

By the Committee on Appropriations

576-03003-26

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to higher education; amending s.
464.0195, F.S.; establishing the Florida Center for
Nursing within the University of South Florida;
requiring the center to administer the Linking
Industry to Nursing Education Fund (LINE) Fund;
requiring the center to promote certain funds and
provide technical assistance during a specified
timeframe; requiring the center to develop certain
guidelines and make them publicly available on its
website; providing requirements for the administration
of LINE funds; amending s. 1009.26, F.S.; providing
that a specified fee waiver applies to a student's
out-of-pocket expenses for tuition and fees after
other aid is applied; deleting a requirement for a
state university to report and disburse certain waived
fees; deleting a requirement for disbursement;
amending s. 1009.8962, F.S.; providing that the LINE
Fund was established for shortages in health science
professions in addition to nursing; defining terms;
requiring that the LINE Fund be administered by the
Florida Center for Nursing within the University of
South Florida, rather than the Board of Governors and
the Department of Education; providing that funding is
subject to approval of an application by the center;
authorizing the fund to match certain contributions if
funds are available; revising how funds may be used;
providing exceptions to certain prohibitions on the
use of funds; revising requirements for a proposal for

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LINE funds submitted by an institution; providing that proposals for related health science programs may not be prioritized over nursing programs; revising requirements for the center to evaluate submitted proposals; authorizing the center to prioritize certain grant applications; requiring the center to notify each applicant of its determination; defining terms; requiring an institution with an approved proposal to certify the health care partner's contribution in a specified manner; authorizing the center to award funds for up to 3 academic years; requiring institutions awarded grant funds to submit an annual report by a certain date to the center instead of the Board of Governors or the Department of Education; providing that the Department of Education is the lead entity for identifying and maintaining which health science programs are eligible for LINE funds; requiring the department to compile and publish a list of eligible programs by a specified date; requiring the department to review and update the list annually; requiring the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help to provide specified data to the department; deleting a requirement for the Board of Governors to adopt regulations and the State Board of Education to adopt rules; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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59 Section 1. Section 464.0195, Florida Statutes, is amended
60 to read:

61 464.0195 Florida Center for Nursing; ~~goals.~~

62 (1) There is established within the University of South
63 Florida the Florida Center for Nursing to address issues of
64 supply and demand for nursing, including issues of recruitment,
65 retention, and utilization of resources that support the state's
66 nursing ~~nurse~~ workforce ~~resources~~. The Legislature finds that
67 the center will repay the state's investment by providing an
68 ongoing strategy for the allocation of the state's resources
69 directed towards nursing.

70 (2) The primary goals for the center shall be to:

71 (a) Develop a strategic statewide plan for nursing manpower
72 in this state by:

73 1. Conducting a statistically valid biennial data-driven
74 gap analysis of the supply and demand of the health care
75 workforce. The center shall:

76 a. Establish and maintain a database on nursing supply and
77 demand in the state, to include current supply and demand.

78 b. Analyze the current and future supply and demand in the
79 state and the impact of this state's participation in the Nurse
80 Licensure Compact under s. 464.0095.

81 2. Developing recommendations to increase nurse faculty and
82 clinical preceptors, support nurse faculty development, and
83 promote advanced nurse education.

84 3. Developing best practices in the academic preparation
85 and continuing education needs of qualified nurse educators,
86 nurse faculty, and clinical preceptors.

87 4. Collecting data on nurse faculty, employment,

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88 distribution, and retention.

89 5. Piloting innovative projects to support the recruitment,
90 development, and retention of qualified nurse faculty and
91 clinical preceptors.

92 6. Encouraging and coordinating the development of
93 academic-practice partnerships, including partnerships with
94 hospitals which provide opportunities for nursing students to
95 obtain clinical experience, to support nurse faculty employment
96 and advancement.

97 7. Developing distance learning infrastructure for nursing
98 education and advancing faculty competencies in the pedagogy of
99 teaching and the evidence-based use of technology, simulation,
100 and distance learning techniques.

101 (b) Enhance and promote recognition, reward, and renewal
102 activities for nurses in the state by:

103 1. Promoting nursing excellence programs such as magnet
104 recognition by the American Nurses Credentialing Center;

105 2. Proposing and creating additional reward, recognition,
106 and renewal activities for nurses; and

107 3. Promoting media and positive image-building efforts for
108 nursing.

