

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs to  
3 which was referred House Bill No. 703 entitled “An act relating to promoting  
4 workforce development” respectfully reports that it has considered the same  
5 and recommends that the Senate propose to the House that

6 **Sec. 1. PURPOSE; IMPLEMENTATION**

7 (a) The purpose of this act is to expand opportunities for workforce  
8 education, training, and development for Vermonters and to make meaningful  
9 investments to support and expand the workforce across the State.

10 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that each recipient of funding  
11 through this act shall conduct significant outreach to ensure that all  
12 Vermonters, and particularly populations that have experienced unequal access  
13 to public or private economic benefits due to geography, socioeconomic status,  
14 disability status, gender or gender identity, age, immigration or refugee status,  
15 or race, have the opportunity to benefit from the financial and programmatic  
16 benefits made available through this act.

17 Sec. 2. IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES AND FUNDING FOR EXPANDING  
18 THE LABOR FORCE; INCREASING THE NUMBER OF  
19 PARTICIPANTS AND PARTICIPATION RATES;  
20 APPROPRIATIONS

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

3            (1) \$2,500,000.00 to the University of Vermont Office of Engagement,  
4        in consultation with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, to  
5        administer a statewide forgivable loan program of \$5,000.00 per graduate for  
6        recent college graduates across all Vermont higher education institutions who  
7        commit to work in Vermont for two years after graduation.

8            (2) \$387,000.00 to Vermont Technical College to develop a skilled meat  
9        cutter training and apprenticeship facility.

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

16        Sec. 2. CTE FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE; FINDINGS

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

1       (b) CTE is a vital component of our educational system, supporting and  
2       delivering on the goals established by the General Assembly in 2013 Acts and  
3       Resolves No. 77 (flexible pathways), 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 189  
4       (workforce development), and in achieving our attainment goal, which is that  
5       70 percent of working-age Vermonters have a credential of value by 2025  
6       (10 V.S.A. § 546).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7        Sec. 3. FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF  
8                    CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN VERMONT

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

12            (1) complete an systematic examination, which was interrupted by  
13        COVID-19, of the existing funding structures of career technical education  
14        (CTE) in Vermont and how these structures impede or promote the State’s  
15        educational and workforce development goals identify the best approach  
16        moving forward;

17            (2) examine CTE governance structures in relationship to those funding  
18        structures and identify the best approach moving forward;

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

1 ~~(4) examine the funding and alignment of early college and dual~~  
2 ~~enrollment;~~

3 ~~(5) consider the CTE funding and governance structures in other states~~  
4 ~~in relation to Vermont's unique system of funding education; and~~

5 ~~(4) identify and prioritize potential~~ propose an implementation plan for  
6 new models of CTE funding and governance structures ~~to reduce barriers to~~  
7 ~~enrollment and~~ to improve the quality, duration, ~~impact,~~ and access to CTE  
8 statewide.

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

14 (c) On or before March 1, 2023, the Joint Fiscal Office Agency of  
15 Education shall issue a written report to the House and Senate Committees on  
16 Education, the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development,  
17 the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General  
18 Affairs, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee  
19 on Finance on the work performed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

20 (d)(1) The Agency of Education shall consider the work performed by the  
21 contractor and report issued pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and shall

1 develop an implementation plan, including recommended steps to design and  
2 implement new funding and governance models.

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

10 Sec. 4. INVESTMENT IN THE UP-SKILLING OF PRIVATE SECTOR

11 EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT THE EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS

12 AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS; APPROPRIATIONS

13 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$250,000.00 is appropriated from the  
14 General Fund to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for a  
15 performance-based contract to provide statewide delivery of business coaching  
16 and other forms of training to BIPOC business owners, networking and special  
17 convenings, and career fairs, workshops and paid internships, career guidance,  
18 and other support for BIPOC workers across the State.

1 **Sec. 4a. EDUCATOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT;**

2 **APPROPRIATION; REPORT**

3 (a) Purpose. The purpose of this section is to encourage and support the  
4 development and retention of qualified and effective Vermont educators. To  
5 combat the growing educator shortage throughout the State and meet the needs  
6 of Vermont students, it is necessary to invest in nontraditional educator  
7 training programs.

8 (b) Grant program.

9 (1) Program creation. In fiscal year 2023, there is established the Peer  
10 Review Support Grant Program, to be administered by the Agency of  
11 Education, to provide grants to expand support, mentoring, and professional  
12 development to prospective educators seeking licensure through the Agency of  
13 Education's peer review process, with the goal of increased program  
14 completion rates.

15 (2) Program administration. The Agency shall adopt policies,  
16 procedures, and guidelines necessary for implementation of the Program  
17 described in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

18 (3) Eligibility criteria. The Agency shall issue grants to organizations or  
19 school districts with programs designed to provide prospective educators in the  
20 peer review program the support necessary for successful completion of the  
21 peer review process by providing:



1           (A) support through the Praxis exam process;

2           (B) local educator lead seminars designed around the Vermont

3 licensure portfolio themes;

4           (C) local educator mentors;

5           (D) support in completing the peer review portfolio and licensing

6 process; and

7           (E) continued professional development support within the first year

8 of licensure.

9           (4) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Agency of Education  
10 shall report to the Senate and House Committees on Education on the status of  
11 the implementation of the Peer Review Support Grant Program and a summary  
12 and performance review of the programs to which grants were awarded. The  
13 report shall include any metrics used in the performance review, the number of  
14 program participants, endorsement areas of participants, feedback from  
15 participants and mentors, and any recommendation for legislative action.

16           (c) Appropriation. Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 4025(d), the sum of  
17 \$712,500.00 is appropriated from the Education Fund to the Agency of  
18 Education in fiscal year 2023 for the purpose of funding the Peer Review  
19 Support Grant Program.

1 Sec. 5. OFFICE OF WORKFORCE INNOVATION TO LEAD AND  
2 COORDINATE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

3 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

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

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

6 Division of the Vermont Department of Labor:

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

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

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

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

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

17 (F) The total volume of hires made each year is approximately  
18 200,000 nonunique individuals.

19 (3) The Department receives approximately 80 percent of its funding  
20 from federal sources, which constrains the Department and its employees from  
21 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           (6) Because most State agencies and departments touch the workforce  
9           system in some way, there is a need for more coordination and alignment  
10           across State government to serve both job seekers and employers.

11           (7) Vermont needs a statewide workforce development, training, and  
12           education system in which all Vermonters who want to work, and all  
13           employers who want workers, can connect.

14           (b) Creation of Office of Workforce Innovation. The Office of Workforce  
15           Innovation is created within the Governor’s office to coordinate statewide and  
16           regional workforce expansion across all agencies and departments in State  
17           government and among a diverse stakeholder community. The State  
18           Workforce Development Board shall be managed by the Office.

19           (1) Purpose. The purposes of the Office of Workforce Innovation  
20           include:

21           (A) interagency coordination around Governor’s work force agenda;

1           (B) serving as the developer and holder of a statewide work force  
2           development plan, including supporting the work of the State Workforce  
3           Development Board and contracting with outside process entities as needed to  
4           help convene all system actors;

5           (C) occasionally convening stakeholders;

6           (D) connecting to National Governors Association best practices  
7           research;

8           (E) endeavoring to have practices implemented throughout the  
9           system;

10           (F) coordinating across State entities to ensure well-coordinated State  
11           responses and programs to carry out Governor’s work force agenda;

12           (G) overseeing service delivery by State employees and outside  
13           contracts at the local and regional levels;

14           (H) ensuring interagency communication;

15           (I) coordination and collaboration to break down silos and to  
16           maximize communication flow; and

17           (J) collaborating with State-level organizations, service providers,  
18           and educational institutions.

19           (2) Personnel. The Director of the Office of Workforce Innovation is  
20           created. There shall be two full-time exempt staff to accomplish the duties of

1 the Office. One of these staff positions shall be the current Executive Director  
2 of the State Workforce Developmental Board.

3 (3) Duties. The Director of the Office of the Workforce Innovation  
4 shall:

5 (A) lead Workforce Development and Expansion for the State;

6 (B) provide interagency coordination and strategic and  
7 comprehensive policy leadership for the purpose of workforce development,  
8 expansion, training, and education in the State;

9 (C) determine where Adult CTE should live and how it should be  
10 financed; and

11 (D) complete a feasibility study to assess creating a recyclable and  
12 outcome-based funding mechanism to deploy State workforce training funding  
13 for re- and up- skilling individuals in strategic sectors and submit findings and  
14 recommendations in a report to the Vermont Workforce Development Board;

15 (E) perform any other duties that are relevant based on the purpose of  
16 this section.

17 (4) Coordination. The Office shall convene interagency and State-level  
18 service provider partners, coordinate State-level workforce information  
19 collection and distribution, establish interagency working agreements, manage  
20 the State Workforce Development Board, and consider other improvements to  
21 the structure, coordination, and collaboration of the workforce development

1 system in general. This may include creating a Vermont workforce  
2 development network.

3 (5) Implementation. The Office of Workforce Innovation shall be  
4 established as of July 1, 2022.

5 (6) Appropriation. The amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the  
6 General Fund to create the Office and perform its duties.

7 Sec. 5a. REGIONAL WORKFORCE EXPANSION SYSTEM

8 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

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

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

11 Division of the Vermont Department of Labor:

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

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

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

18 (D) The workforce has shrunk by 26,000 individuals from 2019 to  
19 2022, yet the unemployment rate is just three percent as of January 2022.

20 (E) The workforce participation rate has fallen from 66 percent to  
21 60.6 percent.

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

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

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

11           (b) Regional Workforce Expansion System. The amount of \$1,500,000.00  
12           \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
13           Labor for a two-year pilot program to launch and lead a coordinated regional  
14           system, beginning in three regions of the State, to work toward accomplishing  
15           the following goals:

- 16           (1) increase local labor participation rate;  
17           (2) decrease the number of open positions reported by local employers;  
18           (3) increase the wages of workers as they transition to new jobs; and  
19           (4) collect, organize, develop, and share information related to local  
20           career pathways with workforce development partners.

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

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

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

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

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

12        (d) System infrastructure. The Department shall make investments that  
13       improve and expand regional capacity to strengthen networks who assist  
14       jobseekers, workers, and employers in connecting.

15            (1) The Department is authorized to create four classified, two-year  
16       limited-service positions, with funding allocated to perform the work described  
17       in this section, who shall report to the Workforce Development Division and of  
18       whom:

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



1           (B) one shall provide oversight and State-level coordination of  
2           activities.

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

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

12           ~~(e) Coordination.~~

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

18           ~~(2) Service provider partners shall include community partners who~~  
19           ~~directly serve mature workers, youth, individuals with disabilities, individuals~~  
20           ~~who have been involved with the correction system, BIPOC Vermonters, New~~  
21           ~~Americans, and other historically marginalized populations in efforts to align~~

1 service delivery, share information, and achieve greater employment outcomes  
2 for Vermonters.

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

8 (f) Implementation. The Department of Labor shall begin implementing  
9 the Regional Workforce Expansion System on or before July 1, 2022.

10 Sec. 6. INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS; WORKFORCE

11 DEVELOPMENT; PILOT PROGRAM

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

16 (b) Policy; appropriations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6           (c) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Corrections  
7           shall create and submit a report on workforce and education training programs  
8           in correctional facilities to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee;  
9           the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Commerce and  
10           Economic Development; and the Senate Committees on Economic  
11           Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Judiciary. The report shall:

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

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

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

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

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

7           Sec. 7. INTENT

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

11          Sec. 8. IMPROVEMENT OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

12                   RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION; REPORT

13          (a) On or before January 15, 2023, the Secretary of Human Services, in  
14          consultation with the Commissioners of Corrections and of Human Resources,  
15          shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Appropriations, on  
16          Commerce and Economic Development, on Corrections and Institutions, and  
17          on Government Operations and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on  
18          Government Operations, and on Judiciary identifying conditions that pose an  
19          obstacle to the successful recruitment and retention of correctional officers and  
20          setting forth a plan to improve the recruitment and retention of correctional  
21          officers.

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

3                (A) wages and benefits;

4                (B) terms and conditions of employment;

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

7        and

8                (D) staffing levels and overtime.

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

13                (A) Maine;

14                (B) New Hampshire;

15                (C) New York;

16                (D) Massachusetts;

17                (E) Rhode Island; and

18                (F) Connecticut.

19                (c) The report shall, as part of the plan to improve the recruitment and  
20        retention of correctional officers, identify specific administrative and

1 legislative actions that are necessary to successfully improve the recruitment  
2 and retention of correctional officers.

3 Sec. 9. ASSESSMENT OF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION  
4 INITIATIVES; REPORT

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

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

10 (A) the secure residential recovery facility; and

11 (B) the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital;

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

13 (A) the Department of Corrections; and

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

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

18 (b) The report shall assess how effective the appropriations identified  
19 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section were in addressing issues related to  
20 employee recruitment and retention; identify any ongoing or remaining  
21 employee recruitment and retention challenges that the recipients have; and

1 identify any potential legislative, administrative, or programmatic changes that  
2 can address those ongoing or remaining employee retention issues.

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

6 (1) the Vermont Veteran’s Home;

7 (2) the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital;

8 (3) the secure residential recovery facility;

9 (4) designated and specialized service agencies; and

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

12 Sec. 10. REPEALS

13 10 V.S.A. §§ 544 and 545 are repealed.

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

15 § 547. WORK-BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20           (1) build and administer the Program;

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

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

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

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

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

11           (1) the total number of participants served;

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

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

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

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

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

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

6       Sec. 12. WORK-BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM;

7                APPROPRIATION

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

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

12                ~~CREDENTIAL PILOT PROJECT~~

13      ~~(a) Pilot Project creation. The Department of Labor, in consultation with~~  
14      ~~the Agency of Education, shall design and implement the Secondary Student~~  
15      ~~Industry Recognized Credential Pilot Project to provide funding for an eligible~~  
16      ~~secondary student to take an eligible adult career and technical education~~  
17      ~~course.~~

18      ~~(b) Eligible courses. A course is eligible for the Pilot Project if it is:~~

19              ~~(1) offered at a regional CTE center, as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 1522(4);~~  
20      ~~and qualifies as adult career technical education or postsecondary career~~  
21      ~~technical education, as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 1522(11) and (12);~~

1           ~~(2) offered during the summer, evening or weekend while secondary~~  
2           ~~school is in session or during the summer; and~~

3           ~~(3) included as an element of the student's personalized learning plan~~  
4           ~~and reasonably related to the student's career goals.~~

5           ~~(c) Eligible student. A student is eligible for the Pilot Project if:~~

6           ~~(1) the student is a Vermont resident attending a Vermont public school~~  
7           ~~or an independent secondary school that is eligible for public funding;~~

8           ~~(2) the student has completed grade 11 and has not received a high~~  
9           ~~school diploma; and~~

10           ~~(3) the student's secondary school and the regional CTE center~~  
11           ~~determine that the student:~~

12           ~~(A) is prepared to succeed in the course;~~

13           ~~(B) meets the prerequisites for the course; and~~

14           ~~(C) has exhausted other sources of available funding prior to~~  
15           ~~submitting an application.~~

16           ~~(d) Administration:~~

17           ~~(1) Not later than 30 days after the effective date of this section, the~~  
18           ~~Department of Labor, in consultation with the Agency of Education, shall~~  
19           ~~develop and make available an application for funding that includes:~~

20           ~~(A) student's enrollment status;~~

21           ~~(B) course information;~~

1 ~~(C) a copy of the student’s personalized learning plan;~~

2 ~~(D) attestation that the secondary and adult career technical education~~  
3 ~~programs find the program of study appropriate for the student;~~

4 ~~(E) description of federal and local funding sources that were~~  
5 ~~explored but insufficient or unavailable for use by the student; and~~

6 ~~(F) other information the Department requires to determine~~  
7 ~~eligibility.~~

8 ~~(2) A student’s secondary school shall timely complete and submit an~~  
9 ~~application to the Department of Labor on behalf of the student.~~

10 ~~(3) The Department of Labor shall:~~

11 ~~(A) review the application and, if appropriate, meet with the student~~  
12 ~~to determine eligibility for existing federal and State programs, including~~  
13 ~~WIOA Title I Youth (in school) and the Vermont Youth Employment~~  
14 ~~Program; and~~

15 ~~(B) provide a copy of the application to the Agency of Education,~~  
16 ~~which shall determine whether Agency funding is available and notify the~~  
17 ~~Department of its determination within 10 business days.~~

18 ~~(4) The Department shall provide funding for the tuition cost for one~~  
19 ~~course to eligible students on a first come, first served basis:~~

20 ~~(A) from State or federal sources that are available through the~~  
21 ~~Department or Agency; or~~

1 ~~(B) if funding is unavailable from those sources, from the amounts~~  
2 ~~available in the Department's fiscal year 2023 budget, not to exceed~~  
3 ~~\$100,000.00.~~

4 ~~(5) For students who meet annual low income qualifications under the~~  
5 ~~Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Department may provide~~  
6 ~~funds to purchase books, supplies, exam fees, and equipment.~~

7 ~~(6) A regional CTE center shall not receive more than \$20,000.00~~  
8 ~~through the program in each fiscal year.~~

9 ~~(e) Regional CTE center report. The Department of Labor shall require a~~  
10 ~~report from each regional CTE center providing information to support the~~  
11 ~~Department's reporting requirements in subsections (f) and (g) of this section.~~

12 ~~(f) Interim Report. The Department of Labor and Agency of Education~~  
13 ~~shall report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House~~  
14 ~~Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate~~  
15 ~~Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs on or~~  
16 ~~before the January 15, 2023 regarding the use of funds, including data relating~~  
17 ~~to student circumstances, levels of participation, and how local school districts~~  
18 ~~are able or unable to meet the career preparation and training needs of~~  
19 ~~secondary students using the program.~~

20 ~~(g) Final Report. The Department of Labor and Agency of Education shall~~  
21 ~~report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House~~

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

12 Sec. 14. THE VERMONT TRADES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

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

20 (1) be enrolled in an industry-recognized training and certification  
21 program that leads to initial employment or career advancement in a building,

1 mechanical, industrial, or medical trade; emergency services; energy;  
2 transportation; broadband; or robotics;

3 (2) demonstrate financial need;

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

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

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

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

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

20 (e) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from  
21 the General Fund to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for



1 scholarships for trades students under the Vermont Trades Scholarship  
2 Program.

3 **Sec. 14a. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

4 In fiscal year 2023, the following amounts are appropriated from the  
5 General Fund to the Department of Health to support EMS workforce  
6 development:

7 (1) \$450,000.00 for a voucher program to support students pursuing  
8 initial EMS or upgrade educational credits;

9 (2) \$300,000.00 for paramedic education reimbursement;

10 (3) \$100,000.00 for EMS courses in underserved EMS districts;

11 (4) \$37,500.00 for critical care paramedic education; and

12 (5) \$62,500.00 for EMS continuing education.

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

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

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

1           (1) be a Vermont resident; and

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

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

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

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

15           (e) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the  
16           General Fund to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for loan  
17           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 shall consult with the Board and other organizations to identify  
17 and consider potential funding partners to leverage amounts available through  
18 the Fund.

19           (3) A CTE center and its partners shall apply to the Board for funding  
20 by submitting a project application that includes the information required by  
21 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 summer or other work  
19                  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 one of the following types  
5            of property that require repair and improvement:

6                    (A) blighted or otherwise non-code-compliant residential property  
7            that results in a building with not more than four dwelling units that are  
8            affordable to seniors, households with lower income, or other communities that  
9            need access to affordable housing;

10                    (B) municipal facilities;

11                    (C) school buildings or related educational facilities; or

12                    (D) commercial construction projects that have substantial  
13            community benefit.

14                    or new residential construction projects or improvements to land in  
15            cases of critical need.

16            (2) The project includes a weatherization component.

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

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

1        (f) Funding; proceeds; revolving loans.

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

5            (2) If a completed project results in a gain for a CTE center, upon the  
6            sale or transfer of a completed project, or upon completion of any  
7            rehabilitation work, the CTE center shall return any loan proceeds and any  
8            profits realized to the Board to provide funding for future projects through the  
9            Fund.

10           (3) If a completed project results in a loss for the CTE center, upon the  
11           sale or transfer of a completed project, or upon completion of any  
12           rehabilitation work, the Board shall hold the CTE center harmless for the  
13           amount of the loss and the CTE center shall return any remaining loan funds to  
14           the Board to provide funding for future projects through the Fund.

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

17        Sec. 17. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; FINDINGS

18           The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

20          (7) while the State works toward achieving these goals, the COVID-19  
21          pandemic has exacerbated already pressing challenges, making it even harder



1 for families to find affordable high-quality child care and more difficult for  
2 early childhood education programs to find and retain qualified educators; and  
3 (8) according to a recent study by the National Association for the  
4 Education of Young Children, 71 percent of center-based child care programs  
5 in Vermont reported experiencing a staffing shortage.

6 Sec. 18. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

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

12 **Sec. 18a. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; EMPLOYEE EDUCATION**  
13 **PROGRAMS**

14 On or before January 15, 2023, the Agency of Human Services shall  
15 catalogue all educational programs and opportunities it makes available to its  
16 employees, including identifying which programs and opportunities are offered  
17 to which employees, and report those findings to the House Committees on  
18 Health Care and on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Health and  
19 Welfare.

20 **H.703 – Senate Health and Welfare **recommendations** on health care**  
21 **workforce**

1 **New draft with VSAC recommendations added in green**

2 Sec. 19. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

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

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

18 Sec. 20. EMERGENCY GRANTS TO SUPPORT NURSE FACULTY AND  
19 STAFF

20 (a) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of ~~\$3,000,000.00~~ **\$1,000,000.00** is  
21 appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State

1 Fiscal Recovery Funds to the Department of Health and shall carry forward for  
2 the purpose of providing emergency interim grants to Vermont’s nursing  
3 schools over ~~three~~ **two** years to increase the compensation for their nurse  
4 faculty and staff, with ~~\$1,000,000.00~~ **\$500,000.00** to be distributed in each of  
5 fiscal years 2023, **and** 2024, ~~and 2025~~ to increase the compensation for each  
6 full-time-equivalent (FTE) member of the clinical and didactic nurse faculty  
7 and staff. The Department shall distribute the funds among the nursing schools  
8 in Vermont equitably based on each school’s proportion of nursing faculty and  
9 staff to the total number of FTE nursing faculty and staff across all nursing  
10 schools statewide.

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

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

18 WORKING GROUP; REPORT

19 (a)(1) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of ~~\$2,400,000.00~~ **\$1,400,000.00** is  
20 appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Human Services to  
21 provide incentive grants to hospital-employed nurses in Vermont to serve as

1 preceptors for nursing students enrolled in Vermont nursing school programs.  
2 The Agency shall distribute the funds to hospitals employing nurses who  
3 provide student preceptor supervision based on the number of preceptor hours  
4 to be provided, at a rate of \$5.00 per preceptor hour, or a lesser hourly rate if  
5 the need exceeds the available funds.

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

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

18 (A) identify ways to increase clinical placement opportunities across  
19 a variety of health care settings for nursing students enrolled in Vermont  
20 nursing school programs, **including exploring opportunities for**  
21 **participation through remote means;**

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

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

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

14           Sec. 22. HEALTH CARE EMPLOYER NURSING PIPELINE AND  
15           APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

16           (a) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of ~~\$3,000,000.00~~ **\$2,000,000.00** is  
17           appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State  
18           Fiscal Recovery Funds to the ~~Vermont Student Assistance Corporation~~  
19           **Vermont State College System** and shall carry forward for the purpose of  
20           providing grants to health care employers, including hospitals, long-term care  
21           facilities, designated and specialized service agencies, federally qualified

1 health centers, and other health care providers, to establish or expand  
2 partnerships with Vermont nursing schools to create nursing pipeline or  
3 apprenticeship programs, or both, that will train members of the health care  
4 employers' existing staff, including personal care attendants, licensed nursing  
5 assistants, and licensed practical nurses, to become higher-level nursing  
6 professionals. Through a combination of scholarship awards, grants awarded  
7 to health care employers pursuant to this section, and the health care  
8 employer's contributions, the trainees' tuition and fees shall be covered in full,  
9 and trainees shall be provided with assistance in meeting their living costs,  
10 such as housing and child care, while attending the program.

11 (b) In awarding grants pursuant to this section, **VSAC the Vermont State**  
12 **College System** shall give priority to health care employer proposals based on  
13 the following criteria:

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

16 (2) the extent of the health care employer's commitment to sustaining  
17 the program financially, including providing financial support for nurse  
18 preceptors, to create ongoing opportunities for educational advancement in  
19 nursing;

20 (3) the ability of the health care employer's staff to leverage nursing  
21 scholarship opportunities to maximize the reach of the grant funds;

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

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

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

9           (c)(1) **VSAC The Vermont State College System** shall begin awarding  
10 grants under this section expeditiously in order to enable health care employer  
11 staff to begin enrolling in nursing school programs that commence in the fall of  
12 2022.

13           (2) On or before September 15, 2022, **VSAC the Vermont State**  
14 **College System** shall provide an update to the Health Reform Oversight  
15 Committee on the status of program implementation.

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

17           § 34. VERMONT NURSING FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE  
18 PROGRAM

19           (a) As used in this section:

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

1           **(2) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the**  
2           **eligibility requirements under this section for a forgivable loan.**

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

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

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

11           ~~**(6) “Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,**~~  
12           ~~**serviced, or otherwise administered by an accredited U.S. educational lender**~~  
13           ~~**for attendance at an eligible school.**~~

14           ~~**(7) “Program” means the Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan**~~  
15           **Incentive Program created under this section.**

16           **(b) The Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan Incentive Program is created**  
17           **and shall be administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with**  
18           **the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The Program provides**  
19           **forgivable loans to students enrolled in an eligible school who commit to**



1 working as a nurse in this State and who meet the eligibility requirements in  
2 subsection (d) of this section.

3 **(c)** The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse forgivable  
4 loan funds under the Program on behalf of eligible individuals, subject to the  
5 appropriation of funds by the General Assembly for this purpose.

6 **(d)** To be eligible for a forgivable loan under the Program, an individual,  
7 whether a resident or nonresident, shall **satisfy all of the following**  
8 **requirements:**

9 (1) be enrolled at an approved postsecondary education institution as  
10 defined in 16 V.S.A. § 2822 **a nursing program at an eligible school:**

11 (2) ~~demonstrate financial need;~~ (VSAC would restore this language)

12 (3) ~~demonstrate academic capacity by carrying the minimum grade point~~  
13 ~~average in the individual's course of study prior to receiving the fund award~~  
14 **maintain good standing at the eligible school at which the individual is**  
15 **enrolled** (VSAC would restore with revisions as follows: **demonstrate**  
16 **academic capacity by carrying a minimum grade point average, or**  
17 **comparable metric used by the school, in the individual's course of study**  
18 **prior to receiving the fund award**); **and**

19 **(4) agree to work as a nurse in Vermont directly for a Vermont**  
20 **health care provider for a minimum of one year following licensure for**  
21 **each year of forgivable loan awarded.**

1 ~~have used any available gift aid;~~

2 ~~(4) have executed a contract with the Corporation committing the~~

3 ~~individual to work as a nurse in this State;~~

4 ~~(5) have executed a credit agreement or promissory note that will~~

5 ~~reduce the individual's forgivable loan benefit, in whole or in part,~~

6 ~~pursuant to subsection (g) of this section, if the individual fails to complete~~

7 ~~the period of service required in subsection (g) of this section subdivision~~

8 ~~(4) of this subsection;~~

9 ~~(5) have provided such other documentation as the Corporation~~

10 ~~may require; and~~

11 ~~(6) have completed the Program's application form, the free~~

12 ~~application for federal student aid (FAFSA), and the Vermont grant~~

13 ~~application each academic year of enrollment in accordance with a~~

14 ~~schedule determined by the Corporation.~~

15 (e)(1) First priority for forgivable loan funds shall be given to students

16 pursuing a practical nursing certificate who will be eligible to sit for the

17 NCLEX-PN examination upon completion of the certificate.

18 (2) Second priority for forgivable loan funds shall be given to students

19 pursuing an associate's degree in nursing who will be eligible to sit for the

20 NCLEX-RN examination upon graduation.

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

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

5           **(f) In addition to the priorities established in subsection (e) of this**  
6           **section:**

7           **(1) Students Vermont residents attending an approved postsecondary**  
8           **educational institution eligible school in Vermont shall receive first preference**  
9           **priority for forgivable loans;**

10           **(2) Vermont residents attending an eligible school in another state**  
11           **shall receive second priority for forgivable loans;**

12           **(3) Nonresidents attending an eligible school in Vermont shall**  
13           **receive third priority for forgivable loans; and**

14           **(4) Nonresidents attending an eligible school in another state shall**  
15           **receive fourth priority for forgivable loans.**

16           **(g) For each year of service as a nurse in this State, an eligible individual**  
17           **shall be entitled to a full academic year of forgivable loan benefit under the**  
18           **Program. If an eligible individual fails to serve as a nurse in this State for**  
19           **a period that would entitle the individual to the full forgivable loan benefit**  
20           **received by the individual, other than for good cause as determined by the**  
21           **Corporation in consultation with the Vermont Department of Health, then**

1 **the individual shall receive only partial loan forgiveness for a pro rata**  
2 **portion of the loan pursuant to the terms of the interest-free reimbursement**  
3 **credit agreement or promissory note signed by the individual at the time**  
4 **of entering the Program.**

5 (h) There shall be no deadline to apply for a forgivable loan under this  
6 section. Forgivable loans shall be awarded on a rolling basis as long as funds  
7 are available, and any funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall roll over  
8 and shall be available to the Department of Health and the Vermont Student  
9 Assistance Corporation in the following fiscal year to award additional  
10 forgivable loans as set forth in this section.

11 **(i) The Corporation shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines**  
12 **necessary to implement the provisions of this section, including maximum**  
13 **forgivable loan amounts.**

14 Sec. 24. REPEAL

15 18 V.S.A. § 31 (educational assistance; incentives; nurses) is repealed.

16 Sec. 25. VERMONT NURSING FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE  
17 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

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

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

2 § 35. VERMONT **NURSING AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT HEALTH**  
3 **CARE**  
4 **PROFESSIONAL LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM**

5 (a) As used in this section:

6 (1) “Corporation” means the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation  
7 established in 16 V.S.A. § 2821 “AHEC” means the Vermont Area Health  
8 **Education Centers program.**

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

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

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

15 (5) “Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,  
16 serviced, or otherwise administered by the Corporation under this subchapter  
17 **by an accredited U.S. educational lender** for attendance at an eligible school.

18 (6) “Program” means the Vermont **Nursing and Physician Assistant**  
19 **Health Care Professional** Loan Repayment Program created under this  
20 section.

1       (b) The Vermont ~~Nursing and Physician Assistant~~ **Health Care**  
2 **Professional** Loan Repayment Program is created and shall be administered by  
3 the Department of Health in collaboration with ~~the Corporation~~ **AHEC**. The  
4 Program provides loan repayment on behalf of individuals who live and work  
5 **in this State** as a ~~nurse or physician assistant~~ **health care professional,**  
6 **including as a nurse, physician assistant, dental hygienist, medical**  
7 **technician, primary care provider, child psychiatrist, general surgeon, or**  
8 **in another field experiencing a health care workforce shortage** ~~in this State~~  
9 and who meet the eligibility requirements in subsection (d) of this section.

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

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

15           (1) have graduated from an eligible school where the individual ~~has,~~  
16 ~~within the past five years, been~~ **was** awarded a ~~nursing degree~~ **or a degree in**  
17 ~~physician assistant studies~~ **in a field experiencing a health care workforce**  
18 **shortage in this State;**

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 or physician assistant~~ in this State ~~as a nurse,~~  
2           ~~physician assistant, dental hygienist, medical technician, primary care~~  
3           ~~provider, child psychiatrist, general surgeon, or in another field~~  
4           ~~experiencing a health care workforce shortage;~~ and  
5           (3) be a resident of Vermont.

6           (e)(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~~ **health care professional**  
9           in this State.

10           (2) ~~The Corporation~~ **AHEC** shall award loan repayments in amounts  
11           that are sufficient to attract high-quality candidates while also making a  
12           meaningful increase in Vermont’s health care professional workforce. **AHEC**  
13           **shall prioritize awards to candidates working in fields in which Vermont**  
14           **is experiencing the greatest health care workforce shortages.**

15           ~~(f) The Corporation shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines~~  
16           ~~necessary to implement the provisions of this section.~~

1 Sec. 27. VERMONT **NURSING AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT HEALTH**  
2 **CARE**

3 **PROFESSIONAL** LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM;

4 APPROPRIATION

5 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of ~~\$2,000,000.00~~ **\$3,000,000.00** is  
6 appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Health for loan  
7 repayment for ~~nurses and physician assistants~~ **health care professionals** under  
8 the Vermont ~~Nursing and Physician Assistant~~ **Health Care Professional** Loan  
9 Repayment Program established in Sec. 26 of this act.

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

11 § 36. NURSE FACULTY FORGIVABLE LOAN **INCENTIVE AND LOAN**  
12 **REPAYMENT** PROGRAM

13 (a) **Definitions.** As used in this section:

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

16 **(2) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the eligibility**  
17 **requirements under this section for a forgivable loan ~~or loan repayment.~~**

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



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

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

6           “Loan repayment” means the cancellation and repayment of loans under  
7 this section.

8           (6) “Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,  
9 serviced, or otherwise administered by the Corporation under this subchapter  
10 by an accredited U.S. educational lender for attendance at an eligible school.

11           (7) “Nurse faculty member” or “member of the nurse faculty” means a  
12 nurse **an individual** with a master’s or doctoral degree that qualifies the  
13 individual to teach at a nursing school in this State.

14           (8) “Program” means the Nurse Faculty Forgivable Loan **and Loan**  
15 **Repayment** Program created under this section.

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

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

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

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

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

14 (2) continually demonstrate satisfactory academic progress by  
15 maintaining the minimum grade point average or better or the equivalent as  
16 determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point  
17 averages maintain good standing at the eligible school at which the  
18 individual is enrolled VSAC would restore with revisions as follows:  
19 demonstrate academic capacity by carrying a minimum grade point average, or  
20 comparable metric used by the school, in the individual's course of study  
21 prior to receiving the fund award);

1           (3) ~~have used any available gift aid;~~  
2           **agree to work as member of the nurse faculty at a nursing school in**  
3           **Vermont for a minimum of one year following licensure for each year of**  
4           **forgivable loan awarded.**

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

8           (5) have executed a **credit agreement or** promissory note that will  
9           reduce the individual's forgivable loan benefit, in whole or in part, **pursuant**  
10          **to subsection (e) of this section** if the individual fails to complete the period  
11          of service required in ~~subsection (e) of this section~~ **subdivision (3) of this**  
12          **subsection;** and

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

17          **(7) have provided such other documentation as the Corporation**  
18          **may require.**

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

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

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

6 ~~(3) work as a member of the nurse faculty at a nursing school in this~~  
7 ~~State; and~~

8 ~~(4) be a resident of Vermont.~~

9 ~~(f) Service commitment.~~

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

1 ~~(2) Loan repayment. An eligible individual shall be entitled to an~~  
2 ~~amount of loan cancellation and repayment under this section equal to one year~~  
3 ~~of loans for each year of service as a member of the nurse faculty at a nursing~~  
4 ~~school in this State.~~

5 ~~(f) Adoption of policies, procedures, and guidelines.~~ The Corporation shall  
6 adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines necessary to implement the  
7 provisions of this section, **including maximum forgivable loan amounts.**

8 Sec. 29. NURSE FACULTY FORGIVABLE LOAN **AND LOAN**  
9 **REPAYMENT**

10 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

11 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the  
12 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery  
13 Funds to the Department of Health for forgivable loans **and loan repayment** for  
14 nurse faculty members under the Nurse Faculty Forgivable Loan **and Loan**  
15 **Repayment** Program established in Sec. 28 of this act.

16 Sec. 29a. 18 V.S.A. § 37 is added to read: **(NEW)**

17 § 37. NURSE FACULTY LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

18 (a) As used in this section:

19 (1) “AHEC” means the Vermont Area Health Education Centers  
20 program.

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

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

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

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

9           (6) “Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,  
10          serviced, or otherwise administered by an accredited U.S. educational lender  
11          for attendance at an eligible school.

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

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

17          (b) The Nurse Faculty Loan Repayment Program is created and shall be  
18          administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with AHEC. The  
19          Program provides loan repayment on behalf of individuals who work as nurse  
20          faculty members at a nursing school in this State and who meet the eligibility  
21          requirements in subsection (d) of this section.

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

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

6            (1) graduated from an eligible school where the individual was awarded  
7            a graduate degree in nursing;

8            (2) work as a member of the nurse faculty at a nursing school in this  
9            State; and

10           (3) be a resident of Vermont.

11        (e) An eligible individual shall be entitled to an amount of loan cancellation  
12        and repayment under this section equal to one year of loans for each year of  
13        service as a member of the nurse faculty at a nursing school in this State.

14        Sec. 29b. NURSE FACULTY LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM;  
15        APPROPRIATION **(NEW)**

16        In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the  
17        American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery  
18        Funds to the Department of Health for loan repayment for nurse faculty  
19        members under the Nurse Faculty Loan Repayment Program established in  
20        Sec. 29a of this act.

1 Sec. 29c. 18 V.S.A. § 38 is added to read:

2 § 38. VERMONT MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL FORGIVABLE

3 LOAN

4 INCENTIVE PROGRAM (NEW)

5 (a) As used in this section:

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

8 (2) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the eligibility  
9 requirements under this section for a forgivable loan.

10 (3) “Eligible school” means a school in the Vermont State College  
11 System.

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

15 (5) “Gift aid” means grant or scholarship financial aid received from the  
16 federal government or from the State.

17 (6) ~~“Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,~~  
18 ~~serviced, or otherwise administered by an accredited U.S. educational lender~~  
19 ~~for attendance at an eligible school.~~

20 (7) “Program” means the Vermont Mental Health Professional  
21 Forgivable Loan Incentive Program created under this section.



1        (b) The Vermont Mental Health Professional Forgivable Loan Incentive  
2        Program is created and shall be administered by the Department of Health in  
3        collaboration with the Corporation. The Program provides forgivable loans to  
4        students enrolled in a master’s program at an eligible school who commit to  
5        working as a mental health professional in this State and who meet the  
6        eligibility requirements in subsection (d) of this section.

7        (c) The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse forgivable  
8        loan funds under the Program on behalf of eligible individuals, subject to the  
9        appropriation of funds by the General Assembly for this purpose.

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

13       (1) be enrolled at a school in ~~the Vermont~~ **this** State ~~College System~~ in a  
14       program, whether through in-person or remote instruction, that leads to a  
15       master’s degree in a mental health field;

16       (2) ~~maintain good standing at the eligible school at which the individual~~  
17       ~~is enrolled~~ VSAC would replace as follows: **demonstrate academic capacity**  
18       **by carrying a minimum grade point average, or comparable metric used**  
19       **by the school, in the individual’s course of study prior to receiving the**  
20       **fund award**);

21       (3) have used any available gift aid;

1           (4) ~~have executed a contract with the Corporation committing the~~  
2 ~~individual to work as a mental health professional in this State~~ **agree to work**  
3 **as a mental health professional in Vermont for a minimum of one year**  
4 **following licensure for each year of forgivable loan awarded:**

5           (5) have executed a **credit agreement or** promissory note that will  
6 reduce the individual’s forgivable loan benefit, in whole or in part, **pursuant**  
7 **to subsection (e) of this section** if the individual fails to complete the period  
8 of service required in ~~subsection (e) of this section~~ **subdivision (4) of this**  
9 **subsection; and**

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

14           **(7) have provided such other documentation as the Corporation**  
15 **may require.**

16           (e) ~~For each year of service as a mental health professional in this State,~~  
17 ~~an eligible individual shall be entitled to a full academic year of forgivable~~  
18 ~~loan benefit under the Program.~~ If an eligible individual fails to serve as a  
19 mental health professional in this State **in compliance with the Program** for a  
20 period that would entitle the individual to the full forgivable loan benefit  
21 received by the individual, other than for good cause as determined by the

1 Corporation in consultation with the Vermont Department of Health, then the  
2 individual shall receive only partial loan forgiveness for a pro rata portion of  
3 the loan pursuant to the terms of the interest-free reimbursement promissory  
4 note signed by the individual at the time of entering the Program.

5 Sec. 29d. VERMONT MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL  
6 FORGIVABLE LOAN

7 INCENTIVE PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION **(NEW)**

8 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$1,500,000.00 is appropriated from the  
9 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery  
10 Funds to the Department of Health for forgivable loans under the Vermont  
11 Mental Health Professional Forgivable Loan Incentive Program established in  
12 Sec. 29c of this act.

13 Sec. 29e. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; DESIGNATED AND  
14 SPECIALIZED

15 SERVICE AGENCIES; WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT **(NEW)**

16 (a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$1,250,000.00 is appropriated to the  
17 Agency of Human Services, of which \$1,000,000 is from the American Rescue  
18 Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds and \$250,000.00  
19 is from the General Fund, to be distributed to the designated and specialized  
20 service agencies equitably based on each agency’s proportion of full-time  
21 equivalent (FTE) mental health and substance use disorder treatment staff to

1 the total number of FTE mental health and substance use disorder treatment  
2 staff across all designated and specialized service agencies statewide. The  
3 designated and specialized service agencies shall use these funds for loan  
4 repayment and tuition assistance to promote the recruitment and retention of  
5 high-quality mental health and substance use disorder treatment professionals  
6 available to Vermont residents in need of their services, as set forth in  
7 subsection (b) of this section.

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

15 (A) loan repayment for master's-level clinicians, bachelor's-level  
16 direct service staff, and nurses; and

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

19 (2) Loan repayment and tuition assistance funds shall be available to the  
20 current and prospective employees of designated and specialized service

1 agencies in the form of forgivable loans, with the debt forgiven upon the  
2 employee's completion of the required service obligation.

3 (c) On or before March 1, 2023, the Agency of Human Services shall make  
4 a presentation available to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Health  
5 Care, and on Human Services; the Senate Committees on Appropriations and  
6 on Health and Welfare on the use of the funds appropriated in this section.

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

8 § 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

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

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

13 \* \* \*

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

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

1           (a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of ~~\$1,000,000.00~~ **\$750,000.00** is  
2           appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State  
3           Fiscal Recovery Funds to the Office of Health Care Reform in the Agency of  
4           Human Services to enable the Agency to establish and operate the statewide  
5           Health Care Workforce Data Center. In order to enhance the State’s public  
6           health data systems, respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and  
7           improve the State’s COVID-19 mitigation and prevention efforts, the Center  
8           shall collect health care workforce data, shall collaborate with the Director of  
9           Health Care Reform to identify and propose solutions to address data gaps, and  
10           shall share the data with the Green Mountain Care Board as appropriate to  
11           inform the Board’s Health Resource Allocation Plan responsibilities pursuant  
12           to 18 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 Health 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)(i) work in a privately operated center-based child care program  
13 or 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; or

15 (ii) if the individual is an employee of a Vermont Head Start  
16 program that operates fewer than 48 weeks per year, work a minimum of nine  
17 months of the year, inclusive of any employer-approved time off;

18 (B) receive an annual salary of not more than \$50,000.00 through the  
19 individual's work in regulated childcare; and

20 (C) have earned an associates or bachelor's degree with a major  
21 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 (3) To participate in the program set forth in this section, an eligible  
4 individual shall submit to the Department for Children and Families  
5 documentation expressing the individual's intent to work in a regulated,  
6 privately operated center-based child care program or family child care home  
7 for at least the 12 months following the annual loan repayment award  
8 notification, inclusive of any known seasonal layoffs. A participant may  
9 receive up to \$4,000.00 annually in student loan repayment assistance, which  
10 shall be distributed by the Department in four allotments. The Department  
11 shall distribute at least one-quarter of the individual's total annual benefit after  
12 the individual has completed three months of employment in accordance with  
13 the program. The remainder of an individual's total annual benefit shall be  
14 distributed by the Department every three months after the initial payment.

15 (b)(1) The Department shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines  
16 necessary to implement the provisions of this section.

17 (2) Student loan repayments shall be available pursuant to this section  
18 on a first-come, first-served basis until appropriated funds are depleted.

19 (3) The Department may contract for the administration of the program.  
20 Administration costs shall not be more than 10 percent of the total  
21 appropriation received to implement this section.

1 (c) An individual shall not simultaneously participate in the student loan  
2 repayment assistance program set forth in this section and either of the  
3 scholarship programs set forth in section 3541 or 3542 of this title.

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, not more than \$540,000.00 total shall  
13 may be allocated in equal amounts to fund the following 2.5 FTE at each of  
14 two geographically 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 may be allocated in  
2           equal amounts to fund a minimum of one-half FTE position, who shall serve as  
3           an employment support counselor, at each of the 10 remaining recovery  
4           centers in the State.

5           (C) Any amounts not appropriated for positions may be used to  
6           provide stipends for transportation, child care, or other costs necessary to  
7           enable clients to work.

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

- 15           (1) educational attainment and achievement of program recipients;  
16           (2) acquisition of a credential of value pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 546;  
17           (3) number of job placements; and  
18           (4) job retention rates.

1       Sec. 39. CREDENTIAL OF VALUE GOAL; PUBLIC-PRIVATE  
2                   PARTNERSHIP; APPROPRIATION

3           (a) Duties. In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$150,000.00 is appropriated  
4           from the General Fund to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for a  
5           performance-based contract to perform the following duties, in coordination  
6           and alignment with State partners, in support of the State’s goal articulated in  
7           10 V.S.A. § 546 that 70 percent of working-age Vermonters hold a credential  
8           of value by 2025 (Goal):

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

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

17           (3) assist or coordinate with stakeholders, such as educational, business,  
18           governmental, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations, in activities that seek  
19           to align the delivery of high-quality education and training opportunities with  
20           career advancement and support the policy priorities outlined in 10 V.S.A.  
21           § 546;

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

3           (5) facilitate conversations or provide information about the national  
4           best practices in aligning, recognizing, measuring, tracking, and promoting  
5           postsecondary credentials of value to the Vermont Department of Labor, the  
6           Department of Economic Development, the State Workforce Development  
7           Board, and the Agency of Education when requested;

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

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

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

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

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

20           (2) offer support to career and education counselors, employment and  
21           training counselors, jobseekers and their families, and other stakeholders,



1 consistent with best practice and State policy and programs, to help them better  
2 understand the postsecondary education and training landscape.

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

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

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

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

11 APPROPRIATION

12 (a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from  
13 the General Fund to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to  
14 continue funding through the pilot project Vermont Serve, Learn, and Earn  
15 Program, which supports workforce development goals through creating  
16 meaningful paid service and learning opportunities for young adults, and which  
17 has a goal to serve 1,700 participants and complete 13,000 service weeks over  
18 the next three years, through the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Vermont  
19 Audubon, Vermont Works for Women, and Resource VT.

1           **(b) The Department shall provide the legislative committees of jurisdiction**  
2           **an interim Program reports on or before January 15, 2023 and 2024 and a final**  
3           **Program report on or before January 15, 2025.**

4           Sec. 41. ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY; FINDINGS

5           The General Assembly finds:

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

11           (2) 36,000 adults in Vermont do not have a high school credential, and  
12           tens of thousands more lack the skills to matriculate into and be successful in  
13           college, in career training programs, or both. Adult education and literacy  
14           providers are the first stop on the path to the transformative opportunities that  
15           Vermont is offering for these individuals.

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

21           (A) family and life;

1           (B) academics; and

2           (C) career and college readiness.

3       Sec. 42. FINDINGS; FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

4           The General Assembly finds for the purposes of this section and Secs. 43 to  
5       45 of this act:

6           (1) Private and public forestlands:

7           (A) constitute unique and irreplaceable resources, benefits, and  
8       values of statewide importance;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2 CHAPTER 82. VERMONT FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

3 § 2531. VERMONT FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

4 (a) Creation. The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation shall  
5 create the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap to strengthen, modernize,  
6 promote, and protect the forest products sector in Vermont. The  
7 Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation may contract with a qualified  
8 contractor for the creation of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap.  
9 During the contract proposal process, the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and  
10 Recreation shall seek a proposal to complete the Vermont Forest Future  
11 Strategic Roadmap from the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

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

14 (1) increase sustainable economic development and jobs in Vermont's  
15 forest economy;

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

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

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

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

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

13           (2) identify infrastructure investment and funding to support and  
14           promote Vermont forest products enterprises;

15           (3) identify regulatory barriers and propose policy recommendations to  
16           support and strengthen the Vermont forest economy;

17           (4) identify opportunities for all State agencies to engage with and  
18           enhance the Vermont forest products sector, including the Department of  
19           Buildings and General Services, the Agency of Commerce and Community  
20           Development, the Department of Tourism and Marketing, the Agency of  
21           Education, the Agency of Transportation, the Department of Public Service,

1 the Agency of Natural Resources, the Department of Financial Regulation, and  
2 the Department of Labor;

3 (5) develop recommendations to support education and training of the  
4 current and future workforce of the Vermont forest products sector;

5 (6) propose alternatives for the modernization of transportation and  
6 regulation of Vermont forest products enterprises, including modernization of  
7 local and State permits;

8 (7) identify methods or programs that Vermont forest enterprises can  
9 utilize to access business assistance services;

10 (8) recommend how to maintain access by Vermont forest products  
11 enterprises to forestland and how to maintain the stewardship and conservation  
12 of Vermont forests as a whole;

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

16 (10) recommend consumer education and marketing initiatives; and

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

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

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

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

12           (e) Advisory panel; administration.

13           (1) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation or relevant  
14           contractor shall convene a Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap advisory  
15           panel to review and counsel in the development and implementation of the  
16           Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap. The advisory panel shall include  
17           representatives of forest products enterprises, State agencies, investors,  
18           forestland owners, foresters, loggers, truckers, wood products manufacturers,  
19           recreational specialists, education representatives, trade organizations, and  
20           other partners as deemed appropriate. The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and  
21           Recreation shall select representatives to the advisory panel.



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

5           Sec. 44. IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

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

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

15           Sec. 45. APPROPRIATIONS

16           In addition to any other funds appropriated to the Department of Forests,  
17           Parks and Recreation, in fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$250,000.00 is  
18           appropriated from the General Fund to the Department to enter a two-year  
19           contract in fiscal year 2023 for the purpose of contracting for the development  
20           of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap required by 10 V.S.A.  
21           § 2531.

1 Sec. 46. ECONOMIC RECOVERY GRANT PROGRAM; REVERSION

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

6 (1) \$8,000,000.00 shall revert to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)  
7 – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds; and

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

12 Sec. 47. EFFECTIVE DATES

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

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

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

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4 (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Senator \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE