

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 329

BY REPRESENTATIVES MYERS, BACALA, BAYHAM, BERAULT, BOYER, BRYANT, CARVER, CHASSION, DEWITT, FREIBERG, MIKE JOHNSON, LAFLEUR, LYONS, MCMAHEN, MILLER, NEWELL, OWEN, SELDERS, STAGNI, TAYLOR, TURNER, WYBLE, AND ZERINGUE

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:3050.11(C)(1)(introductory paragraph), (D), (E), and (F) and  
3 to enact R.S. 17:3050.11(C)(1)(d), (e), and (f), (G), (H), and (I), relative to the  
4 Health Care Employment Reinvestment Opportunity (H.E.R.O.) Fund; to provide for  
5 the use of monies in the fund; to provide for the purposes and priorities of the fund;  
6 to provide for grant opportunities; to provide for procedures for grant proposals and  
7 awards; to provide for the authority of the Joint Legislative Committee on the  
8 Budget; to provide for reporting by the Louisiana Department of Health and  
9 grantees; to provide for the authority of the department; to provide for the  
10 promulgation of rules; to require the Louisiana Board of Regents to provide certain  
11 information and documentation to the Louisiana Department of Health; to provide  
12 for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

13 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

14 Section 1. R.S. 17:3050.11(C)(1)(introductory paragraph), (D), (E), and (F) are  
15 hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:3050.11(C)(1)(d), (e), and (f), (G), (H), and (I)  
16 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

17 §3050.11. Health Care Employment Reinvestment Opportunity (H.E.R.O.) Fund

18 \* \* \*

19 C.(1) Subject to legislative appropriation, ~~and the approval of the Board of~~  
20 ~~Regents, the Louisiana Health Works Commission~~ the Louisiana Department of  
21 Health, office of the secretary, hereinafter referred to in this Section as "department",  
22 is hereby authorized and directed to determine how monies in the fund are allocated

1 and expended through a ~~multi-year~~ multiple year plan, solely and exclusively for the  
2 following purposes ~~and in the following priorities:~~

3 \* \* \*

4 (d) Support dual enrollment and pathway programs between high school  
5 career and technical programs and other healthcare programs.

6 (e) Support strategies for healthcare organizations to increase career  
7 pathways and apprenticeship programs.

8 (f) Raise awareness of and interest in a broad variety of healthcare  
9 occupations and reduce the barriers to access to the healthcare programs necessary  
10 to pursue these occupations, including financial barriers.

11 \* \* \*

12 D.(1) The department may utilize monies in the fund for funding grant  
13 proposals that support efforts with training and education programs and institutions  
14 for the purpose of increasing educational opportunities and training of Louisiana  
15 residents who are seeking enrollment or are currently enrolled in healthcare training  
16 or education programs in Louisiana. Such grant proposals may include financial  
17 incentives to support Louisiana students in nursing and allied health profession  
18 training or education programs.

19 (2) The department may utilize monies in the fund in order to fund nursing  
20 or allied health internships at licensed healthcare providers in Louisiana, including  
21 healthcare providers owned or operated by the state of Louisiana.

22 (3) The department may utilize monies in the fund for funding grant  
23 proposals that support joint efforts between healthcare industry partners and  
24 education programs for the purpose of increasing training opportunities for Louisiana  
25 residents who are seeking enrollment or are currently enrolled in healthcare  
26 education programs in Louisiana.

27 (4) The department may utilize monies in the fund, not to exceed ten percent  
28 of the fund annually, for administrative costs to implement grant proposals or  
29 programs that meet the purposes of this Section and fulfill the provisions of this  
30 Section.

1           (5) At least annually, the department shall publish a notice of funding  
2           opportunity on its website for not less than sixty days prior to the deadline to submit  
3           a notice of intent to apply for a grant. The notification of funding opportunity shall  
4           include all of the following:

5                   (a) The grant period.

6                   (b) The date by which to submit a notice of intent to apply for a grant.

7                   (c) The deadline to apply for the grant. Proposals shall be accepted as early  
8           as thirty days following the notice of intent deadline.

9                   (d) The dollar amount of available grant awards.

10           (6) Grant proposals shall include the following components which shall be  
11           used to prioritize funding along with the evaluation criteria established in Paragraph  
12           (7) of this Subsection:

13                   (a) The total amount of funds requested and a detailed budget for the  
14           expenditure of these funds, including personnel, operating expenses, equipment  
15           acquisitions, training expenses, and other allowable expenses as outlined in the  
16           administrative rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to this Section.

17                   (b) A narrative explaining how the grant award will increase training of  
18           nursing and allied healthcare providers and specific deliverables of the healthcare  
19           industry partner and the education program.

20                   (c) A declaration that statutory requirements shall be satisfied.

21                   (d) A statement that the healthcare industry partner shall match, with monies  
22           or in-kind contributions, at least an amount equal to the grant award. The statement  
23           shall indicate the cash or in-kind amounts the healthcare partner plans to contribute.

24           (7) The department shall evaluate and rank each completed and timely  
25           submitted proposal. The department shall consider the strength of the proposed  
26           programs, the geographic location of the proposals, and statewide workforce  
27           demands in order to promote the distribution of grant awards and avoid a  
28           concentration of grant awards in any single region of the state. The department shall  
29           evaluate the proposals on all of the following minimum criteria:

1           (a) Whether the funds committed by the healthcare industry partner will  
2           contribute to an eligible purpose.

3           (b) How the funds will be utilized to increase enrollment and program  
4           completion.

5           (c) How the healthcare industry partner will onboard and retain graduates.

6           (d) How the funds will expand nursing and allied health education programs  
7           to meet local, regional, or state workforce demands. If applicable, this shall include  
8           advanced education nursing programs and how the funds will increase the number  
9           of faculty and clinical preceptors.

10           (8) Prior to issuing a notice of award to any grantee, the department shall  
11           submit the proposed grant awards to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget  
12           for approval. The department shall award grant funding in response to eligible grant  
13           proposals based on Paragraphs (6) and (7) of this Subsection and any applicable rules  
14           and regulations promulgated pursuant to this Section. The department shall notify  
15           the grant applicant of the approved proposals and award amounts.

16           (9) Prior to the release of a grant award, the grantee shall provide to the  
17           department documentation of the grantee's cash or in-kind contribution.

18           (10) Awards shall be released on no more than a quarterly basis.

19           (11) Each grantee shall submit a report to the department on performance  
20           metrics and outcomes pursuant to the rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to  
21           this Section.

22           E. On or before ~~October~~ March first of each calendar year, the ~~Louisiana~~  
23           ~~Health Works Commission~~ department shall submit a plan of fund allocation for the  
24           next fiscal year to the ~~Board of Regents~~ House Committee on Health and Welfare,  
25           the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, and the Joint Legislative Committee  
26           on the Budget.

27           E. F. The ~~Board of Regents~~ department shall submit a comprehensive annual  
28           report to the ~~Senate Committee on Finance, the House Committee on Appropriations~~  
29           Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, the Senate Committee on Health and  
30           Welfare, and the House Committee on Health and Welfare no later than sixty days

1 after the end of the fiscal year in which ~~the~~ monies were appropriated: pursuant to  
2 the provisions of this Section.

3 ~~F. The provisions of this Section shall terminate on July 1, 2026, or when all~~  
4 ~~of the monies in the fund have been expended, whichever occurs first. Any monies~~  
5 ~~remaining in the fund on July 1, 2026, shall be transferred by the state treasurer to~~  
6 ~~the state general fund.~~

7 G. The department may enter into any contract, memorandum of  
8 understanding, or cooperative endeavor agreement with a grantee, healthcare  
9 industry partner, or education program that may be necessary to effectuate the  
10 provisions of this Section.

11 H. The department shall promulgate rules and adopt regulations, in  
12 accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, to implement the provisions of  
13 this Section.

14 I. To effectuate the provisions of this Section, the Louisiana Board of  
15 Regents shall assist the department with information and documentation on training  
16 and education programs and institutions related to nursing and allied health  
17 professions and related matters.

18 Section 2. The Louisiana Board of Regents may utilize and expend monies in the  
19 Health Care Employment Reinvestment Opportunity (H.E.R.O.) Fund to continue to fund  
20 any grant obligated or awarded by the Board of Regents on or before April 1, 2024.

21 Section 3. This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2024; if vetoed by the governor  
22 and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become effective on July 1,  
23 2024, or on the day following such approval by the legislature, whichever is later.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_