RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 811 (HB 549) **2026 Regular Session** **Berault**

New law creates the Bayou Growth Opportunity Program (program) and provides for its purpose, which is to provide competitive awards to qualified employers for workforce training, including but not limited to talent enhancement, increasing worker productivity, development of worker skills, leadership and management training, and worker retention.

New law defines "approved plan", "awardee", "department", "fund", "program", "qualified employee", "qualified employer", and "qualified training provider".

New law establishes the Bayou Growth Opportunity Workforce Fund (fund) as a special fund within the state treasury and provides for the deposit, use, and administration of monies in the fund. New law also restricts use of monies in the fund to payment of awards to awardees and for the administration of the program.

New law requires La. Works to operate the program and coordinate the implementation of the program with workforce development boards. New law further requires La. Works and the workforce development boards to conduct outreach to inform employers about the program.

New law requires a workforce development board staff member, upon the request of a qualified employer, to conduct an evaluation with the employer to determine whether a skills gap exists and if a qualified training provider is available to provide the instruction needed.

New law requires the staff member to identify any federal or other funding sources that may be obtained for the required training in lieu of an award through the program before the staff member assists the employer with an application.

New law requires a workforce development board to submit to La. Works an application for a program award on behalf of a qualified employer or on behalf of two or more qualified employers for a shared training program.

New law requires La. Works to work with workforce development boards to create an application for an award.

New law requires La. Works, no later than July 1, 2028, to develop criteria to evaluate applications and proposed training plans and to post the criteria on its website.

New law requires the criteria to state that the training plan shall meet, at a minimum, all of the following requirements:

(1) Be for no longer than six months in duration, unless the department determines an extension is appropriate.

(2) Conclude within a year after the date the department approves the award.

(3) Be conducted by a qualified training provider.

(4) Not be for basic training.

(5) Result in a credential for a skill that is transferable and recognized by the industry.

New law requires La. Works to coordinate with workforce development boards on the creation of a uniform training agreement to be used by awardees. New law further requires the agreement to include the responsibilities of the awardee and any other requirements the department considers necessary.

New law provides expenses for which program awards shall be used, including but not limited to any of the following:

(1) The actual cost of classroom training, including instructor costs and instructional materials.

(2) The actual cost of on-the-job training, including wage reimbursement, as determined by La. Works.

(3) Other costs determined by La. Works to be relevant to the training.

New law prohibits an awardee from expending any amount of the program award on any of the following:

(1) Equipment, including tools and computers.

(2) Licensing fees.

(3) Curriculum development.

(4) Qualified employee travel costs.

(5) Online training subscriptions.

(6) Training that begins before the date of the award, unless approved by La. Works.

(7) Offsetting tuition reimbursement.

New law provides that the amount expended shall not exceed $2,000 per qualified employee or apprentice.

New law requires an annual report to be submitted to the House and Senate committees on labor and industrial relations, the House Committee on Appropriations, and the Senate Committee on Finance.

New law provides what should be included in the annual report and that the first report shall be due March 1, 2029.

New law provides for enforcement and rulemaking by La. Works.

Effective upon signature of governor (June 8, 2026).

(Adds R.S. 23:1861-1866)