

1 *Commerce Substitute with Appropriations Amendment to 703 amend 7.1*

2 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

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

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

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

14 (1) ~~\$5,000,000.00~~ \$2,500,000.00 to the University of Vermont Office
15 of Engagement, in consultation with the Vermont Student Assistance
16 Corporation, to administer a statewide forgivable loan program of \$5,000.00
17 per graduate for recent college graduates across all Vermont higher education
18 institutions who commit to work in Vermont for two years after graduation.

19 (2) \$387,000.00 to Vermont Technical College to develop a skilled meat
20 cutter training and apprenticeship facility.

1 (b) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of ~~\$1,000,000.00~~ \$500,000.00 is
2 appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State
3 Fiscal Recovery Funds to the Agency of Human Services to provide grants,
4 which may be administered through a performance-based contract, to refugee-
5 or New American-focused programs working in Vermont to support increased
6 in-migration or retention of recent arrivals.

7 Sec. 2. CTE FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE; FINDINGS

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

12 (b) CTE is a vital component of our educational system, supporting and
13 delivering on the goals established by the General Assembly in 2013 Acts and
14 Resolves No. 77 (flexible pathways), 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 189
15 (workforce development), and in achieving our attainment goal, which is that
16 70 percent of working-age Vermonters have a credential of value by 2025
17 (10 V.S.A. § 546).

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

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

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

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

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

19 (h) 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 189 committed Vermont to a redesign of
20 its workforce development and training system, including the approval of up to

1 four pilot sites or projects to examine the way our CTE system is funded and
2 governed.

3 (i) In a report dated June 14, 2021, the Agency of Education reported on its
4 progress, which was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report
5 presented possible alternatives to our current funding structure, which is
6 widely seen as a barrier to enrollment. However, these alternatives were based
7 on an examination of only the CTE school district funding model and did not
8 include the study of governance models. The report recommended completing
9 this study of CTE funding and governance models to propose actionable
10 implementation steps for the State.

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

17 Sec. 3. FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF

18 CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN VERMONT

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

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

4 (2) examine CTE governance structures in relationship to those funding
5 structures;

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

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

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

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

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

20 (c) On or before March 1, 2023, the Joint Fiscal Office shall issue a written
21 report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House

1 Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee
2 on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, the House
3 Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance on the
4 work performed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

5 (d)(1) The Agency of Education shall consider the work performed and
6 report issued pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and shall develop an
7 implementation plan, including recommended steps to design and implement
8 new funding and governance models.

9 (2) On or before July 1, 2023, the Agency shall issue a written report to
10 the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on
11 Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic
12 Development, Housing and General Affairs, the House Committee on Ways
13 and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance that describes the results of
14 its work under this subsection and the implementation plan and makes
15 recommendations for legislative action.

16 Sec. 4. INVESTMENT IN THE UP-SKILLING OF PRIVATE SECTOR
17 EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT THE EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS
18 AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS; APPROPRIATIONS

19 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of ~~\$500,000.00~~ \$250,000.00 is
20 appropriated from the **General Fund** to the Agency of Commerce and
21 Community Development for a performance-based contract to provide

1 statewide delivery of business coaching and other forms of training to BIPOC
2 business owners, networking and special convenings, and career fairs,
3 workshops and paid internships, career guidance, and other support for BIPOC
4 workers across the State.

5 Sec. 5. REGIONAL WORKFORCE EXPANSION SYSTEM

6 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

7 (1) Vermont is experiencing an acute labor shortage in 2022.

8 (2) According to the Employment and Labor Marketing Information

9 Division of the Vermont Department of Labor:

10 (A) There are approximately 28,000 job openings in Vermont as of

11 December 2021.

12 (B) 9,945 individuals meet the federal statistical definition of

13 unemployed as of January 2022.

14 (C) 4,500 individuals are receiving unemployment insurance

15 assistance as of March 2022.

16 (D) The workforce has shrunk by 26,000 individuals from 2019 to

17 2022, yet the unemployment rate is just three percent as of January 2022.

18 (E) The workforce participation rate has fallen from 66 percent to

19 60.6 percent.

