

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.

1 Sec. 19. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

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

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

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

19 (a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of ~~\$3,000,000.00~~ **\$1,000,000.00** is
20 appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State
21 Fiscal Recovery Funds to the Department of Health and shall carry forward for

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

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

16 Sec. 21. NURSE PRECEPTOR INCENTIVE GRANTS; HOSPITALS;
17 WORKING GROUP; REPORT

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

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

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

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

17 (A) identify ways to increase clinical placement opportunities across
18 a variety of health care settings for nursing students enrolled in Vermont
19 nursing school programs, **including exploring opportunities for**
20 **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, room, board, and the cost of required books and supplies**
7 **for up to full-time attendance at an eligible school.**

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

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

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

15 **(b)** The Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan Incentive Program is created
16 and shall be administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with
17 the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The Program provides
18 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;~~

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; and**

16 (4) ~~agree to work as a nurse in Vermont for a minimum of one year~~
17 ~~following licensure for each year of forgivable loan awarded~~

18 **(3) have used any available gift aid;**

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

1 **(5) have executed a promissory note that will reduce the individual's**
2 **forgivable loan benefit, in whole or in part, if the individual fails to**
3 **complete the period of service required in subsection (g) of this section;**
4 **and**
5 **(6) have completed the Program's application form, the Free**
6 **Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and the Vermont grant**
7 **application each academic year of enrollment in accordance with a**
8 **schedule determined by the Corporation.**

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

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

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

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

19 (f) Students attending an approved postsecondary educational institution in
20 Vermont shall receive first preference for forgivable loans.

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

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

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

19 Sec. 24. REPEAL

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

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

4 (6) “Program” means the Vermont Nursing and Physician Assistant
5 Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program created under this
6 section.

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

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

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

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

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

8 (3) ~~work as a nurse or physician assistant~~ in this State **as a nurse,**
9 **physician assistant, dental hygienist, medical technician, primary care**
10 **provider, child psychiatrist, general surgeon, or in another field**
11 **experiencing a health care workforce shortage; and**

12 (3) ~~be a resident of Vermont.~~

13 (e)(1) ~~An eligible individual shall be entitled to an amount of loan~~
14 ~~cancellation and repayment under this section equal to one year of loans for~~
15 ~~each year of service as a~~ **nurse or physician assistant health care professional**
16 ~~in this State.~~

17 (2) ~~The Corporation~~ **AHEC** shall award loan repayments in amounts
18 that are sufficient to attract high-quality candidates while also making a
19 meaningful increase in Vermont's health care professional workforce. **AHEC**
20 **shall prioritize awards to candidates working in fields in which Vermont**
21 **is experiencing the greatest health care workforce shortages.**

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

3 Sec. 27. VERMONT **NURSING AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT HEALTH**
4 **CARE PROFESSIONAL** LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM;
5 APPROPRIATION

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

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

12 § 36. NURSE FACULTY FORGIVABLE LOAN ~~AND LOAN~~
13 **REPAYMENT** PROGRAM

14 (a) ~~Definitions:~~ As used in this section:

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

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

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

1 (4) “Forgivable loan” means a loan awarded under this section covering
2 tuition, room, board, and the cost of required books and supplies for up to full-
3 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 with a master’s or doctoral degree that qualifies the individual to teach at
13 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;

19 (3) have used any available gift aid;

1 (4) have executed a contract with the Corporation committing the
2 individual to work as a member of the nurse faculty at a nursing school in this
3 State;

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

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

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

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

15 ~~(2) had 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 from the eligible school;~~

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

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

21 ~~(f) Service commitment.~~

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 § 37. NURSE FACULTY LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

10 (a) As used in this section:

11 (1) “AHEC” means the Vermont Area Health Education Centers
12 program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 (3) be a resident of Vermont.

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

7 Sec. 29b. NURSE FACULTY LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM;

8 APPROPRIATION **(NEW)**

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

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

15 § 38. VERMONT MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL FORGIVABLE

16 LOAN INCENTIVE PROGRAM **(NEW)**

17 (a) As used in this section:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13 (b) The Vermont Mental Health Professional Forgivable Loan Incentive
14 Program is created and shall be administered by the Department of Health in
15 collaboration with the Corporation. The Program provides forgivable loans to
16 students enrolled in a master’s program at an eligible school who commit to

1 working as a mental health professional in this State and who meet the
2 eligibility requirements in 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 a school in the Vermont State College System in a
10 program, whether through in-person or remote instruction, that leads to a
11 master's degree in a mental health field;

12 (2) maintain good standing at the eligible school at which the individual
13 is enrolled;

14 (3) have used any available gift aid;

15 (4) have executed a contract with the Corporation committing the
16 individual to work as a mental health professional in this State;

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

20 (6) have completed the Program's application form, the Free
21 Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and the Vermont grant

1 application each academic year of enrollment in accordance with a schedule
2 determined by the Corporation.

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

13 Sec. 29d. VERMONT MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL
14 FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE PROGRAM;
15 APPROPRIATION **(NEW)**

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

1 Sec. 29e. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; DESIGNATED AND
2 SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCIES; WORKFORCE
3 DEVELOPMENT **(NEW)**

4 (a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$1,250,000.00 is appropriated to the
5 Agency of Human Services, of which \$1,000,000.00 is from the American
6 Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds and
7 \$250,000.00 is from the General Fund, to be distributed to the designated and
8 specialized service agencies equitably based on each agency’s proportion of
9 full-time-equivalent (FTE) mental health and substance use disorder treatment
10 staff to the total number of FTE mental health and substance use disorder
11 treatment staff across all designated and specialized service agencies statewide.
12 The designated and specialized service agencies shall use these funds for loan
13 repayment and tuition assistance to promote the recruitment and retention of
14 high-quality mental health and substance use disorder treatment professionals
15 available to Vermont residents in need of their services, as set forth in
16 subsection (b) of this section.

17 (b)(1) Each designated and specialized service agency shall make the funds
18 received pursuant to subsection (a) of this section available to its current and
19 prospective employees as set forth in subdivisions (A) and (B) of this
20 subdivision (1) on a rolling basis in exchange for a one-year service obligation
21 to provide mental health services or substance use disorder treatment services,

1 or both, at a designated or specialized service agency in this State. The funds
2 may be used for the following purposes:

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

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

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

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

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

16 § 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

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

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

21 * * *

1 initiatives from any otherwise applicable financial limitations on the hospital's
2 budget or budget growth. Notwithstanding any provision of GMCB Rule
3 3.202, the Board may modify its hospital budget guidance for hospital fiscal
4 year 2023 as needed to comply with this section.

5 Sec. 32. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; HEALTH CARE

6 WORKFORCE DATA CENTER

7 (a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of ~~\$1,000,000.00~~ **\$750,000.00** is
8 appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State
9 Fiscal Recovery Funds to the Office of Health Care Reform in the Agency of
10 Human Services to enable the Agency to establish and operate the statewide
11 Health Care Workforce Data Center. In order to enhance the State's public
12 health data systems, respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and
13 improve the State's COVID-19 mitigation and prevention efforts, the Center
14 shall collect health care workforce data, shall collaborate with the Director of
15 Health Care Reform to identify and propose solutions to address data gaps, and
16 shall share the data with the Green Mountain Care Board as appropriate to
17 inform the Board's Health Resource Allocation Plan responsibilities pursuant
18 to 18 V.S.A. § 9405.

19 (b) The Center shall use existing statewide information to the extent
20 practicable to avoid imposing administrative burdens on health care providers
21 and to avoid duplication of efforts underway elsewhere in Vermont. The

1 Center shall expand its data collection practices over two years to include all
2 levels of the health care workforce, beginning with the highest-level licensed
3 health care professionals.

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

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

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

11 (3) may collect vacancy and turnover information from health care
12 employers.

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

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

1 Sec. 33. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; BARRIERS TO
2 MENTAL HEALTH LICENSURE; REPORT

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

12 Sec. 34. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; POSITION;
13 APPROPRIATION

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

1 support prior authorization requests in situations in which a request cannot be
2 automatically approved.

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

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

14 § 3543. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

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

19 (2) An eligible individual shall:

20 (A) work in a privately operated center-based child care program or
21 in a family child care home that is regulated by the Division for at least an

1 average of 30 hours per week for 48 weeks for a minimum of nine months of
2 the year; ~~except that this minimum time requirement does not apply to an~~
3 ~~employee of Vermont Head Start to the extent it conflicts with any law or~~
4 ~~contract provision governing the terms of employment, inclusive of employer-~~
5 ~~approved time off;~~

6 (B) receive an annual salary of not more than \$50,000.00 through
7 their work in regulated child care; and

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

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

1 the program. The remainder of an individual’s total annual benefit shall be
2 distributed by the Department every three months after the initial payment.

3 * * *

4 **Sec. 37a. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR OUTREACH**

5 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$125,000.00 is appropriated from the
6 General Fund to the Department for Children and Families to contract with a
7 nonprofit organization to undertake a coordinated outreach and recruitment
8 initiative to attract educators and caregivers to the field of early childhood
9 education.

10 Sec. 38. PILOT PROGRAM; POSITIONS EMBEDDED WITHIN
11 RECOVERY CENTERS

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

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

18 (A) Of the total appropriation, not more than \$540,000.00 total shall
19 may be allocated in equal amounts to fund the following 2.5 FTE at each of
20 two geographically diverse recovery centers:

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

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

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

7 (B) Of the total appropriation, \$75,000.00 shall may be allocated in
8 equal amounts to fund a one-half FTE position who shall serve as an
9 employment support counselor at each of the 10 remaining recovery centers in
10 the State.

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

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

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

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

2 (3) number of job placements; and

3 (4) job retention rates.

4 Sec. 39. CREDENTIAL OF VALUE GOAL; PUBLIC-PRIVATE

5 PARTNERSHIP; APPROPRIATION

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

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

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

20 (3) assist or coordinate with stakeholders, such as educational, business,
21 governmental, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations, in activities that seek

1 to align the delivery of high-quality education and training opportunities with
2 career advancement and support the policy priorities outlined in 10 V.S.A.

3 § 546;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 APPROPRIATION

16 (a) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from
17 the General Fund to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for a
18 two-year pilot project through the Vermont Serve, Learn, and Earn Program,
19 which supports workforce development goals through creating meaningful
20 paid service and learning opportunities for young adults, including 1,700
21 participants and 13,000 service weeks over three years, through the Vermont

1 Youth Conservation Corps, Vermont Audubon, Vermont Works for Women,
2 and Resource VT.

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

6 Sec. 41. ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY; FINDINGS

7 The General Assembly finds:

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

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

18 (3) Adult education and literacy services help people build the assets
19 they need to move out of poverty successfully, as well as the confidence to
20 continue to move toward success throughout their lives. Students are supported

1 to identify concrete goals and then break those goals down into steps. Students
2 set goals in the domains of:

3 (A) family and life;

4 (B) academics; and

5 (C) career and college readiness.

6 Sec. 42. FINDINGS; FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

7 The General Assembly finds for the purposes of this section and Secs. 43 to
8 45 of this act:

9 (1) Private and public forestlands:

10 (A) constitute unique and irreplaceable resources, benefits, and
11 values of statewide importance;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5 CHAPTER 82. VERMONT FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

6 § 2531. VERMONT FOREST FUTURE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 (4) identify opportunities for all State agencies to engage with and
21 enhance the Vermont forest products sector, including the Department of

1 Buildings and General Services, the Agency of Commerce and Community
2 Development, the Department of Tourism and Marketing, the Agency of
3 Education, the Agency of Transportation, the Department of Public Service,
4 the Agency of Natural Resources, the Department of Financial Regulation, and
5 the Department of Labor;

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 (11) recommend how to clarify the roles of various public entities and
21 nongovernmental organizations that provide certain services to the forestry

1 sector and to ensure coordination and alignment of those functions in order to
2 advance and maximize the strength of the forest products industry.

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

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

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

15 (e) Advisory panel; administration.

16 (1) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation or relevant
17 contractor shall convene a Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap advisory
18 panel to review and counsel in the development and implementation of the
19 Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap. The advisory panel shall include
20 representatives of forest products enterprises, State agencies, investors,
21 forestland owners, foresters, loggers, truckers, wood products manufacturers,

1 recreational specialists, education representatives, trade organizations, and
2 other partners as deemed appropriate. The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and
3 Recreation shall select representatives to the advisory panel.

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

8 Sec. 44. IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

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

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

18 Sec. 45. APPROPRIATIONS

19 In addition to any other funds appropriated to the Department of Forests,
20 Parks and Recreation, in fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$250,000.00 is
21 appropriated from the General Fund to the Department to enter a two-year

1 contract in fiscal year 2023 for the purpose of contracting for the development
2 of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap required by 10 V.S.A.
3 § 2531.

4 Sec. 46. ECONOMIC RECOVERY GRANT PROGRAM; REVERSION

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

9 (1) \$8,000,000.00 shall revert to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
10 – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds; and

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

15 Sec. 47. EFFECTIVE DATES

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

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

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

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7 (Committee vote: _____)

8

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE