

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 395

BY REPRESENTATIVE BRASS

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

HIGHER EDUCATION: Expands eligible programs for M.J. Foster Promise Program funding to include those associated with LED projects

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AN ACT

To amend and reenact R.S. 17:3047.1(C) and (D), to enact R.S. 17:3047.1(E)(4), (G)(3), and (H), and to repeal R.S. 17:3047.2(A)(13), relative to the M.J. Foster Promise Program; to provide relative to qualified programs; to provide for initial eligibility requirements; to provide relative to the advisory council; to provide relative to duties of the secretaries of Louisiana Economic Development and the Louisiana Workforce Commission; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:3047.1(C) and (D) are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:3047.1(E)(4), (G)(3), and (H) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

§3047.1. Advisory council; membership; responsibilities

* * *

C. The Louisiana Workforce Commission shall convene the advisory council annually for program updates, and as needed to review and respond to workforce needs associated with Louisiana Economic Development projects. At least once every three years, the advisory council shall review the workforce priorities of the state and each of its workforce regions and designate qualified programs. However, as needed, the council shall review the workforce priorities associated with Louisiana Economic Development projects.

1 D.~~(1)~~ The process for selecting qualified programs by the advisory council
2 shall include:

3 ~~(1)~~ (a) The identification of not more than five industry sectors that are
4 predominated by high-demand, high-wage jobs that are aligned to workforce
5 priorities of the state and each of its workforce regions and identify high-demand,
6 high-wage jobs in each of the sectors.

7 ~~(2)~~ (b) A review of the postsecondary education requirements of each job
8 identified pursuant to ~~Paragraph (1)~~ Subparagraph (a) of this ~~Subsection~~ Paragraph.

9 ~~(3)~~ (c)(i) A review of the public postsecondary education and proprietary
10 school programs, at the associate degree level or below, that offer credentials and
11 degrees that are aligned to the identified jobs in each industry sector.

12 (ii) A review of the public postsecondary education and proprietary school
13 programs, at the associate degree level or below, that offer credentials and degrees
14 that are related to Louisiana Economic Development projects.

15 (aa) The council shall give priority to programs that are related to Louisiana
16 Economic Development projects in the process for selecting qualified programs.

17 (bb) The administering agency shall implement an expedited review process
18 taking no longer than forty-five days from the time the council is in receipt of
19 notification and associated information about Louisiana Economic Development
20 projects with urgent workforce needs from the secretary of Louisiana Economic
21 Development.

22 ~~(4)~~ (d) The designation of programs that offer the credentials and degrees
23 identified pursuant to Subparagraph (c) ~~Paragraph (3)~~ of this ~~Subsection~~ Paragraph
24 as "qualified programs".

25 ~~(5)~~ (e) A review of the return on the state's investment in awards made to
26 recipients who completed a qualified program.

27 (2)(a) The secretary of Louisiana Economic Development shall do the
28 following:

1 (i) Maintain a list of priority programs, at the associate degree level or
2 below, that support workforce needs for Louisiana Economic Development projects.

3 (ii) Notify the other members of the council and the commissioner of higher
4 education when new Louisiana Economic Development projects are approved that
5 will require workforce development support. The secretary may request the council
6 meet to review such new projects and associated needs for support.

7 (iii) Annually report to the other members of the council on the effectiveness
8 of Louisiana Economic Development programs in meeting workforce and economic
9 development goals, as determined by Louisiana Economic Development.

10 (b) The council shall designate programs from the list maintained pursuant
11 to Item (a)(i) of this Paragraph as "qualified programs", if they meet the criteria
12 provided in R.S. 17:3047(A).

13 E. Identification of industry sectors; high-demand, high-wage jobs; and the
14 required degrees and credentials of the identified jobs shall, at a minimum, be based
15 upon the following:

16 * * *

17 (4) Advice from the secretaries of Louisiana Economic Development and the
18 Louisiana Workforce Commission or their designees regarding workforce needs for
19 current and forthcoming Louisiana Economic Development projects.

20 * * *

21 G. The advisory council shall:

22 * * *

23 (3) Identify priority populations for participation in the program based on
24 regional and statewide workforce needs.

25 H. The Board of Regents, in coordination with the secretaries of Louisiana
26 Economic Development and the Louisiana Workforce Commission, shall establish
27 a streamlined review process for the creation of new associate degree programs at
28 two-year institutions supporting Louisiana Economic Development projects, with the

- 1 purpose of the programs being eligible for designation as "qualified programs" as
 2 provided in Subsection (D) of this Section.
 3 Section 2. R.S. 17:3047.2(A)(13) is hereby repealed in its entirety.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 395 Original

2025 Regular Session

Brass

Abstract: Expands eligible programs for an M.J. Foster Promise Award.

Present law establishes the M.J. Foster Promise Award Program, which provides financial awards towards the costs of tuition and required fees to certain students pursuing an associate degree or shorter-term postsecondary credential required for certain high-demand, high-wage occupations aligned to the state's workforce priorities. Proposed law retains present law.

Present law provides for several initial eligibility requirements, including that an applicant meets one of the following:

- (1) Has a family income that does not exceed 300% of the applicable federal poverty guideline as published in the Federal Register by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.
- (2) Can certify unemployment or underemployment for at least six months prior to receiving the award.

Proposed law repeals present law.

Present law requires the La. Workforce Commission (LWC) to establish an advisory council to identify programs in which an eligible student may enroll to receive an award, which shall be designated as "qualified programs". Proposed law retains present law. Proposed law requires, as part of its process for selecting qualified programs, the council to conduct a review of the public postsecondary education and proprietary school programs, at the associate degree level or below, that offer credentials and degrees that are related to Louisiana Economic Development (LED) projects. Further requires the council to give priority to programs that are related to LED projects in such process. Requires the Bd. of Regents, as the administering agency of the program, to implement an expedited review process taking no longer than 45 days for LED projects with urgent workforce needs.

Present law requires the council to convene annually for program updates and every 3 years to review workforce priorities. Proposed law retains present law and further requires the council to meet as needed to review and respond to workforce needs or priorities associated with LED projects, respectively.

Present law requires the secretaries of LED and LWC to serve as members on the council. Proposed law retains present law. Further requires the following of the LED secretary:

- (1) Maintain a list of priority programs, at the associate degree level or below, that support workforce needs for LED projects.

- (2) Notify the other members of the council and the commissioner of higher education when new LED projects are approved that will require workforce development support.
- (3) Annually report to the other members of the council on the effectiveness of LED programs in meeting workforce and economic development goals, as determined by LED.

(Amends R.S. 17:3047.1(C) and (D); Adds R.S. 17:3047.1(E)(4), (G)(3), and (H); Repeals R.S. 17:3047.2(A)(13))