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

4 ~~(4) The federal funding for field staff in the Workforce Development~~
5 ~~Division has declined significantly over the past 20 years, supporting 75~~
6 ~~persons in 2022 as compared to 135 in 2003.~~

7 ~~(5) Though Vermont has a small population, the unique characteristics~~
8 ~~of its region's employers, educational institutions, demographics, and~~
9 ~~socioeconomic conditions make it best to address efforts to connect individuals~~
10 ~~with training and job placement on a regional basis.~~

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

15 ~~(1) increase statewide labor participation rate;~~

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

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

18 ~~(4) increase job preparedness.~~

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

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

3 ~~(2) focus on the overarching goal of helping workers find jobs and~~
4 ~~employers find workers;~~

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

7 ~~(4) collaborate with local education and training providers and regional~~
8 ~~workforce partners to create and regularly distribute data related to local labor~~
9 ~~force supply and demand.~~

10 ~~(d) System infrastructure.~~

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

16 ~~(2) Of the eight positions authorized in this subsection, five shall be~~
17 ~~Workforce Expansion Specialists who shall report to the Workforce~~
18 ~~Development Division and who shall be assigned, one each, to the Division's~~
19 ~~five regions.~~

20 ~~(e) Coordination.~~

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

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

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

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

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

3 Sec. 6. INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS; WORKFORCE
4 DEVELOPMENT; PILOT PROGRAM

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

9 (b) Policy; appropriations.

10 (1)(A) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$420,000.00 is appropriated
11 from the General Fund to the Department of Corrections, in consultation with
12 the Vermont Department of Labor, to address education and vocational
13 enhancement needs. These funds shall not be allocated from any amounts
14 budgeted for Justice Reinvestment II initiatives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 (c) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Corrections
20 shall create and submit a report on workforce and education training programs
21 in correctional facilities to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee;

1 the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Commerce and
2 Economic Development; and the Senate Committees on Economic
3 Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Judiciary. The report shall:

4 (1) identify program design, logistical needs, and policy changes to
5 current Department of Corrections facility-based training and educational
6 programs necessary to successfully enable incarcerated individuals’
7 reintegration into their communities, including changes to programs that
8 enhance individuals’ skill development, knowledge, and other support needed
9 to qualify for and secure a position in a critical occupation in Vermont;

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

13 (3) provide an update on the Department of Corrections’ use of
14 education and vocational enhancement funding in fiscal year 2023;

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

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

19 Sec. 7. INTENT

1 It is the intent of the General Assembly to improve the recruitment and
2 retention of correctional officers to ensure adequate staffing and safe working
3 conditions in facilities operated by the Department of Corrections.

4 Sec. 8. IMPROVEMENT OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICER
5 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION; REPORT

6 (a) On or before January 15, 2023, the Secretary of Human Services, in
7 consultation with the Commissioners of Corrections and of Human Resources,
8 shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Appropriations, on
9 Corrections and Institutions, and on Government Operations and the Senate
10 Committees on Appropriations, on Government Operations, and on Judiciary
11 identifying conditions that pose an obstacle to the successful recruitment and
12 retention of correctional officers and setting forth a plan to improve the
13 recruitment and retention of correctional officers.

14 (b)(1) The report shall specifically analyze the impact of the following on
15 the recruitment and retention of correctional officers:

16 (A) wages and benefits;

17 (B) terms and conditions of employment;

18 (C) working conditions in Department of Corrections facilities,
19 including health and safety issues and the physical condition of the facilities;

20 and

21 (D) staffing levels and overtime.

1 (2) The report shall, for each of the issues examined pursuant to
2 subdivision (1) of this subsection, analyze how the following states compare to
3 Vermont and shall identify any best practices in those states that could improve
4 recruitment and retention of correctional officers in Vermont:

5 (A) Maine;

6 (B) New Hampshire;

7 (C) New York;

8 (D) Massachusetts;

9 (E) Rhode Island; and

10 (F) Connecticut.

11 (c) The report shall, as part of the plan to improve the recruitment and
12 retention of correctional officers, identify specific administrative and
13 legislative actions that are necessary to successfully improve the recruitment
14 and retention of correctional officers.

15 Sec. 9. REPEALS

16 10 V.S.A. §§ 544 and 545 are repealed.