109 (c) Convene various groups representative of nurses, other
110 health care providers, business and industry, consumers,
111 lawmakers, and educators to:

112 1. Review and comment on data analysis prepared for the
113 center;

114 2. Recommend systemic changes, including strategies for
115 implementation of recommended changes; and

116 3. Evaluate and report the results of these efforts to the

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Legislature and other entities.

(3) The Board of Nursing shall include on its initial and renewal application forms a question asking each nurse to voluntarily contribute to funding the Florida Center for Nursing in addition to paying the fees imposed at the time of licensure and licensure renewal. Revenues collected from nurses over and above the required fees shall be transferred from the Medical Quality Assurance Trust Fund to the Grants and Donations Trust Fund within the Department of Health and shall be used solely to support and maintain the goals and functions of the center. Before giving a nurse the opportunity to contribute to funding the center at the time of licensure renewal, the Board of Nursing shall provide the nurse with a summary of the center's work, a link to the center's Internet website, and the following statement: "The Florida Center for Nursing's operating revenues are derived in part from your donation. In order for the Florida Center for Nursing to continue its work on behalf of nurses, please donate."

(4) The center may request from the board, and the board must provide to the center upon its request, any information held by the board regarding nurses licensed in this state or holding a multistate license pursuant to s. 464.0095 or information reported to the board by employers of such nurses, other than personal identifying information.

(5) The center shall administer the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund pursuant to s. 1009.8962.

(a) The center shall proactively promote to eligible institutions the availability of matching funds through the LINE Fund before the opening of the annual application period.

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146 (b) The center shall provide technical assistance to
147 eligible institutions before, during, and after the award
148 process to maximize the success of the program statewide.

149 (c) To administer the application, evaluation, and
150 distribution of LINE Fund grants under s. 1009.8962, the center
151 shall develop and make publicly available on its website the
152 guidelines for the LINE Fund administration, including:

153 1. Any application procedures and deadlines.

154 2. The criteria for program eligibility and funding
155 priorities.

156 3. A preapproval process to assist applicants with planning
157 for the annual application process.

158 4. A process to ensure the fair evaluation of all submitted
159 proposals and determination of award recipients.

160 5. The process that each type of eligible institution must
161 follow to certify the receipt of the pledged contributions from
162 any partner organizations before receiving any matching state
163 funds.

164 6. Reporting and accountability standards for grant
165 recipients that apply for or receive LINE funds, including
166 actions the center may consider when an institution materially
167 fails to comply with any program requirements or standards.

168 (6)-(5) No later than each January 10, the center shall
169 submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
170 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives providing
171 details of its activities during the preceding calendar year in
172 pursuit of its goals and in the execution of its duties under
173 subsection (2), including a nursing education program report.
174 The center shall annually update the report no later than

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February 10, to include data related to the NCLEX examination.

Section 2. Paragraphs (a) and (c) of subsection (18) of section 1009.26, Florida Statutes, as amended by section 7 of chapter 2025-199, Laws of Florida, are amended to read:

1009.26 Fee waivers.—

(18) (a) For every course in a Program of Strategic Emphasis, or in a state-approved teacher preparation program identified by the Board of Governors, as identified in subparagraph 3., in which a student is enrolled and has out-of-pocket expenses for tuition and fees after all other federal, state, and institutional gift aid is applied, a state university shall waive 100 percent of the tuition and fees of the student's out-of-pocket expenses for an equivalent course in such program for a student who:

1. Is a resident for tuition purposes under s. 1009.21.

2. Has earned at least 60 semester credit hours towards a baccalaureate degree within 2 academic years after initial enrollment at a Florida public postsecondary institution.

3. Enrolls in one of 10 Programs of Strategic Emphasis as adopted by the Board of Governors or a state-approved teacher preparation program. The Board of Governors shall adopt eight Programs of Strategic Emphasis in science, technology, engineering, or math; beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, two Programs of Strategic Emphasis in the critical workforce gap analysis category; and beginning with the 2023-2024 academic year, two state-approved teacher preparation programs for which a student may be eligible to receive the tuition and fee waiver authorized by this subsection. The programs identified by the board must reflect the priorities of

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the state and be offered at a majority of state universities at the time the Board of Governors approves the list.

