINE AND

10 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

11 (a) The sum of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Vermont Student
12 Assistance Corporation (VSAC) from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 and
13 shall carry forward for the purpose of providing grants to health care
14 employers, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, designated and
15 specialized service agencies, federally qualified health centers, and other health
16 care providers, to establish or expand partnerships with Vermont nursing
17 schools to create nursing pipeline or apprenticeship programs, or both, that will
18 train members of the health care employers’ existing staff, including personal
19 care attendants, licensed nursing assistants, and licensed practical nurses, to
20 become higher-level nursing professionals. Through a combination of
21 scholarship awards, grants awarded to health care employers pursuant to this

1 section, and the health care employer’s contributions, the trainees’ tuition and
2 fees shall be covered in full, and trainees shall be provided with assistance in
3 meeting their living costs, such as housing and child care, while attending the
4 program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 (6) the employer’s commitment to advancing the professional
20 development of individuals from marginalized communities, especially those

1 that have been historically disadvantaged in accessing educational
2 opportunities and career advancement in the health care professions.

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

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

9 Sec. 17. 18 V.S.A. § 34 is added to read:

10 § 34. VERMONT NURSING FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE
11 PROGRAM

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

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

20 (1) be enrolled at an approved postsecondary education institution as
21 defined in 16 V.S.A. § 2822;

1 (2) demonstrate financial need;

2 (3) demonstrate academic capacity by carrying the minimum grade point
3 average in the individual’s course of study prior to receiving the fund award;
4 and

5 (4) agree to work as a nurse in Vermont for a minimum of one year
6 following licensure for each year of scholarship awarded.

7 (c)(1) First priority for scholarship funds shall be given to students
8 pursuing a practical nursing certificate who will be eligible to sit for the
9 NCLEX-PN examination upon completion of the certificate.

10 (2) Second priority for scholarship funds shall be given to students
11 pursuing an associate’s degree in nursing who will be eligible to sit for the
12 NCLEX-RN examination upon graduation.

13 (3) Third priority for scholarship funds shall be given to students
14 pursuing a bachelor of science degree in nursing.

15 (4) Fourth priority shall be given to students pursuing graduate nursing
16 education.

17 (d) Students attending an approved postsecondary educational institution in
18 Vermont shall receive first preference for scholarships.

19 (e) There shall be no deadline to apply for a scholarship under this section.
20 Scholarships shall be awarded on a rolling basis as long as funds are available,
21 and any funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall roll over and shall be

1 available to the Department of Health and the Vermont Student Assistance
2 Corporation in the following fiscal year to award additional scholarships as set
3 forth in this section.

4 Sec. 18. REPEAL

5 18 V.S.A. § 31 (educational assistance; incentives; nurses) is repealed.

6 Sec. 19. VERMONT NURSING FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE

7 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

8 The sum of \$3,000,000.00 in Global Commitment investment funds is
9 appropriated to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for scholarships
10 for nursing students under the Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan Program
11 established in Sec. 17 of this act.

12 Sec. 20. 18 V.S.A. § 35 is added to read:

13 § 35. VERMONT NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

14 (a) As used in this section:

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

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

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

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

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

6 (6) “Program” means the Vermont Nursing Loan Repayment Program
7 created under this section.

8 (b) The Vermont Nursing Loan Repayment Program is created and shall be
9 administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with the
10 Corporation. The Program provides loan repayment on behalf of individuals
11 who live and work as a nurse in this State and who meet the eligibility
12 requirements in subsection (e) of this section.

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

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

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

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 in this State; and

5 (4) be a resident of Vermont.

6 (f)(1) An eligible individual shall be entitled to an amount of loan
7 cancellation and repayment under this section equal to one year of loans for
8 every for one year of service as a nurse in this State.

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

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

14 Sec. 21. VERMONT NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM;

15 APPROPRIATION

16 The sum of \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
17 Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for loan repayment for nurses under
18 the Vermont Nursing Loan Repayment Program established in Sec. 20 of this
19 act.