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

18 § 547. WORK-BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

19 (a) Vermont Work-Based Learning and Training Program. The
20 Department of Labor shall develop the statewide Work-Based Learning and
21 Training Program that serves transitioning secondary and postsecondary

1 students and Vermonters seeking work-based experience as part of a career
2 experience or change and is designed to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 (1) build and administer the Program;

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

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

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

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

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

12 (1) the total number of participants served;

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

16 (3) the average wage of participants in subdivision (2) of this subsection
17 at the start of the Program and the average wage of participants one year after
18 completion;

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

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

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

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

8 **Sec. X. WORK-BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM;**

9 **APPROPRIATION**

10 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$1,500,000.00 is appropriated from the
11 General Fund to the Department of Labor to implement the Vermont Work-
12 Based Learning and Training Program created in Sec. 10 of this act.

13 **Sec. 11. SECONDARY STUDENT INDUSTRY RECOGNIZED**

14 **CREDENTIAL PILOT**

15 (a) Pilot Project creation. There is created the Secondary Student Industry
16 Recognized Credential Pilot Project to provide funding for secondary students
17 taking nondegree adult courses at Vermont career technical centers.

18 (b) Eligibility.

19 (1) An eligible student may enroll in one adult career technical center
20 course prior to completion of secondary school for which neither the student
21 nor the student's parent or guardian shall be required to pay tuition. A student

1 may enroll in a summer, evening, or weekend course offered while secondary
2 school is in session and during the summer.

3 (2) A Vermont resident who is attending a Vermont public or approved
4 independent secondary school who has completed grade 11 but has not
5 received a high school diploma is eligible to participate in the Pilot Project.

6 (3) The program funded must be an adult career technical center course,
7 included as an element within the student’s personalized learning plan and
8 reasonably related to the student’s career goals.

9 (4) The secondary school and the career and technical center must
10 determine that the student is sufficiently prepared to succeed in the selected
11 adult course and meets the course prerequisites and must have exhausted use of
12 available funding sources before an application is submitted.

13 (c) Adult career technical education. Secondary students may take courses
14 that fall under the definitions of adult career technical education or
15 postsecondary career technical education as they are defined in 16 V.S.A.
16 § 1522(11) and (12). The postsecondary or adult course may be taken at any
17 regional career and technical center, as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 1522(4).

18 (d) Administration. The Vermont Department of Labor, in consultation
19 with the Vermont Agency of Education, shall administer the pilot.

20 (1) The Agency of Education shall develop an application that shall be
21 completed by the requesting student’s secondary school that includes the

1 student's enrollment status, the course detail for which payment is requested, a
2 copy of the student's personalized learning plan that supports funding for the
3 course, attestation that the secondary and adult career technical education
4 programs find the program of study appropriate for the student, description of
5 federal and local funding sources that were explored but insufficient or
6 unavailable for use by the student, and any other information that may be
7 deemed necessary.

8 (2) Applications shall be submitted jointly to the Department of Labor
9 and the Agency of Education. The Agency shall take not more than 10
10 business days to review applications and forward applications of eligible
11 students who request funding to the Department of Labor.

12 (3) The Department of Labor shall review the application and, if
13 appropriate, meet with the student to determine eligibility for existing federal
14 and State programs, including WIOA Title I Youth (in-school) and the
15 Vermont Youth Employment Program. If the Department can meet the
16 student's need using existing funds, it will disburse funding and support
17 accordingly.

18 (4) The Department shall provide funding for tuition to students for
19 whom no other program or source of funding meets their need.

1 (5) For students who meet low-income qualifications set annually under
2 WIOA, the Department may also use funding to purchase books, supplies,
3 exam fees, and equipment.

4 (e) Funding. The Department of Labor shall use \$100,000.00 of funds
5 available in FY 2023, for the purpose of funding the Pilot Project. Funds shall
6 be granted to eligible students on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are
7 depleted. No adult CTE center shall receive more than \$20,000.00 in a fiscal
8 year.

9 (f) Adult career and technical center report. The Department of Labor shall
10 require a report from each adult career and technical education center
11 providing information to support the Department’s reporting requirements
12 below.

13 (g) Interim Report. The Department of Labor and Agency of Education
14 shall 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 or
17 before the January 15, 2023 regarding the use of funds, including data relating
18 to student circumstances, levels of participation, and how local school districts
19 are able or unable to meet the career preparation and training needs of
20 secondary students using the program.

1 (h) Final Report. The Department of Labor and Agency of Education shall
2 report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House
3 Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee
4 on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, the House
5 Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance within
6 45 days following the end of the fiscal year or exhaustion of funds, whichever
7 comes first, regarding the use of funds, including data relating to the number of
8 participants, student circumstances, levels of participation, what certifications
9 were issued, how local school districts are able or unable to meet the career
10 preparation and training needs of secondary students using the program, and
11 recommendations on how to address gaps in access and funding for secondary
12 students seeking professional certifications not offered through the secondary
13 education system.

14 Sec. 12. INTERNSHIP COST OFFSET INITIATIVE

15 (a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of ~~\$3,000,000.00~~ \$1,500,000.00 is
16 appropriated from the **General Fund** to the Department of Labor for an
17 Internship Cost Offset Initiative.

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

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

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

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

13 Sec. 13. THE VERMONT TRADES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in the following fiscal year to
2 award additional scholarships as set forth in this section.

3 (e) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from
4 the **General Fund** to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for
5 scholarships for trades students under the Vermont Trades Scholarship
6 Program.

7 Sec. 14. THE VERMONT TRADES LOAN REIMBURSEMENT
8 PROGRAM

9 (a) The Vermont Trades Loan Repayment Reimbursement Program is
10 created and shall be administered by the Vermont Student Assistance
11 Corporation. The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse
12 funds under the Program to eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of
13 funds by the General Assembly for this purpose.

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

16 (1) be a Vermont resident; and

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

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

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

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

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

13 Sec. 15. CTE CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

14 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM; REVOLVING LOAN
15 FUND

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

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

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

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

5 (4) expand housing access to Vermonters in communities throughout the
6 State; and

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

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

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

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

16 (c) Proposals; applications; funding.

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

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

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

5 (C) commercial construction projects that have substantial
6 community benefit.

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

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

13 (A) the educational benefits for students and fit with the CTE
14 curriculum;

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

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

19 (i) educational instruction and academic credit;

20 (ii) project management;

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

1 (iv) compensation and benefits, including compliance with labor
2 laws, standards, and practices; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 (2) The project includes a weatherization component.

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

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

4 (f) Funding; proceeds; revolving loans.

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

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

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

12 Sec. 16. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; FINDINGS

13 The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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

8 (5) the Vermont Early Care and Learning Dividend Study found that
9 increased investment in early care and education, as described in the
10 recommendations of Vermont’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High-
11 Quality Affordable Child Care, would yield \$3.08 for every additional dollar
12 invested into the system;

13 (6) 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 45 established goals that no Vermont
14 family spend more than 10 percent of its income on child care and that early
15 childhood educators receive compensation commensurate with their peers in
16 similar fields as informed by a systems analysis and financing study;

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

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

4 Sec. 17. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

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

10 ~~Sec. 18. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT~~

11 ~~In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$125,000.00 is appropriated from the~~
12 ~~General Fund to the Department for Children and Families’ Child~~
13 ~~Development Division for a performance based contract to develop and~~
14 ~~implement a comprehensive early childhood educator recruitment campaign.~~

15 Sec. 19. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

16 (a) The General Assembly values all health care workers, at every level and
17 in each component of the health care system. The General Assembly also
18 acknowledges the many struggles faced by health care workers and that the
19 pandemic has placed further strain on an already taxed system. Many health
20 care workers have not had their pay adjusted over time to address increases in
21 the cost of living, essentially amounting to pay cuts from year to year. Health

1 care workers have experienced burnout, trauma, and moral injuries due to a
2 history of underfunding and the present stress of the pandemic.

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

7 Sec. 20. EMERGENCY GRANTS TO SUPPORT NURSE EDUCATORS

8 (a) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from
9 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
10 Funds to the Department of Health and shall carry forward for the purpose of
11 providing emergency interim grants to Vermont’s nursing schools over three
12 years to increase the compensation for their nurse faculty and staff, with
13 \$1,000,000.00 to be distributed in each of fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025 to
14 increase the compensation for each full-time-equivalent (FTE) member of the
15 clinical and didactic nurse faculty and staff. The Department shall distribute
16 the funds among the nursing schools in Vermont equitably based on each
17 school’s proportion of nursing faculty and staff to the total number of FTE
18 nursing faculty and staff across all nursing schools statewide.

19 (b) If the nurse faculty or staff, or both, of a nursing school receiving a
20 grant under this section are subject to a collective bargaining agreement, the
21 use of the grant funds provided to the nursing school for those faculty or staff,

1 or both, shall be subject to impact bargaining between the nursing school and
2 the collective bargaining representative of the nurse faculty or staff, or both, to
3 the extent required by the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

4 Sec. 21. NURSE PRECEPTOR INCENTIVE GRANTS; HOSPITALS;

5 WORKING GROUP; REPORT

6 (a)(1) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$2,400,000.00 is appropriated from
7 the **General Fund** to the Agency of Human Services to provide incentive grants
8 to hospital-employed nurses in Vermont to serve as preceptors for nursing
9 students enrolled in Vermont nursing school programs. The Agency shall
10 distribute the funds to hospitals employing nurses who provide student
11 preceptor supervision based on the number of preceptor hours to be provided,
12 at a rate of \$5.00 per preceptor hour, or a lesser hourly rate if the need exceeds
13 the available funds.

14 (2) If nurse preceptors receiving compensation pursuant to a grant awarded
15 to a hospital under this section are subject to a collective bargaining agreement,
16 the use of the grant funds provided to the hospital for the nurse preceptors shall
17 be subject to impact bargaining between the hospital and the collective
18 bargaining representative of the nurses to the extent required by the collective
19 bargaining agreement.

20 (b)(1) The Director of Health Care Reform or designee in the Agency of
21 Human Services shall convene a working group of stakeholders representing

1 nursing schools, long-term care facilities, designated and specialized service
2 agencies, federally qualified health centers, home health agencies, primary care
3 practices, and other health care facilities to:

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

7 (B) establish sustainable funding models for compensating nurses
8 servicing as preceptors or for supporting the hiring of additional nurses to
9 alleviate the pressures on nurse preceptors, or both; and

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

14 (2) On or before January 15, 2023, the Director of Health Care Reform
15 shall provide the working group's action plan and any recommendations for
16 legislative action to the House Committees on Health Care, on Commerce and
17 Economic Development, and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees on
18 Health and Welfare, on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs,
19 and on Appropriations.

1 Sec. 22. HEALTH CARE EMPLOYER NURSING PIPELINE AND
2 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

3 (a) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from
4 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
5 Funds to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation and shall carry forward
6 for the purpose of providing grants to health care employers, including
7 hospitals, long-term care facilities, designated and specialized service agencies,
8 federally qualified health centers, and other health care providers, to establish
9 or expand partnerships with Vermont nursing schools to create nursing
10 pipeline or apprenticeship programs, or both, that will train members of the
11 health care employers’ existing staff, including personal care attendants,
12 licensed nursing assistants, and licensed practical nurses, to become higher-
13 level nursing professionals. Through a combination of scholarship awards,
14 grants awarded to health care employers pursuant to this section, and the health
15 care employer’s contributions, the trainees’ tuition and fees shall be covered in
16 full, and trainees shall be provided with assistance in meeting their living costs,
17 such as housing and child care, while attending the program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Sec. 23. 18 V.S.A. § 34 is added to read:

2 § 34. VERMONT NURSING FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE
3 PROGRAM

4 (a) The Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan Incentive Program is created
5 and shall be administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with
6 the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The Vermont Student
7 Assistance Corporation shall disburse forgivable loan funds under the Program
8 on behalf of eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of funds by the
9 General Assembly for this purpose.

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

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

14 (2) demonstrate financial need;

15 (3) demonstrate academic capacity by carrying the minimum grade point
16 average in the individual's course of study prior to receiving the fund award;
17 and

18 (4) agree to work as a nurse in Vermont for a minimum of one year
19 following licensure for each year of forgivable loan awarded.

1 (c)(1) First priority for forgivable loan funds shall be given to students
2 pursuing a practical nursing certificate who will be eligible to sit for the
3 NCLEX-PN examination upon completion of the certificate.

4 (2) Second priority for forgivable loan funds shall be given to students
5 pursuing an associate’s degree in nursing who will be eligible to sit for the
6 NCLEX-RN examination upon graduation.

7 (3) Third priority for forgivable loan funds shall be given to students
8 pursuing a bachelor of science degree in nursing.

9 (4) Fourth priority shall be given to students pursuing graduate nursing
10 education.

11 (d) Students attending an approved postsecondary educational institution in
12 Vermont shall receive first preference for forgivable loans.

