

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

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

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

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

13 (1) \$2,500,000.00 to the University of Vermont Office of Engagement,  
14 in consultation with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, to  
15 administer a statewide forgivable loan program of \$5,000.00 per graduate for  
16 recent college graduates across all Vermont higher education institutions who  
17 commit to work in Vermont for two years after graduation.

18 (2) \$387,000.00 to Vermont Technical College to develop a skilled meat  
19 cutter training and apprenticeship facility.

20 (b) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the  
21 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery

1 Funds to the Agency of Human Services to provide grants, which may be  
2 administered through a performance-based contract, to refugee- or New  
3 American-focused programs working in Vermont to support increased in-  
4 migration or retention of recent arrivals.

5 Sec. 2. CTE FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE; FINDINGS

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

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

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

20 (d) As of the fall semester of the 2021–2022 school year, students were  
21 enrolling in CTE programs at a higher rate than at the beginning of the

1 pandemic, increasing from 4,160 to 4,565. In the 2020–2021 school year,  
2 Vermont’s CTE system awarded Tier II credentials of value to 459 students.

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

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

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

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

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

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

15       Sec. 3. FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF

16                CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN VERMONT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17          (c) On or before March 1, 2023, the Joint Fiscal Office shall issue a written  
18          report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House  
19          Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee  
20          on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, the House

1 Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance on the  
2 work performed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

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

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

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

17 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$250,000.00 is appropriated from the  
18 General Fund to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for a  
19 performance-based contract to provide statewide delivery of business coaching  
20 and other forms of training to BIPOC business owners, networking and special

1 convenings, and career fairs, workshops and paid internships, career guidance,  
2 and other support for BIPOC workers across the State.

3 Sec. 5. REGIONAL WORKFORCE EXPANSION SYSTEM

4 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

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

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

7 Division of the Vermont Department of Labor:

8 (A) There are approximately 28,000 job openings in Vermont as of  
9 December 2021.

10 (B) 9,945 individuals meet the federal statistical definition of  
11 unemployed as of January 2022.

12 (C) 4,500 individuals are receiving unemployment insurance  
13 assistance as of March 2022.

14 (D) The workforce has shrunk by 26,000 individuals from 2019 to  
15 2022, yet the unemployment rate is just three percent as of January 2022.

16 (E) The workforce participation rate has fallen from 66 percent to  
17 60.6 percent.

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

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

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

8           (b) Regional Workforce Expansion System. The amount of \$1,500,000.00  
9           is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Labor for a two-  
10           year pilot program to launch and lead a coordinated regional system, beginning  
11           in three regions of the State, to work toward accomplishing the following  
12           goals:

13           (1) increase local labor participation rate;

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

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

16           (4) collect, organize, develop, and share information related to local  
17           career pathways with workforce development partners.

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

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



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

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

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

8           (d) System infrastructure. The Department shall make investments that  
9           improve and expand regional capacity to connect supply (workers) and  
10           demand (employment) in real time and shall hire eight full-time limited-service  
11           employees with funding allocated to perform the work described in this section  
12           who shall report to the Workforce Development Division.

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

17           to strengthen networks who assist jobseekers, workers, and employers in  
18           connecting.

19           (1) The Department is authorized to create four classified, two-year  
20           limited-service positions, with funding allocated to perform the work described

1 in this section, who shall report to the Workforce Development Division and of  
2 whom:

3 (A) three shall be Workforce Expansion Specialists assigned, one  
4 each, to three different regions of the State; and

5 (B) one shall provide oversight and State-level coordination of  
6 activities.

7 (2)(A) The Department shall use funds allocated to develop systems for  
8 coordination, information sharing, and enhanced support to regional partners,  
9 host regional meetings, develop regional plans, and provide localized resources  
10 including labor market information, training and development opportunities,  
11 and support services.

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

16 (e) Coordination.

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

1           (2) Service provider partners shall include community partners who  
2           directly serve mature workers, youth, individuals with disabilities, individuals  
3           who have been involved with the correction system, BIPOC Vermonters, New  
4           Americans, and other historically marginalized populations in efforts to align  
5           service delivery, share information, and achieve greater employment outcomes  
6           for Vermonters.