1 Sec. 22. 18 V.S.A. § 36 is added to read:

2 § 36. NURSE EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT
3 PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 (2) continually demonstrate satisfactory academic progress by
20 maintaining the minimum grade point average or better or the equivalent as

1 determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point
2 averages;

3 (3) have used any available gift aid;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 (4) be a resident of Vermont.

1 (f) Service commitment.

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

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

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

19 Sec. 23. NURSE EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT

20 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

1 The sum of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
2 Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for scholarships and loan repayment
3 for nurse educators under the Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan
4 Repayment Program established in Sec. 22 of this act.

5 Sec. 24. NURSING SCHOOLS; SIMULATION LAB UPDATE AND
6 EXPANSION; APPROPRIATION

7 The sum of \$4,000,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
8 Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2023 for purposes of providing
9 capital grants to nursing school programs to enable them to renovate or expand
10 their simulation laboratories, or both, in order to enable them to increase
11 student enrollment. The amount of the grant funds shall be divided among the
12 nursing schools in Vermont based on each school's projected nursing student
13 enrollment following completion of the renovation or expansion.

14 Sec. 25. 18 V.S.A. § 9456 is amended to read:

15 § 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

16 (a) The Board shall conduct reviews of each hospital's proposed budget
17 based on the information provided pursuant to this subchapter and in
18 accordance with a schedule established by the Board.

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

20 * * *

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

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

10 (12) review the hospital's investments in workforce development
11 initiatives, including nursing workforce pipeline collaborations with nursing
12 schools and compensation and other support for nurse preceptors; and

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

16 * * *

17 Sec. 26. GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; FISCAL YEAR 2023

18 HOSPITAL BUDGET REVIEW; NURSING WORKFORCE

19 DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

20 For hospital fiscal year 2023, the Green Mountain Care Board may exclude
21 all or a portion of a hospital's investments in nursing workforce development

1 initiatives from any otherwise applicable financial limitations on the hospital's
2 budget or budget growth. Notwithstanding any provision of GMCB Rule
3 3.202, the Board may modify its hospital budget guidance for hospital fiscal
4 year 2023 as needed to comply with this section.

5 Sec. 27. DESIGNATED AND SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCIES;

6 MEDICAID RATE INCREASE; REPORT

7 (a) Since the 1960s, the State and federal governments have directed the
8 community mental health system to provide care in the community using the
9 least restrictive means for those who would previously have been
10 institutionalized, but never redistributed the money to the community mental
11 health system or fully funded that mandate. The General Assembly is taking
12 the steps set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of this section to address the
13 shortfall.

14 (b) In order to increase by 10 percent the Medicaid rates for the mental
15 health and developmental disability services provided by designated and
16 specialized service agencies, the sum of \$41,854,493.00 in Global
17 Commitment dollars is appropriated to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal
18 year 2023.

19 (c) The Departments of Mental Health and of Disabilities, Aging, and
20 Independent Living, in consultation with representatives of the designated and
21 specialized services agencies, shall report to the House Committees on Health

1 Care, on Human Services, and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees
2 on Health and Welfare and on Appropriations on or before January 15, 2023
3 with the total amount of funds that would be necessary on an annual basis to
4 increase the salaries for all staff in the community mental health system to the
5 level of equivalent positions in the State workforce, Vermont hospitals, and
6 school settings.

7 Sec. 28. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; DESIGNATED AND
8 SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCIES; WORKFORCE
9 DEVELOPMENT

10 (a) The sum of \$6,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Human
11 Services from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to expand the supply of
12 high-quality mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and
13 developmental disability services professionals by distributing funds to the
14 designated and specialized service agencies equitably based on each agency's
15 proportion of full-time- equivalent (FTE) mental health, substance use disorder
16 treatment, and developmental disability services staff to the total number of
17 FTE mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and developmental
18 disability services staff across all designated and specialized service agencies
19 statewide. The designated and specialized service agencies shall use these
20 funds for loan repayment and tuition assistance to promote the recruitment and
21 retention of high-quality mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and

1 developmental disability services professionals available to Vermont residents
2 in need of their services, as set forth in subsection (b) of this section.

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

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

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

15 (2) Loan repayment and tuition assistance funds shall be available to the
16 current and prospective employees of designated and specialized service
17 agencies in the form of forgivable loans, with the debt forgiven upon the
18 employee’s completion of the required service obligation.

19 (c) Until the funds have been fully expended, the Agency of Human
20 Services shall report on or before January 15 annually to the House
21 Committees on Appropriations, on Health Care, and on Human Services and

1 the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare with
2 information on the following:

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

6 (2) the amount of financial assistance funding provided to each
7 recipient;

8 (3) the specific degrees or certificates toward which the tuition
9 assistance recipients are working and those earned by loan repayment
10 recipients; and

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

14 Sec. 29. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; BARRIERS TO
15 MENTAL HEALTH LICENSURE; REPORT

16 The Office of Professional Regulation shall undertake a systematic review
17 of the licensing processes for mental health and substance use disorder
18 treatment professionals to identify barriers to licensure. On or before
19 January 15, 2023, the Office shall provide its findings and recommendations to
20 address any identified barriers to licensure to the House Committees on Health
21 Care, on Human Services, on Commerce and Economic Development, and on

1 Government Operations and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare, on
2 Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and on Government
3 Operations.

4 Sec. 30. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; POSITION;

5 APPROPRIATION

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

13 (b) The sum of \$170,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
14 Agency of Human Services, Office of Health Care Reform in fiscal year 2023
15 for the Health Care Workforce Coordinator position, of which \$120,000.00 is
16 for personal services and \$50,000.00 is for operating expenses.

17 Sec. 31. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

18 DATA HUB; HEALTH RESOURCE ALLOCATION PLAN

19 The sum of \$2,500,000.00 is appropriated to the Department of Labor from
20 the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to enable the Department to serve as the
21 State's health care workforce data hub. The Department shall collect health

1 care workforce data and identify and propose solutions to address data gaps,
2 and shall share the data with the Green Mountain Care Board to inform the
3 Board’s work in identifying the State’s health resources available to meet
4 Vermonters’ health care needs and additional resources that may be necessary,
5 as part of the Board’s Health Resource Allocation Plan responsibilities
6 pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 9405. The Department shall use existing statewide
7 information to the extent practicable to avoid imposing administrative burdens
8 on health care providers and to avoid duplication of efforts underway
9 elsewhere in Vermont. The Department shall expand its data collection
10 practices over two years to include all levels of the health care workforce,
11 beginning with the highest-level licensed health care professionals.

12 Sec. 32. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE
13 BOARD; SUPPLY AND DEMAND MODELING

14 On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Labor, in collaboration
15 with the Green Mountain Care Board, shall explore and recommend to the
16 House Committees on Health Care, on Human Services, and on Commerce and
17 Economic Development and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare
18 and on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs a process,
19 methodology, and necessary funding amounts to establish and maintain the
20 capacity to perform health care supply and demand modeling based on

1 information in the health care workforce data hub, for use by health care
2 employers, health care educators, and policymakers.

3 Sec. 33. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL REGULATION; GREEN
4 MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS;
5 ADMINISTRATIVE COST REDUCTION; REPORT

6 (a) The Department of Financial Regulation shall explore the feasibility of
7 requiring health insurers and their prior authorization vendors to access clinical
8 data from the Vermont Health Information Exchange whenever possible to
9 support prior authorization requests in situations in which a request cannot be
10 automatically approved.

11 (b) The Department of Financial Regulation shall direct health insurers to
12 provide prior authorization information to the Department in a format required
13 by the Department in order to enable the Department to analyze opportunities
14 to align and streamline prior authorization request processes. The Department
15 shall share its findings and recommendations with the Green Mountain Care
16 Board, and the Department and the Board shall collaborate to provide
17 recommendations to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate
18 Committees on Health and Welfare and on Finance on or before January 15,
19 2023 regarding the statutory changes necessary to align and streamline prior
20 authorization processes and requirements across health insurers.

1 Sec. 34. 33 V.S.A. § 3543 is amended to read:

2 § 3543. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

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

7 (2) An eligible individual shall:

8 (A) work in a privately operated center-based child care program or
9 in a family child care home that is regulated by the Division for at least an
10 average of 30 hours per week for 48 weeks of the year, except that this
11 minimum time requirement does not apply to an employee of Vermont Head
12 Start to the extent it conflicts with any law or contract provision governing the
13 terms of employment.

