

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [CS/HB 1115](#)

**TITLE:** Grants for Genetic Counseling Education

**SPONSOR(S):** Anderson

### Committee References

[Careers & Workforce](#)

16 Y, 0 N, As CS

[Higher Education Budget](#)

13 Y, 0 N

[Education & Employment](#)

16 Y, 0 N

## SUMMARY

### Effect of the Bill:

The bill creates the Genetic Counseling Education Enhancement Grant Program (program) within the State University System to support the development, growth, and sustainability of graduate genetic counseling programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling. The bill requires the Board of Governors (BOG) to award competitive grants to state universities to address faculty shortages, student financial barriers, and clinical training needs, including clinical training capacity. Grants may be awarded to establish new programs or support existing programs based on performance, including student completion and first-time board certification passage rates. The program is designed to reward programs with above-average national certification results.

The bill requires grant funds to be used for recruiting and retaining faculty, providing scholarships to students, and establishing clinical rotations with healthcare partners. Funds may not be used for general administrative costs, facility construction, or unrelated activities. The bill requires universities receiving grants to maintain records of compliance and submit annual reports to the BOG, which will compile a statewide summary for submission to the Governor and Legislature. The BOG is also required to adopt regulations to administer the program.

### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

Funding for the program is contingent upon legislative appropriation. The bill designates the BOG as the entity responsible for administering the competitive grant program for state universities, including developing application criteria, reviewing and awarding grants, and collecting and compiling programmatic data. The BOG may incur administrative costs associated with these duties; however, such costs are expected to be minimal and are anticipated to be absorbed within existing resources.

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## ANALYSIS

### EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill creates the Genetic Counseling Education Enhancement Grant Program (program) within the State University System (SUS) to support the development, growth, and sustainability of graduate level [genetic counseling](#) programs [accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling \(ACGC\)](#).

The bill requires the Board of Governors (BOG) to award competitive grants to state universities to address faculty shortages, student financial barriers, and clinical training needs in genetic counseling.

The BOG is required to award funds to:

- Establish an accredited program at a state university through a one-time start-up grant based upon an application submitted in a format prescribed by the BOG. The application must include:
  - A detailed plan demonstrating how grant funds will be used to achieve program accreditation.
  - The projected outcomes of establishing the program, including all of the following:
    - The anticipated program enrollment.
    - The plan for hiring and retaining faculty for the program.

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- The anticipated program completion rates.
- The anticipated first-time American Board of Genetic Counseling board certification examination passage rates.
- The anticipated program contributions to the state's genetic counseling workforce.
- Documentation demonstrating that the proposed program is supported by sufficient clinical training capacity consistent with nationally recognized accreditation standards, and that the proposed growth represents a net increase in statewide training opportunities rather than a redistribution of existing supervision resources.
- Accredited programs based on program performance according to the following metrics:
  - The number of students completing the genetic counseling program.
  - The first-time American Board of Genetic Counseling board certification examination passage rate for students completing the state university's genetic counseling program.

The bill requires the program to reward excellence among genetic counseling programs with an average first-time ABGC board certification examination passage rate above the national average.

Under the bill, grant funds provided through the program must be used for:

- The recruitment and retention of qualified faculty, including, but not limited to, salaries, professional development, and incentives.
- Financial assistance to students enrolled in the accredited program. Such financial assistance must be in the form of scholarships that cover tuition, required books and materials, and reasonable living expenses.
- The establishment and maintenance of clinical rotations required for completion of the master's degree in genetic counseling, including partnerships with health care facilities for supervised practicum experiences, simulation training resources, and faculty oversight.

The bill specifies that grant funds may not be used for:

- General administrative overhead costs.
- The construction of new facilities.
- Nonprogram-related activities.

State universities awarded a grant under the program must maintain records demonstrating compliance with program requirements.

The bill requires each state university receiving grant funds from the program to submit an annual report to the BOG. The report must include:

- Expenditures.
- The outcomes achieved using grant funds.
- Plans for the upcoming fiscal year for the program.

The bill also requires the board to annually compile the reports into a statewide summary. The summary must be submitted to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1 of each year.

The bill requires the BOG to adopt regulations to administer the program. (Section [1](#)).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section [2](#)).

## FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

### STATE GOVERNMENT:

Funding for the program is contingent upon legislative appropriation. The bill designates the BOG as the entity responsible for administering the competitive grant program for state universities, including developing

application criteria, reviewing and awarding grants, and collecting and compiling programmatic data. The BOG may incur administrative costs associated with these duties; however, such costs are expected to be minimal and are anticipated to be absorbed within existing resources. (Section 1).

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

#### Genetic Disorders

Genetic disorders are health conditions caused by abnormalities in an individual's genetic material, including mutations in one or more genes or structural changes in chromosomes. These conditions may be inherited from one or both parents or may occur spontaneously. Genetic disorders vary widely in severity and may affect physical health, development, or disease susceptibility across the lifespan.<sup>1</sup> Examples of genetic disorders include down syndrome, Alzheimer's disease, cancer, cystic fibrosis, and sickle cell disease.<sup>2</sup>

#### Genetic Counseling

Genetic counseling is a healthcare service that supports the identification and management of genetic disorders. A genetic counselor is a licensed professional who provides this service. Genetic counseling includes advising individuals or families affected by, or at risk for, genetic disorders, and may involve:<sup>3</sup>

- Obtaining and evaluating individual, family, and medical histories to determine genetic risk for genetic or medical conditions and diseases in a patient, his or her offspring, and other family members;
- Discussing the features, natural history, means of diagnosis, genetic and environmental factors, and management of risk for genetic or medical conditions and diseases;
- Identifying, ordering, and coordinating genetic laboratory tests and other diagnostic studies as appropriate for a genetic assessment;
- Integrating genetic laboratory test results and other diagnostic studies with personal and family medical history to assess and communicate risk factors for genetic or medical conditions and diseases;
- Explaining the clinical implications of genetic laboratory tests and other diagnostic studies and their results;
- Evaluating the client's or family's responses to the condition or risk of recurrence and providing client-centered counseling and anticipatory guidance;
- Identifying and using community resources that provide medical, educational, financial, and psychosocial support and advocacy;
- Providing written documentation of medical, genetic, and counseling information for families and health care professionals; and
- Referring patients to a physician for diagnosis and treatment.

Genetic counselors practice across multiple specialties, including prenatal, pediatric, oncology, neurology, ophthalmology, psychiatry, and related clinical fields.<sup>4</sup> Since 1999, the profession has grown significantly. As of March 2023, there were 6,517 certified genetic counselors in the United States. In Florida, for Fiscal Year 2024-

<sup>1</sup> NIH, National Human Genome Research, Genetic Disorders, <https://www.genome.gov/For-Patients-and-Families/Genetic-Disorders> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026)

<sup>2</sup> Cleveland Clinic, Genetic Disorders, <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/21751-genetic-disorders> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

<sup>3</sup> Section 483.913(2)-(3), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> National Society of Genetic Counselors, *About Genetic Counselors*, <https://www.nsgc.org/About/About-Genetic-Counselors> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

2025, there were 153 genetic counselors.<sup>5</sup> The profession has grown by over 100 percent in the last ten years and is expected to grow another 100 percent over the next ten years.<sup>6</sup>

### Genetic Counseling Accreditation

In the United States, genetic counselors must complete a graduate-level genetic counseling program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC).<sup>7</sup> Graduation from an accredited program is required to sit for the certification examination administered by the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC).<sup>8</sup> The ABGC certification process establishes national professional standards and assesses competency in areas such as genetics and genomics expertise, risk assessment, counseling, communication, healthcare systems, and professional identity.<sup>9</sup>

Florida law is consistent with these national standards. To be licensed as a genetic counselor in Florida, an applicant must hold a master's degree from a genetic counseling training program accredited by the ACGC, or an equivalent program, or a doctoral degree from a medical genetics training program accredited by the American Board of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ABMGG) or the Canadian College of Medical Geneticists (CCMG).<sup>10</sup> Applicants must also pass a recognized certification examination administered by the ABGC, the ABMGG, or the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors (CAGC).<sup>11</sup> Florida law also authorizes the Department of Health to issue a temporary license to applicants who meet all licensure requirements except passage of the certification examination and who are eligible to sit for that examination.<sup>12</sup>

As of December of 2024, there were 63 ACGC-accredited genetic counseling programs across the United States and Canada, with a total enrollment of 1,164 students.<sup>13</sup> The University of South Florida is currently the only university in Florida offering a Genetic Counseling program.<sup>14</sup> Florida State University plans to launch its program in Fall 2027.<sup>15</sup> The University of Florida is the only university in Florida offering graduate-level PhD programs in genetics and genomics.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The Florida Department of Health, Division of Medical Quality Assurance, *Annual Report and Long-Range Plan* (Fiscal Year 2024-2025), at 25, available at <https://www.floridahealth.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2025.10.31.FY24-25MQAR-FINAL1-1.pdf>. During Fiscal Year 2024–2025, there were 18 genetic counselors with temporary licenses in Florida and 574 active out-of-state genetic counselors.

<sup>6</sup> National Society of Genetic Counselors, *Executive Summary*, available at <https://www.nsgc.org/Portals/0/2023%20PSS%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, *Get Accredited*, <https://www.gceducation.org/get-accredited/> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

<sup>8</sup> American Board of Genetic Counseling, *About the CGC Credential*, <https://www.abgc.net/Certify/About-the-CGC-Credential> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

<sup>9</sup> Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, *Practice-Based Competencies for Genetic Counselors*, at 2-5, available at [https://www.nsgc.org/Portals/0/Docs/Education/ACGC-Core-Competencies-Brochure\\_15\\_Web.pdf](https://www.nsgc.org/Portals/0/Docs/Education/ACGC-Core-Competencies-Brochure_15_Web.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Section 483.914(2)(d), F.S. See also, ACGC, *About Us*, <https://www.gceducation.org/about-us/> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

The Canadian Association of Genetic Counselors is a partner organization with the ACGC.

<sup>11</sup> Section 483.914(2)(e), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 483.914(3), F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, *ACGC Annual Accreditation Report*, available at <https://www.gceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/ACGC-2024-Annual-Report.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> USF Health, College of Public Health, *MSPH with a Concentration in Genetic Counseling*, <https://health.usf.edu/publichealth/apply/masters/msph-gc> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026). See also, ACGC, *Find a Program*, <https://www.gceducation.org/find-a-program/> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

<sup>15</sup> Florida State University, College of Medicine, *Master's in Genetic Counseling*, <https://med.fsu.edu/iprd/masters-degree-program-genetic-counseling> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

<sup>16</sup> University of Florida, *Genetics and Genomics, Program Information*, <https://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/colleges-departments/liberal-arts-sciences/interdisciplinary-department/genetics-genomics/> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

**RECENT LEGISLATION:**

YEAR	BILL #/SUBJECT	HOUSE/SENATE SPONSOR(S)	OTHER INFORMATION
2021	<a href="#">CS/SB 1770</a> - Genetic Counseling	Silvers/ Jones	Became Law on July 1, 2021

**BILL HISTORY**

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
<a href="#">Careers &amp; Workforce Subcommittee</a>	16 Y, 0 N, As CS	1/20/2026	Kiner	Dixon
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarified the name of the accrediting body for eligible graduate-level genetic counseling programs by identifying the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, rather than the American Board of Genetic Counseling.</li> <li>Added a requirement to the grant application that the proposed program include documentation demonstrating sufficient clinical training capacity and that growth represents a net increase in statewide training opportunities, rather than a redistribution of existing resources.</li> </ul>			
<a href="#">Higher Education Budget Subcommittee</a>	13 Y, 0 N	1/28/2026	Fontaine	Stenson
<a href="#">Education &amp; Employment Committee</a>	16 Y, 0 N	2/3/2026	Hassell	Dixon

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**THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.**  
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