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

19 Sec. 24. REPEAL

20 18 V.S.A. § 31 (educational assistance; incentives; nurses) is repealed.

1 Sec. 25. VERMONT NURSING FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE
2 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

3 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$100,000.00 in Global Commitment
4 investment funds is appropriated to the Department of Health for forgivable
5 loans for nursing students under the Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan
6 Incentive Program established in Sec. 23 of this act.

7 Sec. 26. 18 V.S.A. § 35 is added to read:

8 § 35. VERMONT NURSING AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LOAN
9 REPAYMENT PROGRAM

10 (a) As used in this section:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 or physician assistant in this State; and

21 (4) be a resident of Vermont.

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

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

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

9 Sec. 27. VERMONT NURSING AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LOAN

10 REPAYMENT PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

11 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the
12 General Fund to the Department of Health for loan repayment for nurses and
13 physician assistants under the Vermont Nursing and Physician Assistant Loan
14 Repayment Program established in Sec. 26 of this act.

15 Sec. 28. 18 V.S.A. § 36 is added to read:

16 § 36. NURSE EDUCATOR FORGIVABLE LOAN AND LOAN

17 REPAYMENT PROGRAM

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

19 (1) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the eligibility
20 requirements under this section for a forgivable loan or loan repayment.

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

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

6 (4) “Gift aid” means grant or scholarship financial aid received from the
7 federal government or from the State.

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

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

13 (7) “Nurse educator” means a nurse with a master’s or doctoral degree
14 that qualifies the individual to teach at a nursing school in this State.

15 (8) “Program” means the Nurse Educator Forgivable Loan and Loan
16 Repayment Program created under this section.

17 (b) Program creation. The Nurse Educator Forgivable Loan and Loan
18 Repayment Program is created and shall be administered by the Department of
19 Health in collaboration with the Corporation. The Program provides
20 forgivable loans to students enrolled in an eligible school who commit to
21 working as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State and who meet the

1 eligibility requirements in subsection (d) of this section. The Program also
2 provides loan repayment on behalf of individuals who work as nurse educators
3 at a nursing school in this State and who meet the eligibility requirements in
4 subsection (e) of this section.

5 (c) The forgivable loan and loan repayment benefits provided under the
6 Program shall be paid on behalf of the eligible individual by the Corporation,
7 subject to the appropriation of funds by the General Assembly specifically for
8 this purpose.

9 (d) Eligibility for forgivable loans. To be eligible for a forgivable loan
10 under the Program, an individual, whether a resident or nonresident, shall
11 satisfy all of the following requirements:

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

14 (2) continually demonstrate satisfactory academic progress by
15 maintaining the minimum grade point average or better or the equivalent as
16 determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point
17 averages;

18 (3) have used any available gift aid;

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

1 (5) have executed a promissory note that will reduce the individual’s
2 forgivable loan benefit, in whole or in part, if the individual fails to complete
3 the period of service required in subsection (f) of this section; and

4 (6) have completed the Program’s application form, the free application
5 for federal student aid (FAFSA), and the Vermont grant application each
6 academic year of enrollment in accordance with a schedule determined by the
7 Corporation.

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

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

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

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

16 (4) be a resident of Vermont.

17 (f) Service commitment.

18 (1) Forgivable loans. For each year of service as a nurse educator at a
19 nursing school in this State, an eligible individual shall be entitled to a full
20 academic year of forgivable loan benefit under the Program. If an eligible
21 individual fails to serve as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State for

1 a period that would entitle the individual to the full forgivable loan benefit
2 received by the individual, other than for good cause as determined by the
3 Corporation in consultation with the Vermont Department of Health, then the
4 individual shall receive only partial loan forgiveness for a pro rata portion of
5 the loan pursuant to the terms of the interest-free reimbursement promissory
6 note signed by the individual at the time of entering the Program.

7 (2) Loan repayment. An eligible individual shall be entitled to an
8 amount of loan cancellation and repayment under this section equal to one year
9 of loans for each year of service as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this
10 State.

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

14 Sec. 29. NURSE EDUCATOR FORGIVABLE LOAN AND LOAN
15 REPAYMENT PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

16 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the
17 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
18 Funds to the Department of Health for forgivable loans and loan repayment for
19 nurse educators under the Nurse Educator Forgivable Loan and Loan
20 Repayment Program established in Sec. 28 of this act.

21 Sec. 30. 18 V.S.A. § 9456 is amended to read:

1 § 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

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

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

6 * * *

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

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

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

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

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

* * *

Sec. 31. GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; FISCAL YEAR 2023
HOSPITAL BUDGET REVIEW; NURSING WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

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

Sec. 32. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; HEALTH CARE
WORKFORCE DATA CENTER

(a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of ~~\$2,500,000.00~~ \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds to the Office of Health Care Reform in the Agency of Human Services to enable the Agency to establish and operate the statewide Health Care Workforce Data Center. In order to enhance the State’s public health data systems, respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and improve the State’s COVID-19 mitigation and prevention efforts, the Center shall collect health care workforce data, shall collaborate with the Director of Health Care Reform to identify and propose solutions to address data gaps, and

1 shall share the data with the Green Mountain Care Board as appropriate to
2 inform the Board’s Health Resource Allocation Plan responsibilities pursuant
3 to 18 V.S.A. § 9405.

4 (b) The Center shall use existing statewide information to the extent
5 practicable to avoid imposing administrative burdens on health care providers
6 and to avoid duplication of efforts underway elsewhere in Vermont. The
7 Center shall expand its data collection practices over two years to include all
8 levels of the health care workforce, beginning with the highest-level licensed
9 health care professionals.

10 (c) In order to ensure the Center has access to accurate and timely health
11 care workforce data, the Center:

12 (1) shall have the cooperation of other State agencies and departments in
13 responding to the Center’s requests for information;

14 (2) may enter into data use agreements with institutions of higher
15 education and other public and private entities, to the extent permitted under
16 State and federal law; and

17 (3) may collect vacancy and turnover information from health care
18 employers.

19 (d) One classified, full-time Health Care Workforce Data Center Manager
20 position is created in the Agency of Human Services, Office of Health Care

1 Reform in fiscal year 2023 to manage the Health Care Workforce Data Center
2 created pursuant to this section.

3 (e) The Agency of Human Services may include proposals for additional
4 funding or data access, or both, for the Center as part of the Agency’s fiscal
5 year 2024 budget request.

6 Sec. 33. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; BARRIERS TO
7 MENTAL HEALTH LICENSURE; REPORT

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

17 Sec. 34. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; POSITION;
18 APPROPRIATION

19 (a) One classified, three-year limited-service Health Care Workforce
20 Coordinator position is created in the Agency of Human Services, Office of
21 Health Care Reform in fiscal year 2023 to support the health care workforce

1 initiatives set forth in this act and in the Health Care Workforce Development
2 Strategic Plan. The Coordinator shall focus on building educational, clinical,
3 and housing partnerships and support structures to increase and improve health
4 care workforce training, recruitment, and retention.

5 (b) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$170,000.00 is appropriated from the
6 General Fund to the Agency of Human Services, Office of Health Care Reform
7 for the Health Care Workforce Coordinator position, of which \$120,000.00 is
8 for personal services and \$50,000.00 is for operating expenses.

9 Sec. 35. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE

10 BOARD; SUPPLY AND DEMAND MODELING

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

1 Sec. 36. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL REGULATION; GREEN
2 MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS;
3 ADMINISTRATIVE COST REDUCTION; REPORT

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

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

1 Sec. 37. 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. 38. PILOT PROGRAM; POSITIONS EMBEDDED WITHIN
2 RECOVERY CENTERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 value of education and training that would further their advancement in
2 educational pathways and pursuit of career goals, through targeted outreach as
3 outlined in subsection (b) of this section;

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

7 (3) assist or coordinate with stakeholders, such as educational, business,
8 governmental, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations, in activities that seek
9 to align the delivery of high-quality education and training opportunities with
10 career advancement and support the policy priorities outlined in 10 V.S.A.
11 § 546;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Sec. 40. VERMONT SERVE, LEARN, AND EARN PROGRAM;

2 APPROPRIATION

3 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of ~~\$3,200,000.00~~ \$2,000,000.00 is
4 appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Forests, Parks and
5 Recreation to provide funding for capital and operating needs of groups
6 participating in the Vermont Serve, Learn, and Earn Program, which supports
7 workforce development goals through creating meaningful paid service and
8 learning opportunities for young adults.

9 Sec. 41. 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. 42. FINDINGS; FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

12 The General Assembly finds for the purposes of this section and Secs. 43 to
13 45 of this act:

14 (1) Private and public forestlands:

15 (A) constitute unique and irreplaceable resources, benefits, and
16 values of statewide importance;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 (3) Private and public forestlands are critical for and contribute
9 significantly to the State’s outdoor recreation and tourism economies.

10 (4) Eighty percent of Vermont’s forestland is held in private ownership,
11 of which 56 percent of private lands are enrolled in the forestland category of
12 Vermont’s Use Value Appraisal Program (UVA). UVA is Vermont’s most
13 important conservation program and contains the largest foundation of supply
14 to support a vibrant forest-based rural economy.

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

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

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

8 Sec. 43. 10 V.S.A. chapter 82 is added to read:

9 CHAPTER 82. VERMONT FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

10 § 2531. VERMONT FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

11 (a) Creation. The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation shall
12 create the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap to strengthen, modernize,
13 promote, and protect the forest products sector in Vermont. The
14 Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation may contract with a qualified
15 contractor for the creation of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap.
16 During the contract proposal process, the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and
17 Recreation shall seek a proposal to complete the Vermont Forest Future
18 Strategic Roadmap from the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

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

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

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

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

9 (4) identify actionable strategies designed to strengthen, modernize,
10 promote, and protect the forest products sector in Vermont, including
11 opportunities for new product development, opening new markets for Vermont
12 forest products, adopting modern manufacturing processes, and utilizing new
13 ways to market Vermont forest products.

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

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

- 1 (2) identify infrastructure investment and funding to support and
2 promote Vermont forest products enterprises;
- 3 (3) identify regulatory barriers and propose policy recommendations to
4 support and strengthen the Vermont forest economy;
- 5 (4) identify opportunities for all State agencies to engage with and
6 enhance the Vermont forest products sector, including the Department of
7 Buildings and General Services, the Agency of Commerce and Community
8 Development, the Department of Tourism and Marketing, the Agency of
9 Education, the Agency of Transportation, the Department of Public Service,
10 the Agency of Natural Resources, the Department of Financial Regulation, and
11 the Department of Labor;
- 12 (5) develop recommendations to support education and training of the
13 current and future workforce of the Vermont forest products sector;
- 14 (6) propose alternatives for the modernization of transportation and
15 regulation of Vermont forest products enterprises, including modernization of
16 local and State permits;
- 17 (7) identify methods or programs that Vermont forest enterprises can
18 utilize to access business assistance services;
- 19 (8) recommend how to maintain access by Vermont forest products
20 enterprises to forestland and how to maintain the stewardship and conservation
21 of Vermont forests as a whole;

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

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

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

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

10 (1) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation or relevant
11 contractor shall develop the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap and all
12 subsequent revisions through the use of a public stakeholder process that
13 includes and invites participation by interested parties representing all users of
14 Vermont’s forests, including representatives of forest products enterprises,
15 State agencies, investors, forestland owners, recreational interests, loggers,
16 foresters, truckers, sawmills, firewood processors, wood products
17 manufacturers, education representatives, and others.

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

21 (e) Advisory panel; administration.

1 (1) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation or relevant
2 contractor shall convene a Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap advisory
3 panel to review and counsel in the development and implementation of the
4 Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap. The advisory panel shall include
5 representatives of forest products enterprises, State agencies, investors,
6 forestland owners, foresters, loggers, truckers, wood products manufacturers,
7 recreational specialists, education representatives, trade organizations, and
8 other partners as deemed appropriate. The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and
9 Recreation shall select representatives to the advisory panel.

10 (2) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation or relevant
11 contractor may seek grants or other means of assistance to support the
12 development and implementation of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic
13 Roadmap.

14 Sec. 44. IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

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

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

4 Sec. 45. APPROPRIATIONS

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

11 Sec. 46. ECONOMIC RECOVERY GRANT PROGRAM; TRANSFER

12 The Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall transfer to
13 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery
14 Funds any amounts remaining in the Economic Recovery Grant Program.

15 Sec. 47. EFFECTIVE DATES

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

17 (1) Sec. 12(b)–(c) (Internship Cost Offset Initiative) shall take effect on
18 passage.

19 (2) Sec. 30 (18 V.S.A. § 9456) shall take effect on January 1, 2023 and
20 shall apply to hospital fiscal years 2024 and after.