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

15 (C) have earned an associates or bachelor's degree with a major
16 concentration in early childhood, child and human development, elementary
17 education, special education with a birth to age eight focus, or child and family
18 services within the preceding five years.

19 * * *

1 Sec. 35. PILOT PROGRAM; POSITIONS EMBEDDED WITHIN
2 RECOVERY CENTERS

3 (a)(1) In fiscal year 2023, \$1,290,000.00 is appropriated to the Department
4 for Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living’s Division of Vocation
5 Rehabilitation and the Vermont Association of Business Industry and
6 Rehabilitation from the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund for the purpose
7 of developing and implementing a two-year pilot program that embeds 15 FTE
8 new positions within 12 recovery centers across the State.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 (b) On or before January 1, 2024, the Division of Vocational
2 Rehabilitation, in collaboration with the Vermont Association of Business
3 Industry and Rehabilitation, shall submit a report to the House Committees on
4 Commerce and Economic Development and on Human Services and to the
5 Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
6 and on Health and Welfare summarizing the effectiveness of the pilot program,
7 including:

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

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

10 (3) number of job placements; and

11 (4) job retention rates.

12 Sec. 36. ADVANCE VERMONT PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

13 (a) Duties. Advance Vermont shall perform the following duties, in
14 coordination and alignment with State partners, in support of the State’s goal
15 articulated in 10 V.S.A. § 546 that 70 percent of working-age Vermonters hold
16 a credential of value by 2025 (Goal):

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

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

4 (3) assist or coordinate with stakeholders, such as educational, business,
5 governmental, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations, in activities that seek
6 to align the delivery of high-quality education and training opportunities with
7 career advancement and support the policy priorities outlined in 10 V.S.A.
8 § 546;

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

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

15 (6) maintain its web-based resources that provide information about
16 opportunities to obtain a postsecondary credential of value, in coordination
17 with State partners;

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

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

3 (b) Outreach. Advance Vermont may use funds awarded by the State to:

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

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

10 (c) Reports. Advance Vermont shall provide written reports to:

11 (1) the Vermont Department of Labor and Agency of Education about
12 anticipated work and activities using a simplified reporting template jointly
13 developed by Advance Vermont and the State entities on a quarterly basis; and

14 (2) on or before December 15, 2022, the House and Senate committees
15 of jurisdiction regarding the use of funds, activities performed, and outcomes
16 achieved by Advance Vermont.

17 (d) Appropriation. The sum of \$350,000.00 is appropriated from the
18 General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to the Vermont Student Assistance
19 Corporation for the purposes of funding the work outlined in this section by
20 Advance Vermont.

21 Sec. 37. VERMONT SERVE, LEARN, AND EARN PROGRAM;

1 APPROPRIATION

2 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$3,200,000.00 is appropriated from the
3 General Fund to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to be granted
4 to the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps to continue the Vermont Serve,
5 Learn, and Earn Program with other community partners, providing the Corps
6 and its partners with the capital and operating funds necessary to support
7 workforce development goals through creating meaningful paid service and
8 learning opportunities for young adults.

9 Sec. 38. ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY; FINDINGS

10 The General Assembly finds:

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

16 (2) 36,000 adults in Vermont do not have a high school credential, and
17 tens of thousands more lack the skills to matriculate into and be successful in
18 college, in career training programs, or both. Adult education and literacy

1 providers are the first stop on the path to the transformative opportunities that
2 Vermont is offering for these individuals.

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

8 (A) family and life;

9 (B) academics; and

10 (C) career and college readiness.

11 Sec. 39. EFFECTIVE DATES

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

13 (1) Sec. 8a(b)–(c) (Internship Cost Offset Initiative) shall take effect on
14 passage.

15 (2) Sec. 25 (18 V.S.A. § 9456) shall take effect on January 1, 2023 and
16 shall apply to hospital fiscal years 2024 and after.

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2 (Committee vote: _____)

3

4

Representative _____

5

FOR THE COMMITTEE