

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 RESPONSE TO CRITICAL WORKFORCE
8 SHORTAGES; PRIORITIZING HEALTH AND SAFETY;
9 APPROPRIATIONS

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

12 (1) \$1,000,000.00 for program funding for mental health nursing
13 programs:

14 (A) \$500,000.00 to the University of Vermont; and

15 (B) \$500,000.00 to Vermont State University.

16 (2) \$6,000,000.00 to Vermont State University to double the nursing
17 program capacity.

18 (3) \$3,000,000.00 to the University of Vermont to scale up its nursing
19 program by 50 percent.

20 (4) \$2,000,000.00 to the Agency of Human Services for project
21 management, stakeholder participation, and implementation costs of the Health

1 Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan, exclusive of financial incentive
2 programs.

3 Sec. 2. IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES AND FUNDING FOR EXPANDING
4 THE LABOR FORCE; INCREASING THE NUMBER OF
5 PARTICIPANTS AND PARTICIPATION RATES;
6 APPROPRIATIONS

7 In fiscal year 2023 the following amounts are appropriated from the General
8 Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

9 (1) \$5,000,000.00 to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation to
10 administer a statewide forgivable loan program of \$5,000.00 per graduate for
11 recent college graduates across all Vermont higher education institutions who
12 commit to work in Vermont for two years after graduation.

13 (2) \$3,000,000.00 to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation to
14 administer up to \$3,000.00 per individual for matching grants for paid
15 Vermont internships or registered apprenticeships where the grant matches
16 employer contribution up to the grant limit. The employer contribution shall
17 meet or exceed Vermont livable wage requirements on its own or any existing
18 internship or apprenticeship rules for paid work experiences.

19 (3) \$2,000,000.00 to the State Refugee Office to administer as grants to
20 refugee- or New American-focused programs working in Vermont, to support
21 increased in-migration or retention of recent arrivals.

1 (4) \$387,000.00 to Vermont Technical College to develop a skilled meat
2 cutter training and apprenticeship facility.

3 (5) \$1,500,000.00 to the Department of Labor to grant to expand
4 capacity of Working Fields or other support and retraining nonprofit
5 organizations, or both, who work with justice-involved, or recently justice-
6 involved, individuals to support adults with low-level offenses in finding job
7 training, upskilling, and record expunging opportunities so they can fully
8 participate in the labor force.

9 Sec. 3. IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES AND FUNDING FOR STRATEGIC
10 SECTORS; CURRENT DEMAND-DRIVEN AND FUTURE-
11 DRIVEN INITIATIVES; 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) Future-driven initiatives concerning the green economy and climate
15 workforce.

16 (2) \$2,000,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community
17 Development to regrant to entities working to scale investments in sector and
18 occupation career pathways to complete Talent Pipelines for all the priority
19 sectors and occupations within two years, with priority given to recipients of
20 the EDA Good Jobs Challenge. The Agency shall ensure funding is targeted to
21 the following primary sectors and occupations: construction, health care, food

1 and durable goods manufacturing, information technology, broadband
2 installation, accounting, product development, supply chain logistics, energy
3 system, software development, and outdoor recreation, and customer service.

4 (b) The Committee on Government Accountability, in collaboration with
5 the Chief Performance Officer and Chief Equity Officer, shall develop:

6 (1) performance measurement frameworks for evaluating stimulus- and
7 incentive-based spending on specific State positions, general occupations, and
8 sectors, including measuring the cascading impact of State investments in State
9 employee compensation and incentive-based retention or recruitment on State
10 supported entities delivering community-based solutions, specifically, social
11 services with related occupations that are significantly financially dependent
12 on State-set reimbursement rates for ability to change their compensation
13 structures; and

14 (2) social equity performance notes to ensure that targeted workforce
15 incentives are improving, not exacerbating, inequities.

16 **Sec. 4. [H.483 Language]**

17 SEC. 5. INVESTMENT IN AN AGILE, TECHNOLOGICALLY

18 RESILIENT WORKFORCE; APPROPRIATIONS

19 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$250,000.00 each is appropriated from the
20 General Fund to the University of Vermont and the Vermont State Colleges to

1 support staff capacity to engage in collaborative network activities and be more
2 responsive to demand-driven training and development needs; and

3 Sec. 6. ENABLE EVERY WORKER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
4 WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE
5 SUPPORT; APPROPRIATIONS

6 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$400,000.00 is appropriated from the
7 General Fund to the Department of Labor to regrant as a performance-based
8 grant to a Vermont based nonprofit with statewide reach to design, market, and
9 pilot a job coaching and career planning help-line and online platform to
10 provide incumbent workers with career counseling, resources for evaluating
11 job transitions, and risk/reward calculation of switching employers.

12 Sec. 7. INVESTMENT IN THE UP-SKILLING OF PRIVATE SECTOR
13 EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT THE EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS
14 AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS; APPROPRIATIONS

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

17 (1) \$1,500,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community
18 Development to regrant a performance-based contract for statewide delivery of
19 a SmallBusiness411 helpline and website to help small businesses navigate
20 available resources to an entity with statewide reach, small business expertise,
21 and the technical knowledge to expand upon the SBA Community Navigator

1 Pilot Program. The successful grant proposal must include a marketing budget
2 to boost visibility of the program.

3 (2) \$2,000,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community
4 Development to subgrant to one or more partners to assemble, develop, and
5 design the content, delivery model, and statewide roll-out of a new employer
6 initiative to upskill employers.

7 (A) The initiative will improve access to employer best practices, HR
8 information, interpreted labor market info, business coaching, and support for
9 adapting business models to current market conditions.

10 (B) The initiative will provide training in best practices to businesses
11 on how to operate remotely effectively over the long-term.

12 (C) The content shall include an employer of choice program to
13 support businesses prioritizing human well-being, healthy work, and high-
14 quality employment practices and creativity and innovation in the way we
15 work, for example, four-day work weeks, benefits, work culture, employee
16 ownership, and B-Corp certification.

17 (D) Program partners will collaborate with, and regrant funds through
18 performance-based grants to, the RDCs and specialized trade and business
19 associations for sector- or market-specific training and to fund local and
20 regional distribution and trainings.

1 (3) \$500,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community

2 Development:

3 (A) to regrant a performance-based contract for statewide delivery of
4 business coaching to support employee ownership business models, including
5 worker co-ops and employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs); and

6 (B) to create a task force on ESOPs and worker ownership business
7 models to make recommendations on how the State can ease regulation to
8 stimulate transition to ESOPs or worker-ownership.

9 (4) \$500,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community

10 Development to regrant a performance-based contract to the Vermont
11 Professionals of Color Network for statewide delivery of business coaching
12 and other forms of training to BIPOC business owners, networking and special
13 convenings, and career fairs, workshops and paid internships, career guidance,
14 and other support for BIPOC workers across the State.

15 (5) Update Vermont Training Program criteria for eligibility to allow
16 training and coaching for small business owners and their management teams
17 to improve their capacity to evolve and lead their small businesses and
18 increase base funding for this program to \$2.5 million per year. [amend 10
19 VSA 540 et seq?]

20 Sec. 8. INVESTMENT IN NEW MODELS OF CONNECTION-BUILDING
21 ACROSS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS TO

1 IMPROVE ALIGNMENT, COLLABORATION, INSIGHTS, AND
2 STRATEGY; APPROPRIATIONS

3 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from the
4 General Fund to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to
5 make a performance-based grant to a nonprofit to serve as a statewide
6 Connecting Organization, which shall:

7 (1) create, convene, and administer a Vermont Workforce Network;

8 (2) provide sub-grant, performance-based awards to six regional
9 Workforce-Education Business Councils, each of whom will employ a full-
10 time regional Navigator; and

11 (3) coordinate with the implementation of VDOL Pilot Project of
12 Workforce Expansion Specialists in six regions of the State.

13 Sec. 9. REGIONAL WORKFORCE EXPANSION SYSTEM

14 (a) Regional Workforce Expansion System. The Department of Labor shall
15 launch and lead a coordinated regional system to support the State’s workforce
16 expansion efforts. The system will be designed to:

17 (1) Support employers in tailoring their work requirements, conditions,
18 and expectations to better access local workers.

19 (2) Collaborate with local education and training providers and regional
20 workforce partners, to create and regularly distribute data related to local labor
21 force supply and demand.

1 (3) Create and share work-based learning and training opportunities with
2 secondary and post-secondary students, local workforce expansion partners,
3 and others interested in starting or advancing in their career.

4 (b) System Infrastructure.

5 (1) The Vermont Department of Labor will make investments that
6 improve and expand regional capacity to connect supply (workers) and
7 demand (employment) in real-time.

8 (2) The Department will place six state-funded Workforce Expansion
9 Specialists in the Barre, Bennington, Brattleboro, Rutland, St. Albans and St.
10 Johnsbury areas. These limited-service, full-time-employees will report to the
11 Workforce Development Division.

12 (c) Coordination.

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

19 (2) The Department shall develop labor market information reports by
20 CTE district to support discussion and decision making that will address local

1 labor market challenges and opportunities and support a regional approach to
2 solving local or unique labor supply challenges.

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

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

12 Sec. 10. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; RELOCATION ASSISTANCE
13 SUPPORT

14 (a) Relocation Support Specialists. VDOL shall participate in supporting
15 individuals seeking to relocate to Vermont by providing career counseling,
16 employment and non-employment referrals, making warm handoffs, and
17 remaining part of the relocation team for any individual until they are no
18 longer needed.

19 (b) Out-of-State Recruitment Efforts. VDOL will provide employers with
20 out-of-state recruitment efforts such as hiring events and following up on

1 coordinate, targeted outreach. As part of this effort the Department will also
2 participate in job fairs and other events, as both a coordinator and a participant.

3 (c) Information Management System. As VDOL is expanding its
4 technological systems to support case management, customer and information
5 management, data collection, information bank, and reporting requirements it
6 will tailor its solution to integrate functionality that will enhance
7 communication and information exchange about prospective out-of-state
8 jobseekers, recruitment efforts, and prospective relocators.

9 Sec 11. WORK BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

10 Strike 10 VSA 544 and 545 and replace with: Vermont Work-Based Learning
11 and Training Program

12 (a) Vermont Work Based Learning and Training Program. The Department
13 of Labor shall develop a statewide Work Based Learning and Training
14 Program that serves transitioning secondary and postsecondary students and
15 Vermonters seeking work-based experience as part of career change. This
16 program will be designed to:

17 (1) Support Vermonters who are graduating from post-secondary
18 education or a secondary CTE program or who are pursuing a career change
19 with a paid on-the-job work experience lasting twelve weeks or less,

20 (2) Establish a statewide platform available to all employers to list their
21 internships, returnships, pre-apprenticeships, and Registered Apprenticeship

1 opportunities and for jobseekers to view and access information about specific
2 opportunities; and to

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

5 (b) Definitions.

6 (1) As used in this section, "internship" means a work-based learning
7 experience with an employer where the participant may, but does not
8 necessarily, receive academic credit.

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

13 (3) "Pre-apprenticeship" is a program of combined learning and work-
14 based experiences that lead to an informal apprenticeship or formal registered
15 apprenticeship program.

16 (4) "Registered Apprenticeship" is a program approved by the VDOL as
17 a federally recognized apprenticeship program.

18 (c) Funding made available for this program may be used to:

19 (1) Build and administer the program,

20 (2) Develop an online platform that will connect students and jobseekers
21 with work-based learning and training opportunities within Vermont

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

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

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

8 (d) The Department of Labor shall collect data and establish program goals
9 and performance measures that demonstrate program results for activities
10 funded through the Vermont Work Based Learning and Training Program.

11 (e) The Department of Labor will engage appropriate agencies and
12 departments of the State in the Work Based Learning and Training Program to
13 expand these opportunities with State government and with entities awarded
14 State contracts.

15 (f) Reporting: By February 15, 2022, the Vermont Department of Labor
16 will report on recommended metrics for measuring program performance to
17 the relevant Committees of jurisdiction.

18 ***Sec. X. Apprenticeship***

19 ***[NOTE THERE IS LANUGAGE IN THE BUDGET BILL THAT***

20 ***AUTHORIZES THE CARRY FORWARD OF THESE FUNDS] IF YOU***

1 ***WANT ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TO DIRECT USE; SB CAN***

2 ***PROVIDE. Current language:***

3 *DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; TRADE APPRENTICESHIP EXPENSE*
4 *REIMBURSEMENT; PROGRAM EXPANSION*
5 *\$1,000,000 of funds carried forward in the special apprenticeship fund*
6 *is allocated for use by the Department to reimburse for costs incurred*
7 *for work tools and personal protective equipment for new apprentices,*
8 *and for expansion of registered apprenticeship programs and*
9 *participants.*

10 Sec. 12. THE VERMONT TRADES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

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

18 (1) be enrolled in an industry recognized training and certification
19 program that leads to initial employment or career advancement in a building,
20 mechanical, industrial, or medical trade;

21 (2) demonstrate financial need;

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 Sec. 13. THE VERMONT TRADES LOAN REIMBURSEMENT
21 PROGRAM

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

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

8 (1) be a Vermont resident

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

12 (c) For every year of work in a qualifying occupation, an individual shall
13 be eligible for up to \$5,000 in loan repayment reimbursement.

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

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

1 (e) The sum of \$500,000 in base General Funds is appropriated to the
2 Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for loan repayment for trades
3 professionals under the Vermont Trades Loan Repayment Program.

4 Sec. 14. CTE CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION
5 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM; REVOLVING LOAN FUND

6 (a) Purpose.

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

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

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

14 (3) beautify communities and rehabilitate underperforming housing and
15 land assets;

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

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

20 (b) Appropriation; creation of fund. In fiscal year 2023 the amount of
21 \$15,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Education Fund to the Vermont

1 Housing and Conservation Board to create and administer a CTE Construction
2 and Rehabilitation Experiential Learning Program and Revolving Loan Fund
3 pursuant to this section.

4 (c) Proposals; applications; funding.

5 (1) A regional CTE center, working in collaboration with one or more
6 housing and community partners, private businesses, nonprofit organizations,
7 or municipalities, shall identify project opportunities for rehabilitation of
8 residential properties that are blighted or not code-compliant, or for new
9 residential construction projects or improvements to land in cases of critical
10 community need, which would be relevant and appropriate for CTE students
11 enrolled in construction, electrical, plumbing, design, business management, or
12 other CTE programs.

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

16 (A) the educational benefits for students and fit with the CTE
17 curriculum;

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

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

- 1 (i) educational instruction and academic credit;
- 2 (ii) project management;
- 3 (iii) insurance coverage for students and the property;
- 4 (iv) compensation and benefits, including compliance with labor
- 5 laws, standards, and practices; and
- 6 (v) property acquisition, ownership, and transfer.

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

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

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

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

17 (1) The project involves the rehabilitation of blighted or otherwise non-
18 code compliant property, or new residential construction projects or
19 improvements to land in cases of critical need, and results in a building with
20 not more than four residential dwelling units.

21 (2) The project includes a weatherization component.

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

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

6 (f) Funding; proceeds; revolving loans.

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

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

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

14 Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATE

15 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

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1 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE