

1           (z) \$4,680,000 General Fund to the Judiciary for the Judiciary network  
2 replacement project. Funds shall be held in reserve and shall not be allocated  
3 until the General Assembly has assessed the independent expert review  
4 outlined in the 2023 Budget Adjustment Act, H.145, Sec. 93.

5                           \* \* \* Workforce Development \* \* \*

6           Sec. B.1101 WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – FISCAL  
7                           YEAR 2024 ONE-TIME APPROPRIATIONS

8           (a) Education workforce.

9                   (1) Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 4025(d), in fiscal year 2024, the  
10 amount of \$500,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of  
11 Education for the purpose of funding the Emerging Pathways Grant Program  
12 established by Sec. F.4 of this act.

13                   (2) In fiscal year 2024, the amount of \$2,500,000 is appropriated from  
14 the General Fund to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for the  
15 Vermont Teacher Forgivable Loan Incentive Program created in 16 V.S.A.  
16 § 2871.

17                   (3) In fiscal year 2024, the sum of \$30,000 is appropriated from the  
18 General Fund to the Agency of Education for the purpose of funding the  
19 Historically Underrepresented Educator Affinity Groups Grant Program  
20 created in Sec. F.6 of this act.

21           (b) Corrections workforce.

1 ~~the cost to retroactively provide paid leave to employees who took unpaid~~  
2 ~~leave for COVID-19-related reasons.~~

3 ~~(A) For reimbursement of COVID-19-related paid leave that was~~  
4 ~~already provided, the employer may, subject to the limitations of~~  
5 ~~subdivision (2) of this subsection (e), apply for a grant in an amount equal to~~  
6 ~~the number of hours of COVID-19-related paid leave provided to each~~  
7 ~~employee multiplied by the greater of either the minimum wage established~~  
8 ~~pursuant to 21 V.S.A. § 384 or the employee's regular hourly wage.~~

9 ~~(B) For COVID-19-related paid leave that will be provided~~  
10 ~~retroactively to employees who took unpaid leave for COVID-19-related~~  
11 ~~reasons, the employer may, subject to the limitations of subdivision (2) of this~~  
12 ~~subsection (e), apply for a grant in an amount equal to the number of hours of~~  
13 ~~COVID-19-related paid leave to be provided to each employee multiplied by~~  
14 ~~the greater of either the minimum wage established pursuant to 21 V.S.A.~~  
15 ~~§ 384 or the employee's regular hourly wage.~~

16 Sec. F.3 16 V.S.A. chapter 87, subchapter 6 is added to read:

17 Subchapter 6. Forgivable Loan Incentive Programs

18 § 2871. VERMONT TEACHER FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE

19 PROGRAM

20 (a) As used in this section:

- 1           (1) “Corporation” means the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation  
2 established in section 2821 of this title.
- 3           (2) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the eligibility  
4 requirements under this section for a forgivable loan.
- 5           (3) “Eligible school” means an approved postsecondary education  
6 institution as defined under section 2822 of this title.
- 7           (4) “Forgivable loan” means a loan awarded under this section covering  
8 tuition, which may also include room, board, and the cost of required books  
9 and supplies for up to full-time attendance in an undergraduate or graduate  
10 program at an eligible school.
- 11           (5) “Program” means the Vermont Teacher Forgivable Loan Incentive  
12 Program created under this section.
- 13           (b) The Vermont Teacher Forgivable Loan Incentive Program is created  
14 and shall be administered by the Corporation. The Program provides  
15 forgivable loans to students enrolled in an eligible school who commit to  
16 working as a teacher in a Vermont public school and who meet the eligibility  
17 requirements in subsection (d) of this section. The intent of the Program is to  
18 encourage students to enter into teaching professions, with an emphasis on  
19 encouraging Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color Vermonters, New  
20 Americans, and other historically underrepresented communities in an effort to  
21 diversify the educator workforce.

1        (c) The Corporation shall disburse forgivable loan funds under the Program  
2        on behalf of eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of funds by the  
3        General Assembly for this purpose.

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

7                (1) be enrolled in teaching program at an eligible school;

8                (2) maintain good standing at the eligible school at which the individual  
9        is enrolled;

10               (3) agree to work as a teacher in Vermont employed directly by a public  
11        school located in Vermont for a minimum of one year following licensure for  
12        each year of forgivable loan awarded;

13               (4) have executed a credit agreement or promissory note that will reduce  
14        the individual's forgivable loan benefit, in whole or in part, pursuant to  
15        subsection (f) of this section, if the individual fails to complete the period of  
16        service required in this subsection;

17               (5) have completed the Program's application form, the Free  
18        Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and for Vermont residents, the  
19        Vermont grant application each academic year of enrollment in accordance  
20        with a schedule determined by the Corporation; and

1           (6) have provided such other documentation as the Corporation may  
2           require.

3           (e) If an eligible individual fails to serve as a teacher in a Vermont public  
4           school for a period that would entitle the individual to the full forgivable loan  
5           benefit received by the individual, other than for good cause as determined by  
6           the Corporation, then the individual shall receive only partial loan forgiveness  
7           for a pro rata portion of the loan pursuant to the terms of the interest-free credit  
8           agreement or promissory note signed by the individual at the time of entering  
9           the Program.

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

15           (g) The Corporation shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines  
16           necessary to implement the provisions of this section, including maximum  
17           forgivable loan amounts. The Corporation shall not use more than seven  
18           percent of the funds appropriated for the Program for its costs of  
19           administration and may recoup its reasonable costs of collecting the forgivable  
20           loans in repayment.

1       Sec. F.4 EMERGING PATHWAYS TO TEACHING; REPORT

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

7           (b) Grant program.

8           (1) Program creation. In fiscal year 2024, there is established the  
9       Emerging Pathways Grant Program, to be administered by the Agency of  
10       Education, to provide grants to expand support, mentoring, and professional  
11       development to prospective educators seeking licensure through the Agency of  
12       Education's emerging pathways, including peer review and apprentice  
13       pathways, with the goal of increased program completion rates and increased  
14       rates of licensure of underrepresented demographics.

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,  
19       school districts, or a group of school districts for the development and  
20       administration of programs and program coordinators designed to provide  
21       prospective educators in emerging pathways to teaching with the support

1 necessary for successful entry into the educator workforce. Recruitment,  
2 support, and retention of prospective educator candidates shall focus on  
3 diversity, equity, and inclusion. Support provided through the Program may  
4 include:

5 (A) support through the Praxis exam process;

6 (B) local, educator-led seminars designed around the Vermont  
7 licensure portfolio themes;

8 (C) local educator mentors;

9 (D) support in completing the peer review portfolio and licensing  
10 process; and

11 (E) continued professional development support within the first year  
12 of licensure.

13 (4) Report. On or before January 15, 2024, the Agency of Education  
14 shall report to the Senate and House Committees on Education on the status of  
15 the implementation of the Emerging Pathways Grant Program and a summary  
16 and performance review of the programs to which grants were awarded. The  
17 report shall include any metrics used in the performance review, the number of  
18 program participants, endorsement areas of participants, feedback from  
19 participants and mentors, and any recommendation for legislative action.

1       Sec. F.5 TEACHER LICENSING FEES; SUSPENSION

2           (a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, peer review  
3       process one-time licensure fee requirements under 16 V.S.A. § 1697(a)(7) are  
4       suspended during fiscal years 2024 through 2029.

5           (b) In fiscal year 2024, the estimated fees that would have been  
6       collected under 16 V.S.A. § 1697(a)(7) shall be accounted for through funds  
7       appropriated to the Agency of Education from the General Fund.

8       Sec. F.6 EDUCATOR WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

9           (a) Educator demographics. In order to understand and improve the  
10       longstanding and well-documented issue of underrepresentation in the  
11       Vermont educator workforce, including underrepresentation of Black,  
12       Indigenous, and Persons of Color; New Americans; and other historically  
13       underrepresented communities, the Agency of Education shall collect  
14       demographic information from educators and report such information in its  
15       annual teacher and staff full-time equivalencies report. The Agency shall  
16       submit the educator demographic information section of the report annually to  
17       the General Assembly on or before each January 15.

18           (b) Historically Underrepresented Educator Affinity Groups Grant  
19       Program.

20           (1) There is created the Historically Underrepresented Educator Affinity  
21       Groups Grant Program for the purpose of providing grants for the support of



1 existing and the development of new educator affinity groups for historically  
2 underrepresented groups. The Agency of Education shall administer the  
3 Program.

4 (2) The Agency shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines  
5 necessary for the implementation of the Program established pursuant to this  
6 subsection (b).

7 Sec. F.7 DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONAL  
8 DEVELOPMENT; INTENT; CONTRACT

9 (a) It is the intent of the General Assembly to assist the Department of  
10 Corrections to continue and further engage in a professional development  
11 initiative to enhance supervisory effectiveness and strengthen leadership  
12 development within the Department and among its employees. The  
13 Department's enhanced supervisory training is part of its effort to address an  
14 employee workforce crisis and strengthen workplace satisfaction.

15 (b) The Department of Corrections shall contract or expand an existing  
16 contract with a vendor to provide supervisory and management professional  
17 development services to the Department and among its employees.

18 (c) On or before March 15, 2024, the Department and the contracted  
19 vendor shall testify before the House Committee on Corrections and  
20 Institutions about the progress and effectiveness of its professional