The Florida Senate

BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Committee on Higher Education

BILL:	CS/SB 1376
INTRODUCER:	Education Postsecondary Committee and Senator Burgess and others
SUBJECT:	Grants for Genetic Counseling Education
DATE:	February 24, 2026 REVISED:

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Jahnke	Bouck	HE	**Fav/CS**
2.	Gray	Elwell	AHE	**Pre-meeting**
3.			FP	

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 1376 creates the Genetic Counseling Education Enhancement Grant Program within the State University System to support the development, growth, and sustainability of graduate genetic counseling programs accredited by the American Board of 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. 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, with rewards for 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.

The bill does not impact state revenues or expenditures as it is subject to appropriation. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Genetic Disorders

Genetic disorders are diseases caused, in whole or in part, by changes in an individual's DNA sequence from the typical sequence. Such disorders may result from a mutation in a single gene, mutations in multiple genes, a combination of genetic mutations and environmental factors, or damage to chromosomes, including changes in the number or structure of chromosomes that carry genes. Research related to the human genome has shown that many diseases have a genetic component. Some genetic disorders result from inherited mutations present at birth, while others are caused by acquired mutations that occur during a person's lifetime and are not inherited.[1]

Genetic disorders include a wide range of conditions, such as chromosomal disorders including Down Syndrome and Fragile X syndrome; multifactorial disorders including late-onset Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, cancer in most cases, and spina bifida; and monogenic disorders including cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease, and Tay-Sachs disease.

Chromosomal disorders affect the structures within each cell that hold genes or DNA. Multifactorial disorders stem from a combination of gene mutations and other factors, such as chemical exposure, diet, certain medications, and tobacco or alcohol use. Monogenic disorders are conditions caused by mutations in a single gene.[2]

Genetic Counseling

Genetic counseling consists of advising individuals or families affected by, or at risk of, genetic disorders and is provided by licensed genetic counselors. The scope of practice of genetic counseling includes:

- Obtaining and evaluating individual, family, and medical histories to assess genetic risk for genetic or medical conditions and diseases;
- Discussing the features, diagnosis, genetic and environmental factors, and risk management related to genetic or medical conditions and diseases;
- Identifying, ordering, and coordinating genetic laboratory tests and other diagnostic studies as part of a genetic assessment;
- Integrating genetic test results and diagnostic studies with personal and family medical history to assess and communicate risk factors;
- Explaining the clinical implications of genetic tests, diagnostic studies, and their results;
- Evaluating individual or family responses to a condition or risk of recurrence and providing 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

[1] National Human Genome Research Institute, *Genetic Disorders*, https://www.genome.gov/For-Patients-and-Families/Genetic-Disorders (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).
[2] Cleveland Clinic, *Genetic Disorders*, https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/21751-genetic-disorders (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).

- Referring patients to a physician for diagnosis and treatment.[3]

Genetic counselors practice across multiple specialties, including prenatal, pediatric, oncology, neurology, ophthalmology, psychiatry, and related clinical fields.[4] Since 1999, the profession has grown significantly. As of April 2024, there are 6,985 certified genetic counselors in the United States. 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.[5]

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).[6] Graduation from an accredited program is required to sit for the certification examination administered by the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC).[7] 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.[8]

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). Applicants must also pass a recognized certification examination administered by the ABGC, the ABMGG, or the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors (CAGC). The Florida Department of Health is also authorized 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.[9]

As of December 2024, there were 63 ACGC-accredited genetic counseling programs across the United States and Canada, with a total enrollment of 1,164 students.[10] The University of South Florida was the first university in Florida to offer an accredited graduate-level program in genetic

[3] Section 483.913, F.S.
[4] National Society of Genetic Counselors, *About Genetic Counselors*, https://www.nsgc.org/About/About-Genetic-Counselors (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).
[5] National Society of Genetic Counselors, *2024 Professional Status Survey Executive Summary* (2024), at 2, *available at https://www.nsgc.org/Portals/0/Docs/Policy/PSS%202024%20Executive%20Summary_Final.pdf* (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).
[6] Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, *Get Accredited*, https://www.gceducation.org/get-accredited/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).
[7] American Board of Genetic Counseling, *About the CGC Credential*, https://www.abgc.net/Certify/About-the-CGC-Credential (last visited Jan. 22, 2026).
[8] Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, *Practice-Based Competencies for Genetic Counselors*, at 2-5 (2023), *available at* https://www.nsgc.org/Portals/0/Docs/Education/ACGC-Core-Competencies-Brochure_15_Web.pdf (last visited Feb. 12, 2026) .
[9] Section 483.914, F.S.
[10] Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, 2024 *ACGC Annual Accreditation Report* (2025), *available at* https://www.gceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/ACGC-2024-Annual-Report.pdf (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).

counseling.[11] Florida State University plans to launch a Master's in Genetic Counseling program in Fall 2027.[12]

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill creates s. 1009.8963, F.S., establishing 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.

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 on 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: anticipated student enrollment; the plan for faculty hiring and retention; anticipated program completion rates; anticipated first-time American Board of Genetic Counseling Inc., board certification examination passage rates; and the program's anticipated contribution to Florida'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 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, Inc., 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

The bill requires the grant funds provided through the program to 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, which must be awarded as scholarships covering tuition, required books and materials, and reasonable living expenses.

[11] USF Health, College of Public Health, *MSPH with a Concentration in Genetic Counseling*, https://health.usf.edu/publichealth/apply/masters/msph-gc (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).
[12] Florida State University, College of Medicine, *Master's in Genetic Counseling*, https://med.fsu.edu/iprd/masters-degree-program-genetic-counseling (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).

- 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 prohibits grant funds from being used for general administrative overhead costs, construction of new facilities, or non-program-related activities. State universities that receive a grant through the program are required to maintain records sufficient to demonstrate compliance with program requirements.

The bill requires each state university that receives program funds to submit an annual report to the BOG. The report must include program expenditures, the outcomes achieved using grant funds, and plans for the upcoming fiscal year. The bill also requires the BOG to compile the reports into an annual 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

Additionally, the bill requires the BOG to adopt regulations to administer the program.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

This bill could have a significant impact on state expenditures for the Genetic Counseling Education Enhancement Grant Program. However, the grants are subject to an appropriation.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates section 1009.8963 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Education Postsecondary on January 28, 2026:
The committee substitute clarifies 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, Inc.

The committee substitute also adds 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 distribution of existing resources.

B. Amendments:

None.