

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

14 (2) \$3,000,000.00 to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation to
15 administer up to \$3,000.00 per individual for tuition costs incurred for
16 Vermont-based internships.

17 (3) \$2,000,000.00 to the State Refugee Office to administer as grants to
18 refugee- or New American-focused programs working in Vermont, to support
19 increased in-migration or retention of recent arrivals.

20 (4) \$387,000.00 to Vermont Technical College to develop a skilled meat
21 cutter training and apprenticeship facility.

1 Sec. 3. CTE FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE; FINDINGS

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

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

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

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

20 (e) Since 2015, through legislative initiatives such as 2015 Acts and
21 Resolves No. 51, 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 69, 2018 Acts and Resolves No.

1 189, 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 80, and most recently 2021 Acts and
2 Resolves No. 74, the General Assembly and other stakeholders in education
3 and in State government have been working to identify, understand, and
4 resolve long-standing concerns related to the functioning of the CTE system.

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

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

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

17 (i) In a report dated June 14, 2021, the Agency of Education reported on its
18 progress, which was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report
19 presented possible alternatives to our current funding structure, which is
20 widely seen as a barrier to enrollment. However, these alternatives were based
21 on an examination of only the CTE school district funding model and did not

1 include the study of governance models. The report recommended completing
2 this study of CTE funding and governance models to propose actionable
3 implementation steps for the State.

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

10 Sec. 4. FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF
11 CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN VERMONT

12 (a) There is appropriated to the Agency of Education for fiscal year 2023
13 the amount of \$180,000.00 from the General Fund to contract for services to:

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

17 (2) examine CTE governance structures in relationship to those funding
18 structures;

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

21 (4) consider the CTE funding and governance structures in other states;

1 and

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

5 (b)(1) On or before March 1, 2023, the Agency of Education shall issue a
6 written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House
7 Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate
8 Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs on the
9 status of its work under subsection (a) of this section.

10 (2) On or before July 1, 2023, the Agency of Education shall develop an
11 implementation plan, including recommended steps to design and implement
12 new funding and governance models, and issue a written report to the House
13 and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Commerce and
14 Economic Development, and the Senate Committee on Economic
15 Development, Housing and General Affairs describing the results of its work
16 under subsection (a) of this section and making recommendations for
17 legislative action.

18 Sec. 5. INVESTMENT IN THE UP-SKILLING OF PRIVATE SECTOR

19 EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT THE EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS

20 AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS; APPROPRIATIONS

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

8 (5) Update Vermont Training Program criteria for eligibility to allow
9 training and coaching for small business owners and their management teams
10 to improve their capacity to evolve and lead their small businesses and
11 increase base funding for this program to \$2.5 million per year.

12 Sec. 6. INVESTMENT IN NEW MODELS OF CONNECTION-BUILDING
13 ACROSS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS TO
14 IMPROVE ALIGNMENT, COLLABORATION, INSIGHTS, AND
15 STRATEGY; APPROPRIATIONS

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

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

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

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

6 Sec. 7. REGIONAL WORKFORCE EXPANSION SYSTEM

7 (a) Regional Workforce Expansion System. The amount of \$3,000,000 is
8 appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Labor to launch and
9 lead a coordinated regional system to support the State’s workforce expansion
10 efforts. The system will be designed to:

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

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

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

19 (b) System Infrastructure.

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

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

8 (c) Coordination.

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

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

19 (d) Report. On, or before, December 15, 2024, the Department shall
20 provide a narrative update on the progress made in hiring staff, establishing
21 interagency agreements, developing regional information exchange systems,

1 and serving jobseekers and employers, to the House and Senate Committees of
2 Jurisdiction. The report will also recommend ongoing metrics that can be
3 easily recorded and reported at the local and state levels on a regular basis to
4 meet multiple information needs.

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

7 **Sec. 7. JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS; WORKFORCE**
8 **DEVELOPMENT; PILOT PROGRAM**

9 **(a) Findings.**

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

12 (2) 95 percent of incarcerated individuals will be released to their
13 communities and between 78-83 percent of those released are between the ages
14 of 25 and 54, which is prime working age.

15 (3) 63 percent of incarcerated individuals in the Vermont Southern State
16 Correctional Facility reported job training as the most helpful program to meet
17 their needs.

18 **(b) Policy; appropriations.**

19 (1)(A) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$417,000 is appropriated from
20 the General Fund to the Department of Corrections to address vocational
21 enhancement needs.

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

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

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

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

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

10 (2) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$300,000 is appropriated from the
11 General Fund to Vermont Works for Women, which may be allocated over not
12 more than three years, to establish a community-based pilot reentry program at
13 the Chittenden Correctional Facility that will provide continuity of services for
14 justice involved women and:

15 (A) expand VWW's current employment readiness program within
16 the Chittenden facility by building pathways for coordinated transition to
17 employment;

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

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

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

2 (E) work with employers to support successful hiring and best

3 practices to support justice involved employees.

4 (c) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Corrections

5 shall create and submit a report on Workforce and Education Training

6 Programs in Correctional Facilities to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight

7 Committee, House Corrections & Institutions Committee, House Commerce &

8 Economic Development, Senate Economic Development and Senate Judiciary.

9 The report shall:

10 (1) identify program design, logistical needs, and policy changes needed

11 to current Department of Corrections facility-based training and educational

12 programs necessary to successfully support justice involved individuals'

13 reentry into their communities, including changes to programs that better

14 support individuals' skill development, knowledge and support needed to

15 qualify and secure a position in a critical occupation in Vermont;

16 (2) identify disparities of outcomes for justice-involved BIPOC

17 individuals in facility-based training and educational programming and

18 successful reentry into the community and solutions for addressing the

19 disparities;

20 (3) provide an update on the Department of Corrections Vocational

21 Enhancement work funding in FY23; and

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

3 Sec. 8. REPEAL

4 10 V.S.A. §§ 544 and 545 are repealed.

5 Sec. 9. WORK BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

6 (a) Vermont Work Based Learning and Training Program. The Department
7 of Labor shall develop a statewide Work Based Learning and Training
8 Program that serves transitioning secondary and postsecondary students and
9 Vermonters seeking work-based experience as part of career change and is
10 designed to:

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

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

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

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

1 (1) "Internship" means a work-based learning experience with an
2 employer where the participant may, but does not necessarily, receive
3 academic credit.

4 (2) "Pre-apprenticeship" is a program of combined learning and work-
5 based experiences that lead to an informal apprenticeship or formal registered
6 apprenticeship program.

7 (3) "Registered Apprenticeship" is a program approved by the Vermont
8 Department of Labor as a federally-recognized apprenticeship program.

9 (4) "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 (c) The Department may use available funding to:

14 (1) build and administer the Program;

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

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

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

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

3 (d) The Department shall collect data and establish goals and performance
4 measures that demonstrate program results for activities funded through the
5 Program.

6 (e) The Department shall engage appropriate State agencies and
7 departments to expand Program opportunities with State government and with
8 entities awarded State contracts.

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

12 Sec. 10. THE VERMONT TRADES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

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

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;

4 (2) demonstrate financial need;

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

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

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

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

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

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

4 Sec. 11. THE VERMONT TRADES LOAN REIMBURSEMENT
5 PROGRAM

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

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

13 (1) be a Vermont resident

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

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

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

20 (d) There shall be no deadline to apply for loan repayment reimbursement
21 under this section. Loan repayment shall be awarded on a rolling basis if funds

1 are available, and any funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall roll over
2 and shall be available to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in the
3 following fiscal year to award additional loan repayment as set forth in this
4 section.

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

8 Sec. 12. CTE CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION
9 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM; REVOLVING LOAN FUND

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

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

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

17 (3) beautify communities and rehabilitate **buildings that are**
18 **underperforming assets**;

19 (4) expand housing access to Vermonters in communities throughout the
20 State; and

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

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

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

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

10 (c) Proposals; applications; funding.

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

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

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

20 (C) commercial construction projects that have substantial
21 community benefit.

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

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

7 (A) the educational benefits for students and fit with the CTE
8 curriculum;

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

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

13 (i) educational instruction and academic credit;

14 (ii) project management;

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

16 (iv) compensation and benefits, including compliance with labor
17 laws, standards, and practices; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

13 (2) The project includes a weatherization component.

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

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

19 (f) Funding; proceeds; revolving loans.

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

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

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

8 *** Health Care Workforce ***

9 Sec. 13. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

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

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

1 Sec. 14. EMERGENCY GRANTS TO SUPPORT NURSE EDUCATORS

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

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

1 Sec. 15. NURSE PRECEPTOR INCENTIVE GRANTS; HOSPITALS;
2 WORKING
3 GROUP; REPORT

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

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

18 (b)(1) The Director of Health Care Reform or designee in the Agency of
19 Human Services shall convene a working group of stakeholders representing
20 nursing schools, long-term care facilities, designated and specialized service

1 agencies, federally qualified health centers, home health agencies, primary care
2 practices, and other health care facilities to:

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

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

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

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

1 Sec. 16. HEALTH CARE EMPLOYER NURSING PIPELINE AND
2 APPRENTICESHIP
3 PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5 § 34. VERMONT NURSING SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

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

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

16 (2) demonstrate financial need;

17 (3) demonstrate academic capacity by carrying at least a 2.5 grade point
18 average in the individual's course of study prior to receiving the fund award;
19 and

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

1 (c)(1) First priority for scholarship 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 scholarship 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 scholarship 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 scholarships.

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

19 Sec. 18. REPEAL

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

1 Sec. 19. VERMONT NURSING SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM;
2 APPROPRIATION

3 The sum of \$3,000,000.00 in Global Commitment investment funds is
4 appropriated to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for scholarships
5 for nursing students under the Vermont Nursing Scholarship Program
6 established in Sec. E of this act.

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

8 § 35. VERMONT NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

9 (a) As used in this section:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 (2) had an overall 2.5 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 from the eligible school;

18 (3) work as a nurse in this State; and

19 (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 every for one year of service as a nurse 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. 21. VERMONT NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM;

10 APPROPRIATION

11 The sum of \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
12 Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for loan repayment for nurses under
13 the Vermont Nursing Loan Repayment Program established in Sec. H of this
14 act.

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

16 § 36. NURSE EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT
17 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 scholarship or loan repayment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 (b) Program creation. The Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan
16 Repayment Program is created and shall be administered by the Department of
17 Health in collaboration with the Corporation. The Program provides
18 scholarships to students enrolled in an eligible school who commit to working
19 as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State and who meet the
20 eligibility requirements in subsection (d) of this section. The Program also
21 provides loan repayment on behalf of individuals who work as nurse educators

1 at a nursing school in this State and who meet the eligibility requirements in
2 subsection (e) of this section.

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

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

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

12 (2) continually demonstrate satisfactory academic progress by
13 maintaining a 2.5 grade point average or better or the equivalent as determined
14 by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point averages;

15 (3) have used any available gift aid;

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

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

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

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

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

9 (2) had an overall 2.5 grade point average or better or the equivalent as
10 determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point
11 averages from the eligible school;

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

13 (4) be a resident of Vermont.

14 (f) Service commitment.

15 (1) Scholarships. For each year of service as a nurse educator at a
16 nursing school in this State, an eligible individual shall be entitled to a full
17 academic year of full scholarship benefit under the Program. If an eligible
18 individual fails to serve as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State for
19 a period that would entitle the individual to the full scholarship benefit
20 received by the individual, other than for good cause as determined by the
21 Corporation, then the individual shall reimburse the Corporation a pro rata

1 portion of the scholarship paid under the Program pursuant to the terms of the
2 interest-free reimbursement promissory note signed by the individual at the
3 time of entering the Program.

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

8 (g) Adoption of policies, procedures, and guidelines. The Corporation
9 shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines necessary to implement the
10 provisions of this section.

11 Sec. 23. NURSE EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT
12 PROGRAM;

13 APPROPRIATION

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

18 Sec. 24. NURSING SCHOOLS; SIMULATION LAB UPDATE AND
19 EXPANSION;

20 APPROPRIATION

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

8 Sec. 25. 18 V.S.A. § 9456 is amended to read: (note – Sec. M shall take effect
9 on January 1, 2023 and shall apply to hospital fiscal years 2024 and after)

10 § 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

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

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

15 * * *

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

19 (11) require each hospital to create or maintain connectivity to the
20 State's Health Information Exchange Network in accordance with the criteria
21 established by the Vermont Information Technology Leaders, Inc., pursuant to

1 subsection 9352(i) of this title, provided that the Board shall not require a
2 hospital to create a level of connectivity that the State's Exchange is unable to
3 support;

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

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

10 * * *

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

12 HOSPITAL BUDGET

13 REVIEW; NURSING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

14 INITIATIVES

15 For hospital fiscal year 2023, the Green Mountain Care Board may exclude
16 all or a portion of a hospital's investments in nursing workforce development
17 initiatives from any otherwise applicable financial limitations on the hospital's
18 budget or budget growth. Notwithstanding any provision of GMCB Rule
19 3.202, the Board may modify its hospital budget guidance for hospital fiscal
20 year 2023 as needed to comply with this section.

1 Sec. 27. DESIGNATED AND SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCIES;

2 MEDICAID

3 RATE INCREASE; REPORT

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

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

15 (c) The Departments of Mental Health and of Disabilities, Aging, and
16 Independent Living, in consultation with representatives of the designated and
17 specialized services agencies, shall report to the House Committees on Health
18 Care, on Human Services, and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees
19 on Health and Welfare and on Appropriations on or before January 15, 2023
20 with the total amount of funds that would be necessary on an annual basis to
21 increase the salaries for all staff in the community mental health system to the

1 level of equivalent positions in the State workforce, Vermont hospitals, and
2 school settings.

3 Sec. 28. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; DESIGNATED AND
4 SPECIALIZED

5 SERVICE AGENCIES; WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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

20 (b)(1) Each designated and specialized service agency shall make the funds
21 received pursuant to subsection (a) of this section available to its current and

1 prospective employees as set forth in subdivisions (A) and (B) of this
2 subdivision (1) on a rolling basis in exchange for a one-year service obligation
3 to provide mental health, substance use disorder treatment, or developmental
4 disability services, or a combination of these, at a designated or specialized
5 service agency in this State. The funds may be used for the following
6 purposes:

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

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

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

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

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

4 (2) the amount of financial assistance funding provided to each
5 recipient;

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

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

12 Sec. 29. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; BARRIERS TO
13 MENTAL

14 HEALTH LICENSURE; REPORT

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

1 Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and on Government
2 Operations.

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

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

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

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

18 HUB; HEALTH RESOURCE ALLOCATION PLAN

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

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

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

14 AND DEMAND MODELING

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

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

3 Sec. 33. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL REGULATION; GREEN
4 MOUNTAIN

5 CARE BOARD; PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS; ADMINISTRATIVE
6 COST
7 REDUCTION; REPORT

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

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

1 2023 regarding the statutory changes necessary to align and streamline prior
2 authorization processes and requirements across health insurers.

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

4 **§ 3543. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE**

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

9 (2) An eligible individual shall:

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

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

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

21 * * *

1 Sec. 35. PILOT PROGRAM; POSITIONS EMBEDDED WITHIN

2 RECOVERY

3 CENTERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13 (3) number of job placements; and

14 (4) job retention rates.

15 Sec. 36. CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; HIGHER
16 EDUCATION SAVINGS INCENTIVE; PUBLIC EDUCATION
17 CAMPAIGN

18 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$XXX is appropriated to the Department
19 for Children and Families' Child Development Division to develop and
20 implement as public education campaign aimed at ensuring that families in the
21 Child Care Financial Assistance Program are aware that the earnings deposited

1 in a qualified child education savings account, such as the Vermont Higher
2 Education Investment Plan established in 16 V.S.A. § 2877, or any similar plan
3 qualified under 26 U.S.C. § 529, shall be disregarded in determining the
4 amount of a family’s income for the purpose of determining continuing
5 eligibility.

6 Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATE

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

8

9

10

11

12

13

14 (Committee vote: _____)

15

16

Representative _____

17

FOR THE COMMITTEE