~~(c) Upon enrollment in a Program of Strategic Emphasis or a state-approved teacher preparation program, the tuition and fees waived under this subsection must be reported for state funding purposes under ss. 1009.534 and 1009.535 and must be disbursed to the student. The amount disbursed to the student must be equal to the award amount the student has received under s. 1009.534(3) or s. 1009.535(2).~~

Section 3. Subsections (2) through (10) of section 1009.8962, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.8962 Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund.—

(2) Recognizing that the state has a persistent and growing nursing shortage and shortages in other related health science professions, it is the intent of the Legislature to address this critical workforce need by incentivizing collaboration between nursing education and related health science programs and health care partners through the establishment of the LINE Fund. This fund is intended to meet local, regional, and state workforce demand by recruiting faculty and clinical preceptors, increasing the capacity of high-quality nursing education and related health science programs, and increasing the number of nursing education and related health science program graduates who are prepared and licensed to enter the workforce.

(3) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Center" means the Florida Center for Nursing within the University of South Florida, established by s. 464.0195.

(b) ~~(a)~~ "Health care partner" means a health care provider

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as defined in s. 768.38(2) that is licensed to operate in this
state. The center may also consider any of the following types
of organizations that are connected to nursing education or the
nursing workforce as a "health care partner" for the purpose of
evaluating an institution's proposal and a pledged contribution
for matching LINE funds.

1. An organization that manufactures or sells durable
medical equipment or simulation equipment that demonstrably
enhances or supplements a nursing student's education.

2. An organization that provides educational materials or
instruction related to preparation to pass a nationally
recognized nursing licensure examination.

3. A health care organization active in this state which
employs or uses licensed nurses to deliver direct patient care.

4. A nonprofit organization or fund with a 501(c)(3)
designation registered in this state for at least 2 years before
the date of the initial LINE grant application which is
organized primarily, or which makes other reportable charitable
contributions, to support the health care workforce of this
state through training or the continuing education of health
care professionals.

5. A direct-support organization of an eligible applicant
whose match contribution supports an eligible purpose of the
grant.

(c) ~~(b)~~ "Institution" means a school district career center
under s. 1001.44; a charter technical career center under s.
1002.34; a Florida College System institution; a state
university; an independent nonprofit college or university
located and chartered in this state and accredited by an agency

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or association that is recognized by the database created and maintained by the United States Department of Education to grant baccalaureate degrees; or an independent school, college, or university with an accredited program as defined in s. 464.003 which is located in this state and licensed by the Commission for Independent Education pursuant to s. 1005.31, or an institution authorized under s. 1009.521, which has a nursing education program that meets or exceeds the following:

1. For a certified nursing assistant program, a completion rate of no more than 10 percent below the current national average ~~of at least 70 percent for the prior year.~~

2. For a licensed practical nurse, associate of science in nursing, and bachelor of science in nursing program, a first-time passage rate on the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensing Examination of no more than 10 percent below the current national average, ~~of at least 75 percent for the prior year~~ based on a minimum of 10 testing participants.

(d) "Related health science" means a program that prepares graduates to provide direct patient care or diagnostic services that advance patient care in a health care setting, as defined in s. 408.802, which are outlined in the State Board of Education's Career and Technical Education Health Science curriculum framework, and which are identified by the Department of Education pursuant to subsection (10).

~~(e)-(e)~~ "Student" means a person who is a resident for tuition purposes pursuant to s. 1009.21 and enrolled in a nursing education or a related health science education degree or certificate program at an institution that is part of the State Board of Education's Career and Technical Education Health

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291 Science curriculum framework.

292 (4) The LINE Fund shall be administered by the center ~~Board~~
293 ~~of Governors for state universities and the Department of~~
294 ~~Education for all other institutions.~~

295 (5) Subject to available funds and the approval of an
296 application by the center, for every dollar contributed to an
297 institution by a health care partner, the fund shall provide a
298 dollar-to-dollar match to the participating institution to
299 implement the activities outlined in the institution's approved
300 proposal. Subject to available funds, the fund may also provide
301 a dollar-to-dollar match to the participating institution for
302 every dollar contributed to an institution or its direct-support
303 organization by an individual or entity that does not meet the
304 definition of a health care partner, provided the contribution
305 supports an eligible purpose of the LINE Fund. Contributions
306 from health care partners shall receive priority awarding
307 matching.

308 (6) (a) Funds may be used for student scholarships;;
309 recruitment of additional faculty and clinical preceptors;
310 increasing program enrollment, program completion, and licensure
311 exam passage rates;; equipment;;~~and~~ simulation centers,
312 internships, and clinical preceptorships; and other related
313 activities determined by the center to advance high-quality
314 nursing education programs and to expand the qualified nursing
315 workforce and related health science professions throughout the
316 state.

317 (b) Funds may not be used for the construction of new
318 buildings but may be used to expand, retrofit, or upgrade
319 existing facilities if the proposal will result in increased

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320 program enrollments or improved or modernized educational or
321 simulation space for nursing education or related health science
322 students.

323 (7)(a) To participate, an institution must submit a timely
324 and completed proposal to the center ~~Board of Governors or~~
325 ~~Department of Education,~~ in a standardized format developed
326 under s. s. 464.0195(5) ~~prescribed by the Board of Governors or~~
327 ~~Department of Education,~~ as applicable.

328 (b) The proposal must identify the specific a health care
329 partner ~~located and licensed to operate in the state~~ whose
330 monetary or nonmonetary contributions will be matched by the
331 fund on a dollar-to-dollar basis if the proposal is approved by
332 the center.

333 1. Examples of allowable nonmonetary LINE Fund
334 contributions from health care partners include, but are not
335 limited to, the value of the donated use of health care partner
336 employees as nursing program instructors or clinical preceptors;
337 the value of the donated use of a health care partner's space or
338 equipment by a nursing education program; or the value of
339 donated goods and services, such as educational or simulation
340 equipment, licensure exam preparation materials and instruction,
341 or other similar quantifiable donated goods and services deemed
342 by the center to be good faith contributions that support the
343 goals of the LINE Fund.

344 2. To accept nonmonetary contributions as health care
345 partner matching funds, the applicant and the center must
346 quantify the value of the contribution in dollars and certify
347 that the proposed contribution directly supports the goals of
348 the LINE Fund outlined in subsection (1).

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349 (c) Proposals for related health science programs other
350 than nursing may be considered, but may not be prioritized over
351 nursing programs. The proposal for such programs must be part of
352 the State Board of Education's Career and Technical Education
353 Health Science curriculum framework and include evidence that a
354 material regional workforce demand exists for that related
355 health science program.

356 ~~(8) (a) The center Board of Governors or Department of~~
357 ~~Education, as applicable,~~ must review and evaluate each
358 completed and timely submitted proposal according to the
359 following minimum criteria, where applicable:

360 1. (a) Whether funds committed by the health care partner
361 will contribute to an eligible purpose.

362 2. (b) How the institution plans to use the funds, including
363 how such funds will be utilized to increase student enrollment,
364 and program completion, or licensure exam test-takers or passage
365 rates.

366 3. (c) How the health care partner will onboard and retain
367 graduates or otherwise improve the likelihood that graduates
368 will successfully join the state or local workforce.

369 4. (d) How the funds will expand the institution's nursing
370 education and related health science programs to meet local,
371 regional, or state workforce demands. If applicable, this shall
372 include

373 5. How the proposal will enhance opportunities to pursue
374 and complete advanced education nursing education programs.

375 6. and how How the funds will increase the number of
376 faculty and clinical preceptors and planned efforts to utilize
377 the clinical placement process established in s. 14.36.

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(b) The center may assign priority consideration for grant applications that will improve services in underserved geographic areas or for programs and partnerships that address the greatest workforce needs or gaps identified under s. 464.0195.

(c) After reviewing and evaluating each timely submitted proposal, the center must notify each applicant regarding which of the following categories each of the institution's proposals has been classified into, and provide a brief explanation for the center's principal reason or reasons for reaching its determination:

1. Approved;
2. Provisionally Approved;
3. Approved, Pending Available Funding; or
4. Denied for Funding.

(d) As used in this subsection, the term:

1. "Approved" means that the center agrees that the institution's proposal meets the criteria and intent of this section, and the proposal will receive matching LINE funding upon certification of the receipt of the health care partner's contribution.

2. "Provisionally Approved" means that the center agrees that the institution's proposal makes a good faith effort to meet the criteria and intent of this section, but the center determined that additional information or amendments to the proposal are necessary to bring the proposal into full compliance with the requirements of this section.

a. The center may offer technical assistance to the applying institution to ensure its resubmitted application meets

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the full program requirements for funding.

b. A Provisionally Approved proposal, if timely resubmitted, may immediately move to an Approved proposal if the center determines that the resubmitted proposal meets the full requirements of this section, that sufficient LINE funds are available to match the proposal, and that the proposal addresses a high priority need for the state, such as serving underserved geographic areas or closing identified workforce gaps.

3. "Approved, Pending Available Funding" means that the center agrees that the institution's proposal, or resubmitted proposal, meets the criteria and intent of this section, but the proposal will not receive matching LINE funds unless additional LINE funding becomes available later in the fiscal year. The availability of LINE Fund dollars to match proposals classified as Approved, Pending Available Funding may result from:

a. The failure of another approved awardee to timely certify the actual receipt of a health care partner's pledged contributions.

b. Additional savings identified by the center from previously appropriated LINE funds.

c. A balance in the LINE Fund due to a lack of approved proposals from a type of nursing education program, health science program, or institution for which a specified amount of LINE funds was identified in the General Appropriations Act for a particular fiscal year. The center may set a date on or after February 1 of each year when the center determines that an insufficient number of approved or provisionally approved proposals exist from the institutions provided priority consideration by the Legislature in that fiscal year. After the

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436 noticed date, the center may redistribute any remaining LINE
437 funds to highly ranked Approved, Pending Available Funding
438 proposals from any type of program or institution that can
439 certify, before June 30, the receipt of its health care
440 partner's contribution.

441 4. "Denied for Funding" means that the institution's
442 proposal does not meet the full criteria or intent of this
443 section or that the institution has not timely certified the
444 receipt of an allowable health care partner's contribution.

445 (9)(a) Each institution with an approved proposal must
446 certify to the center in a manner prescribed under s.
447 464.0195(5) the shall notify the Board of Governors or
448 Department of Education, as applicable, upon receipt of the
449 health care partner's contribution partner provided funds
450 identified in the approved proposal. The center may Board of
451 Governors or Department of Education, as applicable, shall
452 release grant funds, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to the
453 amount of the contribution certified as funds received by the
454 institution, including certifications made on a rolling or
455 periodic basis.

456 (b) If deemed to meet the long-term goals of the LINE Fund,
457 the center may award funds for an approved proposal for up to 3
458 academic years immediately following the academic year within
459 which the initial approval is granted. If the center approves a
460 multiyear award to an institution, it must notify the recipient
461 that the award amount in subsequent years is subject to a LINE
462 Fund appropriation and the continued certification of the health
463 care partner's contribution to match the multiyear award of
464 state funds.

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465 ~~(c)(b)~~ Annually, by February 1, each institution awarded
466 grant funds in the previous fiscal year shall submit a report to
467 the center which ~~Board of Governors or Department of Education,~~
468 ~~as applicable, that~~ demonstrates the expansion as outlined in
469 the proposal and the use of funds. At minimum, the report must
470 include, by program level, the number of additional nursing
471 education and related health science students enrolled; if
472 scholarships were awarded using grant funds, the number of
473 students who received scholarships and the average award amount;
474 and the outcomes of students as reported by the Office of
475 Reimagining Education and Career Help pursuant to s.
476 14.36(3)(1).

477 (10)(a) The Department of Education shall serve as the lead
478 entity for identifying and maintaining related health science
479 programs eligible for participation in the LINE Fund.

480 (b) In carrying out this subsection, the department shall
481 apply the State Board of Education's Career and Technical
482 Education Health Science framework as the basis for determining
483 program eligibility.

484 (c) No later than October 1, 2026, the department shall
485 compile and publish an initial list of LINE-eligible related
486 health science programs. In developing the list, the department
487 shall:

488 1. Compile the current Career and Technical Education
489 Health Science pathways and programs;

490 2. Identify aligned health science programs offered
491 through:

492 a. District technical colleges and career centers; and

493 b. Florida College System institutions offering Career and

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Technical Education-aligned health science certificates and degrees;

3. Establish and apply alignment criteria, including credential type and applicable licensure or certification outcomes; and

4. Publish and maintain an approved list of LINE-eligible health science programs for use in administering the LINE Fund.

(d) The department shall review and update the list annually to reflect updates to the Career and Technical Education Health Science framework and changes to eligible program offerings.

(e) The Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help shall provide workforce and labor market demand data, including information on statewide and regional health care workforce shortages, projected job growth, and occupational demand, to the department to support data-informed prioritization of LINE funding. The office may not determine program eligibility
~~The Board of Governors shall adopt regulations and the State Board of Education shall adopt rules to administer the fund, establish dates for the submission and review of proposals, award funds, and other regulations and rules necessary to implement this section.~~

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.