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

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

16           (g) Implementation. The Department of Labor shall begin implementing  
17           the Regional Workforce Expansion System on or before July 1, 2022.

18           Sec. 6. INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS; WORKFORCE

19                   DEVELOPMENT; PILOT PROGRAM

20           (a) Purpose. The purpose of this section is to facilitate the education and  
21           vocational training of incarcerated individuals so that they have a greater

1 likelihood of obtaining gainful employment and positively contributing to  
2 society upon reintegration into the community.

3 (b) Policy; appropriations.

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

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

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

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

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

18 (2) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$300,000.00 is appropriated from  
19 the General Fund to the Department of Corrections, which may be allocated  
20 over not more than three years, to establish a community-based pilot reentry  
21 program at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility in consultation with

1 the Vermont Department of Labor. The Department of Corrections shall  
2 designate a service provider to administer the pilot program’s goals to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

13 (c) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Corrections  
14 shall create and submit a report on workforce and education training programs  
15 in correctional facilities to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee;  
16 the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Commerce and  
17 Economic Development; and the Senate Committees on Economic

18 Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Judiciary. The report shall:

19 (1) identify program design, logistical needs, and policy changes to  
20 current Department of Corrections facility-based training and educational  
21 programs necessary to successfully enable incarcerated individuals’

1 reintegration into their communities, including changes to programs that  
2 enhance individuals' skill development, knowledge, and other support needed  
3 to qualify for and secure a position in a critical occupation in Vermont;

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

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

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

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

13 Sec. 7. INTENT

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

17 Sec. 8. IMPROVEMENT OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

18 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION; REPORT

19 (a) On or before January 15, 2023, the Secretary of Human Services, in  
20 consultation with the Commissioners of Corrections and of Human Resources,  
21 shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Appropriations, on

1 Commerce and Economic Development, on Corrections and Institutions, and  
2 on Government Operations and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on  
3 Government Operations, and on Judiciary identifying conditions that pose an  
4 obstacle to the successful recruitment and retention of correctional officers and  
5 setting forth a plan to improve the recruitment and retention of correctional  
6 officers.

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

9 (A) wages and benefits;

10 (B) terms and conditions of employment;

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

14 (D) staffing levels and overtime.

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

19 (A) Maine;

20 (B) New Hampshire;

21 (C) New York;

1           (D) Massachusetts;

2           (E) Rhode Island; and

3           (F) Connecticut.

4           (c) The report shall, as part of the plan to improve the recruitment and  
5           retention of correctional officers, identify specific administrative and  
6           legislative actions that are necessary to successfully improve the recruitment  
7           and retention of correctional officers.

8           **Sec. 9. ASSESSMENT OF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

9           **INITIATIVES; REPORT**

10           (a) On or before January 15, 2023, the Secretary of Human Services, in  
11           consultation with the Commissioner of Human Resources, shall submit to the  
12           House and Senate Committees on Appropriations a report regarding the use of  
13           funds appropriated pursuant to 2022 Acts and Resolves, No. 83:

14           (1) Sec. 14 for employee recruitment and retention at:

15           (A) the secure residential recovery facility; and

16           (B) the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital;

17           (2) Sec. 68 for employee retention with respect to:

18           (A) the Department of Corrections; and

19           (B) the Vermont Veteran's Home; and



1           (3) Sec. 72 for workforce recruitment and retention incentives with  
2 respect to designated and specialized service agencies, including shared living  
3 providers.

4           (b) The report shall assess how effective the appropriations identified  
5 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section were in addressing issues related to  
6 employee recruitment and retention; identify any ongoing or remaining  
7 employee recruitment and retention challenges that the recipients have; and  
8 identify any potential legislative, administrative, or programmatic changes that  
9 can address those ongoing or remaining employee retention issues.

10          (c) The report shall also include a recommendation as to whether and how  
11 to appropriate additional funds in the 2023 Budget Adjustment Act to address  
12 ongoing recruitment and retention challenges at:

13           (1) the Vermont Veteran’s Home;

14           (2) the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital;

15           (3) the secure residential recovery facility;

16           (4) designated and specialized service agencies; and

17           (5) the Department of Corrections’ facilities with respect to individuals  
18 employed as a Correctional Officer I or a Correctional Officer II.

19       Sec. 10. REPEALS

20           10 V.S.A. §§ 544 and 545 are repealed.

1 Sec. 11. 10 V.S.A. § 547 is added to read:

2 § 547. WORK-BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7           (1) build and administer the Program;

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

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

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

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

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

18           (1) the total number of participants served;

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

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

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

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

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

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

13           **Sec. 12. WORK-BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM;**

14           **APPROPRIATION**

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

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

19           **CREDENTIAL PILOT PROJECT**

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

4       (b) Eligibility.

5           (1) An eligible student may enroll in one adult career technical center  
6       course prior to completion of secondary school for which neither the student  
7       nor the student’s parent or guardian shall be required to pay tuition. A student  
8       may enroll in a summer, evening, or weekend course offered while secondary  
9       school is in session and during the summer.

10          (2) A Vermont resident who is attending a Vermont public school, or an  
11       approved independent secondary school that is eligible for public funds, who  
12       has completed grade 11 but has not received a high school diploma is eligible  
13       to participate in the Pilot Project.

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

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

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

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

8            (1) The Department of Labor, in consultation with the Agency of  
9        Education, shall develop an application that shall be completed by the  
10       requesting student's secondary school that includes the student's enrollment  
11       status, the course detail for which payment is requested, a copy of the student's  
12       personalized learning plan that supports funding for the course, attestation that  
13       the secondary and adult career technical education programs find the program  
14       of study appropriate for the student, description of federal and local funding  
15       sources that were explored but insufficient or unavailable for use by the  
16       student, and any other information that may be deemed necessary.

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

1           (3) The Department of Labor shall review the application and, if  
2           appropriate, meet with the student to determine eligibility for existing federal  
3           and State programs, including WIOA Title I Youth (in-school) and the  
4           Vermont Youth Employment Program. If the Department can meet the  
5           student’s need using existing funds, it will disburse funding and support  
6           accordingly.

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

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

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

17          (f) Adult career and technical center report. The Department of Labor shall  
18          require a report from each adult career and technical education center  
19          providing information to support the Department’s reporting requirements in  
20          subsections (g) and (h) of this section.

1        (g) Interim Report. The Department of Labor and Agency of Education  
2        shall report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House  
3        Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate  
4        Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs on or  
5        before the January 15, 2023 regarding the use of funds, including data relating  
6        to student circumstances, levels of participation, and how local school districts  
7        are able or unable to meet the career preparation and training needs of  
8        secondary students using the program.

9        (h) Final Report. The Department of Labor and Agency of Education shall  
10       report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House  
11       Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee  
12       on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, the House  
13       Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance within  
14       45 days following the end of the fiscal year or exhaustion of funds, whichever  
15       comes first, regarding the use of funds, including data relating to the number of  
16       participants, student circumstances, levels of participation, what certifications  
17       were issued, how local school districts are able or unable to meet the career  
18       preparation and training needs of secondary students using the program, and  
19       recommendations on how to address gaps in access and funding for secondary  
20       students seeking professional certifications not offered through the secondary  
21       education system.



1 Sec. 12. INTERNSHIP COST OFFSET INITIATIVE

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

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

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

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

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

1       Sec. 14. THE VERMONT TRADES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 Sec. 15. THE VERMONT TRADES LOAN REIMBURSEMENT  
15 PROGRAM

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

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

3               (1) be a Vermont resident; and

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

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

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

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

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

1 Sec. 16. CTE CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

2 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM; REVOLVING LOAN

3 FUND

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

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

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

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

13 (4) expand housing access to Vermonters in communities throughout the  
14 State; and

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

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

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

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

3           (c) Proposals; applications; funding.

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

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

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

13           (C) commercial construction projects that have substantial  
14 community benefit.

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

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

1           (A) the educational benefits for students and fit with the CTE  
2 curriculum;

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

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

7                   (i) educational instruction and academic credit;

8                   (ii) project management;

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

10                  (iv) compensation and benefits, including compliance with labor  
11 laws, standards, and practices; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

8            (2) The project includes a weatherization component.

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

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

14        (f) Funding; proceeds; revolving loans.

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

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

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



1       Sec. 17. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; FINDINGS

2           The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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

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

1           (6) 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 45 established goals that no Vermont  
2           family spend more than 10 percent of its income on child care and that early  
3           childhood educators receive compensation commensurate with their peers in  
4           similar fields as informed by a systems analysis and financing study;

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

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

12       Sec. 18. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

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

18       **Sec. 18. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT**

19           In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$125,000.00 is appropriated from the  
20           General Fund to the Department for Children and Families’ Child

1 Development Division for a performance-based contract to develop and  
2 implement a comprehensive early childhood educator recruitment campaign.

3 Sec. 19. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

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

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

16 Sec. 20. EMERGENCY GRANTS TO SUPPORT NURSE EDUCATORS

17 (a) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from  
18 the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery  
19 Funds to the Department of Health and shall carry forward for the purpose of  
20 providing emergency interim grants to Vermont’s nursing schools over three  
21 years to increase the compensation for their nurse faculty and staff, with

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

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

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

14 WORKING GROUP; REPORT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 Sec. 22. HEALTH CARE EMPLOYER NURSING PIPELINE AND

10 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 § 34. VERMONT NURSING FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE  
11 PROGRAM

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

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

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



1           (2) demonstrate financial need;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4 Sec. 24. REPEAL

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

6 Sec. 25. VERMONT NURSING FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE  
7 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

8 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$100,000.00 in **General Fund** investment  
9 funds is appropriated to the Department of Health for forgivable loans for  
10 nursing students under the Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan Incentive  
11 Program established in Sec. 23 of this act.

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

13 § 35. VERMONT NURSING AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LOAN  
14 REPAYMENT PROGRAM

15 (a) As used in this section:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5           (4) be a resident of Vermont.

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

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

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

14           Sec. 27. VERMONT NURSING AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LOAN  
15                           REPAYMENT PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

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

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

2 § 36. NURSE EDUCATOR FORGIVABLE LOAN AND LOAN

3 REPAYMENT PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5           (3) have used any available gift aid;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2           (4) be a resident of Vermont.

3           (f) Service commitment.

4           (1) Forgivable loans. For each year of service as a nurse educator at a  
5           nursing school in this State, an eligible individual shall be entitled to a full  
6           academic year of forgivable loan benefit under the Program. If an eligible  
7           individual fails to serve as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State for  
8           a period that would entitle the individual to the full forgivable loan benefit  
9           received by the individual, other than for good cause as determined by the  
10           Corporation in consultation with the Vermont Department of Health, then the  
11           individual shall receive only partial loan forgiveness for a pro rata portion of  
12           the loan pursuant to the terms of the interest-free reimbursement promissory  
13           note signed by the individual at the time of entering the Program.

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

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



1 Sec. 29. NURSE EDUCATOR FORGIVABLE LOAN AND LOAN  
2 REPAYMENT PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

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

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

9 § 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

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

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

14 \* \* \*

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

18 (11) require each hospital to create or maintain connectivity to the  
19 State’s Health Information Exchange Network in accordance with the criteria  
20 established by the Vermont Information Technology Leaders, Inc., pursuant to  
21 subsection 9352(i) of this title, provided that the Board shall not require a

1 hospital to create a level of connectivity that the State’s Exchange is unable to  
2 support;

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

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

9 \* \* \*

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

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

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

1       (a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated from  
2       the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery  
3       Funds to the Office of Health Care Reform in the Agency of Human Services  
4       to enable the Agency to establish and operate the statewide Health Care  
5       Workforce Data Center. In order to enhance the State’s public health data  
6       systems, respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and improve the  
7       State’s COVID-19 mitigation and prevention efforts, the Center shall collect  
8       health care workforce data, shall collaborate with the Director of Health Care  
9       Reform to identify and propose solutions to address data gaps, and shall share  
10       the data with the Green Mountain Care Board as appropriate to inform the  
11       Board’s Health Resource Allocation Plan responsibilities pursuant to 18  
12       V.S.A. § 9405.

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

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

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

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

6           (3) may collect vacancy and turnover information from health care  
7           employers.

8           (d) One permanent classified Care Workforce Data Center Manager  
9           position is created in the Agency of Human Services, Office of Health Care  
10           Reform in fiscal year 2023 to manage the Health Care Workforce Data Center  
11           created pursuant to this section.

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

15           Sec. 33. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; BARRIERS TO

16                           MENTAL HEALTH LICENSURE; REPORT

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

1 Care, on Human Services, on Commerce and Economic Development, and on  
2 Government Operations and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare, on  
3 Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and on Government  
4 Operations.

5 Sec. 34. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; POSITION;

6 APPROPRIATION

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

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

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

19 BOARD; SUPPLY AND DEMAND MODELING

20 On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Labor, in collaboration  
21 with the Green Mountain Care Board, shall explore and recommend to the

1 House Committees on Health Care, on Human Services, and on Commerce and  
2 Economic Development and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare  
3 and on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs a process,  
4 methodology, and necessary funding amounts to establish and maintain the  
5 capacity to perform health care supply and demand modeling based on  
6 information in the **Health Care Workforce Data Center**, for use by health care  
7 employers, health care educators, and policymakers.

8 Sec. 36. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL REGULATION; GREEN  
9 MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS;  
10 ADMINISTRATIVE COST REDUCTION; REPORT

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

16 (b) The Department of Financial Regulation shall direct health insurers to  
17 provide prior authorization information to the Department in a format required  
18 by the Department in order to enable the Department to analyze opportunities  
19 to align and streamline prior authorization request processes. The Department  
20 shall share its findings and recommendations with the Green Mountain Care  
21 Board, and the Department and the Board shall collaborate to provide

1 recommendations to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate  
2 Committees on Health and Welfare and on Finance on or before January 15,  
3 2023 regarding the statutory changes necessary to align and streamline prior  
4 authorization processes and requirements across health insurers.

5 Sec. 37. 33 V.S.A. § 3543 is amended to read:

6 § 3543. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

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

11 (2) An eligible individual shall:

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

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

19 (C) have earned an associates or bachelor's degree with a major  
20 concentration in early childhood, child and human development, elementary

1 education, special education with a birth to age eight focus, or child and family  
2 services within the preceding five years.

3 \* \* \*

4 Sec. 38. PILOT PROGRAM; POSITIONS EMBEDDED WITHIN  
5 RECOVERY CENTERS

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

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

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

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

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

19 (iii) 0.5 FTE to serve as Employment Assistance Program staff  
20 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. 39. CREDENTIAL OF VALUE GOAL; PUBLIC-PRIVATE

16                          PARTNERSHIP; APPROPRIATION

17           (a) Duties. In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$150,000.00 is appropriated  
18           from the General Fund to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for a  
19           performance-based contract to perform the following duties, in coordination  
20           and alignment with State partners, in support of the State's goal articulated in

1 10 V.S.A. § 546 that 70 percent of working-age Vermonters hold a credential  
2 of value by 2025 (Goal):

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

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

11 (3) assist or coordinate with stakeholders, such as educational, business,  
12 governmental, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations, in activities that seek  
13 to align the delivery of high-quality education and training opportunities with  
14 career advancement and support the policy priorities outlined in 10 V.S.A.  
15 § 546;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5                            APPROPRIATION

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

12           Sec. 41. ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY; FINDINGS

13           The General Assembly finds:

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

19           (2) 36,000 adults in Vermont do not have a high school credential, and  
20           tens of thousands more lack the skills to matriculate into and be successful in  
21           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; REVERSION

12      In fiscal year 2022, of the amounts appropriated in 2021 Acts and Resolves  
13      No. 74, Sec. G. 300(a)(13), from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) –  
14      Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds to the Agency of Commerce and  
15      Community Development for the Economic Recovery Grant Program:

16      (1) \$8,000,000.00 shall revert to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)  
17      – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds; and

18      (2) any additional amounts remaining in the Program at the close of  
19      fiscal year 2022 shall revert to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) –  
20      Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds and the Agency shall report such  
21      amount to the Joint Fiscal Committee at its July 2022 meeting.

1       Sec. 47. EFFECTIVE DATES

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

3                   (1) Sec. 13 (Secondary Student Industry Recognized Credential Pilot  
4 Project) and Sec. 46 (Economic Recovery Grant Program funding) shall take  
5 effect on passage.

6                   Sec. 12(b)–(c) (Internship Cost Offset Initiative) shall take effect on  
7 passage.

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